

## **ANALYSIS ON EUROPEAN FUTURE OF MACEDONIA: THE GREEK OBSTACLES ON THE NAME ISSUE**

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### **—Abstract —**

Macedonia as a candidate for admission to the European Union (EU) has difficulty in meeting the criteria for membership, but also in solving problems that arise with the name of the country. In the framework of this paper will analyze international relations Macedonia - EU, in particular importance will be given to the impact that makes Greece from within as a member of the EU. Also, will analyze the decision of the International Court of Justice relating to compliance with the Interim Agreement between Greece and Macedonia, its potential impacts, and will analyze the opinions of citizens about this issue. At the end, conclusions and recommendations are issued in order to facilitate the path of Macedonia towards the EU.

**Key Words:** *International Relations, Macedonia, EU Integration*

**JEL Classification:** H7

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Based on the fact that Macedonia over two decades since its independence, is faced with different challenges on the path to integration of state in the European Union (EU), here I will analyze the problem imposed by Greece over the name of the state "Macedonia" as the main obstacle in this regard. The question that evolves here, has its own specifics, since analyzes of EU policy on Macedonia's membership (formal criteria for membership), and the circumstances that led to the imposition of additional problem of Greece (as additional conditionality).

The paper, besides the historical analysis of a dispute between two neighboring states, addresses the political environment in Macedonia, which relates to the lack of internal cohesion in the way of resolving the name dispute.

## **2. THE RELATIONSHIP EUROPEAN UNION AND MACEDONIA: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

After the breakup of Yugoslavia, Macedonia was supposed to require a democratic way, which will guarantee security, stability and prosperity. Since the EU is based on freedom, democracy, respect for freedoms and human rights, rule of law, Macedonia was determined to join those European values (Aleksovski, p.124). Thus in 2001, signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with EU. State during these last 11 years, was on track to achieve all the tasks defined by MSA, particularly those planned for implementation in the first phase under Chapter V (movement of workers, goods, services and capital).

European Council in December 2005 gave Macedonia a candidate country status, while in November 2009, the European Commission recommended the Council to begin negotiations with Macedonia, as well as this, should go in the second phase of implementation of the SAA. These recommendations were also reiterated in the Commission report of 2010, while Council has not yet received a positive attitude about the recommendations of The European Commission (Progress Report, 2011, p.4)

Today, Macedonia is expecting the date to start negotiations with the EU, while statements from EU officials often point out that such a thing strictly conditioned by the resolution of the dispute with Greece over the name of the country.

- In relations with the EU, Macedonia scored some important dates:
- In 1995 established diplomatic relations with EU
- In 1996 signed the first bilateral agreement on the use of the PHARE program
- In 1997 signed a cooperation agreement which entered into force in 2004, and the Agreement on textiles which is in force since 1998
- In April 2001 signed the SAA, and the same came into force in April 2004
- On March 22, 2004 filed a request for EU membership
- In 2004 led National Strategy for EU Integration
- On December 16, 2005 received candidate status for membership
- In 2007 adopted the National Strategy for the approval of EU law, brought national development plan for the period 2007-09 as well as pre-accession economic program

- In January 2008 came into force readmission agreement with EU
- On December 19, 2009 entered into force liberalization of visas for citizens who travel in the Schengen area (SEP, p.7)

### **3. MEMBERSHIP CONDITIONS AND THE PROGRESS OF FYROM**

In general, EU enlargement as a process has not been without difficulties. Obstacles to accession are presented for various reasons, such as: rejection of any member state<sup>1</sup>, undemocratic fluctuations within states<sup>2</sup>, hindering the process through a referendum by the citizens of states, etc.

When mentioning the process of EU enlargement, should always take into account the capacity of EU integration, namely the capacity of institutions to admit new states and their regular operation, the effective implementation of policies in the new member states, budget opportunities to deal with financial and other fluctuations.

Unlike the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which had previously signed agreements on cooperation and association agreements later, the Western Balkan states was offered a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA). Stabilization and Association Process is a framework of long-term policy towards the Western Balkan countries in order of their association to the EU, simultaneously doing the complete stabilization, and their economic prosperity.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the UK's demand for membership in the EC was successful in the second attempt, as originally in 1961 it was hampered by the veto of then French president, who later in 1976 after repeated request for membership was expressed reserved for admission of Great Britain in the European Community. With the changes in French political scene, opportunities for UK membership were opened in 1973.

<sup>2</sup> Although, Greece had signed the Association Agreement in 1961 and became EC member state 20 years later. This is because during the signing of the agreement there was a democratic regime, but in 1967 the regime was changed after a coup by canceling the membership aspirations of Greece until 1974, when democracy was restored. Greece's official request was made in 1975, but the European Commission had estimated that Greece's membership must wait until the proper implement economic reforms. However, the European Council for political reasons on the recommendation of the European Commission had decided to start membership negotiations in 1976 and, in 1981 had become a full member of the European Community. In the case of Spain and Portugal, which expressed interest to join the European Community since the 60s, the two countries in 1986 established democratic systems (by changing the previous authoritarian regimes) and overcome economic difficulties.

In European Council meeting in Copenhagen in 1993, was clearly identified four criteria which must be met by any state that requires membership in the EU. The so-called "Copenhagen criteria" are as follows:

- Political: stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights and minority rights, and acceptance of the political objectives of the EU;
- Economic: existence of a functional and efficient market economy, the capacity to cope with competition and market laws within the EU;
- Legal: full approval of the 'acquis communautaire' (primary and secondary legislation, rulings of the European Court of Justice, declarations and resolutions of the EU, measures taken on the common foreign and security policy, provisions on justice and home affairs, international agreements that the EU has concluded and the agreements between Member States on the scope of the EU);
- Administrative: adaptation of the administrative structure with the objectives of harmonization and gradual integration (such as strengthening of administrative capacity, the establishment of efficient administration which will ensure the acceptance and implementation of EU legislation. on justice and home affairs domestic).

For each year in the reports on the progress of Macedonia, European Commission gives assessments about fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria, indicates areas where progress has been made for 35 chapters, but also highlighted deficiencies in this regard.

The European Commission estimates that the state is making progress in meeting the above criteria. However, some issues still remain a problem for the state and constantly repeated. There are several areas where there is stagnation and lack of political will, which addressed as well as remarks by opposition political parties which are related to defects in the rule of law, independence of judiciary, politicization of public administration, etc.

#### **4. THE NAME ISSUE OF MACEDONIA AND THE GREEK OBSTACLES**

Seen from the historical aspect, Greece had no objection to the northern neighbor's name at the time when Macedonia was a constituent part of the former Yugoslavia (1944-1991), when it nominated as "People's Republic of Macedonia", and later as the "Socialist Republic of Macedonia ". Two years after independence, when Macedonia filed a request for UN membership, the Macedonian people was contested history and culture, ethnicity and language,

even the state's constitutional name. Greece had disputed Macedonia's constitutional name citing two reasons:

- The first one was historical: the exclusive right to use the Greek name "Macedonia" and
- The second was the territorial character: Macedonians potential claims for territory to Greece (Hans-Lothar Staphan, 2004, pp.5-15).

Security Council of the United Nations in this regard, in 1993 had adopted resolutions 817 and 845, which suggested to the General Assembly to accept Macedonia's membership in the UN under the interim reference "FYR", while to find a solution about differences for the name of the country with Greece. At that time, the Macedonian Government was strongly opposed using the FYR, saying that "under no condition" is not ready to accept the provisional name for the state. As a result of this, Greece did diplomatic pressure, political and economic embargo (in February 1994), which severely affected the economic situation in Macedonia.

To overcome this situation were engaged to mediate American diplomat Richard Holbrooke and the UN Special Envoy Sairus WENS, who influenced the parties in dispute, to sign the Interim Agreement in New York (13 September 1995), with which the disputed issues were closed temporarily and the dispute was decided to negotiate under the supervision of representatives of the UN Secretary General, the mediator Mathew Nimitz. Accordingly, Greece had agreed to end the economic embargo against Macedonia, and Macedonia withdrew from the sun with 16 arms (the symbol of the first flag of independent Macedonia, which Greece considers that holds historical rights) and amended Article 3 of the Constitution which emphasizes that "Macedonia has no territorial tendencies toward neighboring states."

Under Article 11 of the Interim Agreement "Greece had agreed not to hinder, Macedonia's membership in international organizations, in which Greece is a member", which means the obligation of Greece to not hinder Macedonia's membership in EU and NATO. However, Greece did the opposite, since the NATO summit in Bucharest in 2008, which was expected to join the three Adriatic Charter countries (Albania, Croatia and Macedonia); Greece had objected to be sent an invitation for membership to Macedonia. After that, it became clear that Greece will always appear as an obstacle for Macedonia's integration into international organizations, while Macedonia will accept a solution outside of its own regarding the name dispute.

Yet, even beyond the political dispute over the name of the state, Greece continues to have an indirect impact on the Macedonian economy. In the list of foreign investors in Macedonia after the signing of the Interim Agreement, Greek companies are at the top of the list of investors, and Greece presents significant trade partner for Macedonia immediately after Germany (Veremis, p.18)

## **5. IMPACT OF THE DECISION OF THE ICJ AND THE CITIZENS OPINION ON THE NAME ISSUE**

As a result of the events mentioned above, Macedonia had initiated proceedings before the International Court of Justice for violation of Article 5 of the Interim Agreement. Under this requirement, ICJ advisory opinion brought a without binding legal effect to the parties in dispute. The decision of the ICJ has no effect on the decision-making rules in NATO and the EU. Enlargement policy of these organizations is based on consensus, and Greece as part of these organizations, acting from within, has a position to block Macedonia's entry, using the instrument's veto. In fact, these circumstances make Macedonia impasse, and if she wants to join NATO and the EU definitely has to choose the dispute without regard to whether it will remain satisfied with the outcome of the solution. The ICJ decision will have no effect on the rules of NATO enlargement and the EU, as ICJ had rejected the Macedonian claim that ICJ obliges Greece not to block its membership in NATO and the EU. Thus, the ICJ was expressed in the second part of the decision that ... will not be able to order the Greece of how to behave and not further hinder Macedonia's membership in international organizations. This decision encourages both sides to continue negotiations and find an acceptable solution, especially for Macedonia because Greece does not have what to lose by postponing the resolution of the dispute, while Macedonia is.

For purposes of this paper, in May-June 2012 was made a survey of citizens in Macedonia, which included questions that citizens have expressed their stance over the name dispute.

Those citizens, who are set against changing the name of the state, are aware that Macedonia will face stagnation in economic development and no chance for a meaningful future for the country. However, they conclude that there can be no negotiation about their identity, while no one has the right to be called differently from what they are. Macedonian community has confidence that the change of name of state will also change their national identity.

**Table 1 the citizens' opinion on the state name issue**

Question	Answer		
	Yes	No	No Answer
1. Do you agree that the name of the state, to add a geographical prefix as Greece seeks, in favor of Euro-Atlantic integration?	43%	48%	9%
2. Do you think that the stalemate in resolving the dispute with the name of the country will exacerbate inter-ethnic relations, economy and will encourage other consequences?	43%	29%	28%
3. A has any influence and effect, the decision of ICJ in resolving the dispute with the state name?	3%	73%	20%

Others (especially Albanians and a small part of the Macedonians and other communities) who are determined to Euro-Atlantic integration of the country through the dispute resolution-whatever name it, they think it will step economic development perspective and best opportunities for citizens.

From the responses, clearly shows that there is great divisions within the community itself to Macedonian citizens about resolving name dispute (even some of them conclude that they are of Slavic origin, while others ... ancient origin), which simultaneously shows a confusion about national identity. While separations are much larger at the community level as regards the name of the state, where in particular is worth mentioning the Albanian community, which largely agrees to change the name in favor of Euro-Atlantic integrations.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Considering the current events on the name issue, it is evident that Greece has the advantage of the fact that ... is a member of Euro-Atlantic structures and from this position hinders Macedonia's membership in NATO and the EU. Greece pulls a unanimous vote during the decision-making in these organizations, although this approach has faced criticism from some countries, however, without concrete results in order to convince him to give up the internationalization of bilateral issue about the name.

If this situation continues this way, it would mean waste of Macedonia outside Euro-Atlantic structures. Consequently, Macedonia has no capacity to resolve the

dispute extends to infinity, since the holding of such a situation to the status quo may adversely affect interethnic relations taking into account the differences between Macedonian and Albanian community about name resolution.

Failure of the matter is counter-productive and gives the signal to a lack of willingness to resolve disputes. In this regard, it will give to Greece's powerful argument that Macedonia is a party which does not want compromise, which it puts into the awkward position and increased international pressure on Macedonia. Therefore, Macedonia should not remain hostage to history, but must decide between isolation and integration.

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