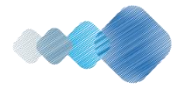




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PRESPES AGREEMENT OBSERVATORY

Analytical Report I, January 2021



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INTRODUCTION

1

North Macedonia is a multi-ethnic country in the Balkans, formerly one of Yugoslavia's six federal states. With a referendum held in September 1991, the then "Republic of Macedonia" separated from Yugoslavia becoming an independent state; a name dispute with Greece over the name of Macedonia initiated. The main issues between the two countries (apart from the name) were territorial (the acknowledgement that the new state has not expansionist tendencies) and its identity claims (history claims, use of national symbols), including the existence of a minority in northern Greece.

Soon after its independence, the "Republic of Macedonia" pursued membership to Euro-Atlantic structures. The progress in reforming the state was not enough to become an EU member because of the bitter dispute with Greece.

The Prespes Agreement of 2018 ended the impasse, paving the way for NATO and EU membership. It was a necessary compromise to provide the basis for cooperation between the two countries.

The purpose of this report is to evaluate the progress in bilateral relations, the impact in the region and the aftermath of the Agreement's implementation. In particular, it aims to identify how the stakeholders have perceived the Agreement, be it politicians, academics and regional/EU agents. Furthermore, we study the impact of the Agreement on the Parliamentary Elections in North Macedonia in 2020. Then, we focus on the implementation of certain provisions, vis-à-vis reforms and other policies. We acknowledge that recently, the relations between Bulgaria and North Macedonia have deteriorated, raising concerns about the latter's accession talks with the EU and we watch closely the developments in bilateral talks.

THE AGREEMENT IN THE GREEK ACADEMIC DEBATE

2

The Greek academic community was divided about the Prespes Agreement. Some scholars have publicly argued that "the Prespes agreement is not an honest compromise" and that "it fails to convincingly prevent the usurpation of sensitive historical data."¹ They believe that there are legal

gaps² and they argue that it violates the Greek Constitution and law.³ They disapprove the political management from the then ruling party of SYRIZA, claiming that the will of the citizens was ignored; a referendum should have taken place, they say. This side is suspicious that the "North" prefix will not be respected in the long run.⁴

In the same spirit, a group of foreign thinkers from several universities expressed its opposition to the Agreement, stating that the issue of identity should not be addressed in a regulatory manner by the governments.⁵ The Guardian, who refused to post their resolution, published the opposite view, highlighting the benefits of the Prespes Agreement arguing that it can serve as a model for future conflict resolution.

Others saw the Agreement as an opportunity to tackle nationalism, fanaticism and demagoguery in both countries. They acknowledged that North Macedonia has agreed to amend its constitution, remove irredentism and accept the Macedonian identity as separate from Greek culture and history.⁶

According to Matthew Nimetz, who was the UN mediator for over 20 years, and the former US presidential envoy to the dispute, the Prespes Agreement has resolved the "Macedonian name issue" between Greece and North Macedonia, by contributing to a more constructive bilateral dialogue. However, it is still a "work in progress," the success of which will be determined by the future generations.⁷ The Agreement goes beyond the historical determinism and sets an example of compromise and cooperation under the spirit of the European values.⁸

Tsipras and Zaev have been criticized for using "questionable tools and tactics" in terms of political legitimacy.⁹ The Agreement's very legality has also been questioned under the scope of the UN SC Res.817 of 1993, the provisions of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties of 1969 and the peremptory norms of International Law, particularly the principle of self-determination.¹⁰ It has been said that the content of the Agreement is not based on a clear and sufficient linguistic framework in law terms but remains far from attaining its objective for territorial settlement, and that it is about Western neo-colonial aspirations in the Balkan region.¹¹

THE GREEK POLITICAL PARTIES

3

The signing of the Prespes Agreement (17.06.2018) shook the political establishment in Greece.¹² Opinion polls at the time of the Agreement's ratification from the Parliament showed that the majority of Greeks did not accept the name deal and would continue to call the country "Skopje."¹³ Except of the ruling party of SYRIZA, the other parties were –more or less- opposed to the Agreement due to objections concerning the recognition of the "Macedonian" language and nationality.¹⁴

PM Alexis Tsipras said that the Agreement put an end to a yearlong conflict.¹⁵ He also stated that the Agreement is promoting friendship, cooperation, and peace between the two nations, that it is a stabilizing factor for the Balkans as a whole; it also upgrades the strategic role of Greece in the region. Through the Agreement, North Greece is again the center of the Balkans, its economical role in Southeast Europe is upgraded and it becomes a crossroad of trade and culture. Nevertheless, the small ally of SYRIZA in the government, the ultra-nationalist Independent Greeks (ANEL), was in a very unpleasant situation and eventually casted a negative vote for the Agreement, except for one MP (Thanasis Papachristopoulos).¹⁶ Panos Kammenos, President of ANEL, retreated his party from the government, framing the Agreement as "betrayal."

The main opposition of Nea Dimokratia (ND), the conservative party and an equivalent of CDU in Germany, endorsed the maximalist position of Greek foreign policy, remembering the nationalist narrative of the early 1990s. Its leader, and incumbent Prime Minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, said that the Agreement allows "irredentist" claims against Greece's interests.¹⁷ He called the Agreement "bad, for the acceptance of a Macedonian language and nation amount to a national subsidence." The chairperson of the social democrats (KINAL), Fofi Gennimata, described the Agreement as harmful.

Eventually, the Parliament ratified the Agreement with 153/300 votes. Today, the ruling party is New Democracy. We observe that the stance of the government has changed and Kyriakos Mitsotakis himself appears a rather compromising character, in contrast to his ferocious statements as opposition. At his first meeting with Zoran Zaev, he said that he would respect the Agreement because it is binding. The former Spokesperson, Stelios Petsas, underlined that the official stance of the Parliament is renowned and stated that once an international treaty is signed, it cannot be altered.

Furthermore, Petsas noted that the only possible way is the implementation of the Agreement, in addition to the Greek government's support to North Macedonia's negotiations concerning its EU path. KINAL has a steadfast position, with Gennimata continuously denouncing the Agreement as wrong. However, the party said it would watch the development, especially those connected with North Macedonia's EU membership. Lastly, the newly founded Mera25/DiEM, under Yannis Varoufakis' leadership, is in favor of the Agreement, as long as all its criteria are successfully met.¹⁸

PERCEPTION OF THE AGREEMENT IN NORTH MACEDONIA

4

The referendum for the Agreement which was held in North Macedonia in October 2018, was boycotted by citizens who were against the agreement reaching a turnout of just 37%.

Recent polls, however, conducted over the past two years indicate that a large segment of the population (40-60%) in North Macedonia is in favour of or acknowledges the importance of the Prespes Agreement for the country's Euro-Atlantic future.¹⁹

In the parliamentary elections of 2020, Zoran Zaev managed to win with a political platform based on the hopes of the Agreement, receiving 36% of the total vote. The Albanian vote was of great significance in these elections. Traditionally playing the role of the "kingmaker," ethnic Albanians and the Albanian parties played a crucial role for the approval of the Agreement.

Despite the lead of the Agreement's supporters, the country was divided, though. The right-wing VMRO-DPMNE adopted a nationalist position similar to Greece's ND, opposing steadily the passing of the Agreement. They criticized Zaev claiming that he gave up their name increasing the appetite to other neighbors such as Bulgaria and Albania to seek concessions for themselves.²⁰ North Macedonia and Bulgaria are currently at odds over several issues set by Bulgaria, as prescribed in the Friendship Treaty signed by both countries in 2017. At this stage, the result of the talks between the two countries remains unknown, dragging the opening of the EU accession talks; it may prove to be a "hard pill to swallow" for a significant part of the pro-EU population of North Macedonia if more concessions are to be made, this time to Bulgaria.

VMRO- DPMNE'S STANCE

5

VMRO-DPMNE campaigned against the Agreement. The party's leader, Hristijan Mickoski, refused to accept the new constitutional name and he still uses the "Republic of Macedonia." He believes the Agreement does a great damage to the country's national interest as it mostly favors Greece; technically, he adds, it sacrifices the "Macedonian identity."

The party tried to sabotage the ratification process. On 5 July 2018, VMRO pressed charges against Zaev and Foreign Minister Nikola Dimitrov for high treason without any result. On 19 October 2018 the Agreement entered the Parliament for ratification. The ruling coalition did not have enough votes and thus it had to persuade some MPs from the opposition. Finally, 7 VMRO-DPMNE and 1 Socialist MPs seceded to the ruling coalition, securing the two-thirds majority (80 MPs). The VMRO-DPMNE leadership expelled its members who disobeyed the leadership while the secretary-general accused them for accepting bribery.²¹ After the vote, the then President of the Republic and former VMRO politician, Gjorge Ivanov, refused to sign the bill although he had no constitutional power to deny.²²

VMRO-DPMNE lost because it failed to shape substantial and realistic alternatives vis-à-vis the country's EU and NATO aspirations. To bridge the domestic gap, in December 2018, amnesty was granted to several opposition VMRO-DPMNE MPs for their aggressiveness against their colleagues who supported the Agreement.²³

In 2020 elections, VMRO aligned again with the nationalist perspective, adopting a hard stance against the Prespes Agreement. The party's election campaign largely centered on identity politics and sharp criticism of Zaev's compromising policy. Mickoski, in particular, asserted that a VMRO-DPMNE government would reverse the country's bilateral agreements with Bulgaria and Greece, restoring the state's name, insisting on the narrative of "Macedonism," an irredentist concept which ceased with the Prespes Agreement.²⁴ VMRO-DPMNE's vice-president, Aleksandar Nikoloski, appeared adamant for the name, too. He made clear that his party would not accept the constitutional amendments, insisting that the name should be "Macedonia".

THE ROLE OF REGIONAL POWERS

6

The US, EU institutions, and some key EU member states, notably Germany, welcomed the Prespes Agreement. Germany is the leading power in Europe with an export-oriented economy; thus, the importance of regional cooperation is vital. The peaceful resolution of a dispute like that between Greece and North Macedonia helps Germany to deepen its influence in the Balkans (it is the most significant economic partner of North Macedonia).

Russia, displayed a low public profile despite its strong historic, cultural and religious ties in the Balkans. It acted mainly by issuing statements underlining the western pressure. However, various allegations and evidence, display a more delicate effort of the Russian government to exert influence against the Agreement primarily due to its opposition to NATO enlargement.

Moscow's dissatisfaction became obvious in March 2020, when North Macedonia entered NATO. With an official statement, it expressed its dismay pointing -among others- to the referendum's lack of legitimacy.²⁵ While it is difficult to evaluate the extent to which Russia or the US affected the public opinion in North Macedonia, it is clear that key EU and non-EU actors stepped up their engagement to push through or backtrack the Agreement in view of their geopolitical interests in the region.²⁶

Following the signing of the Agreement, the doors of NATO and the EU opened for North Macedonia and on the 27 March 2020, the country became the 30th member of NATO. Greece was a warm supporter of the accession, and this was reflected in the statement of the Greek Foreign Minister.²⁷ With a symbolic gesture, 2 US aircrafts followed by 4 Greek, flew over the city of Skopje, welcoming the new member state.²⁸

At the same time, the EU member states agreed upon beginning the accession negotiations with both North Macedonia and Albania. Again, Greece was the warmest supporter, trying to overcome French and Bulgarian skepticism. After July's 2019 elections in Greece, PM Mitsotakis promised Zaev that he will respect the Agreement and he will support North Macedonia's candidacy in the EU.²⁹

This is important because Mitsotakis was a denier of the Agreement (his Parliamentary spokesperson called it an

“act of treason”) while the Agreement underlines that Greece shall not object any accession request or membership international, multilateral and regional organizations and institutions for North Macedonia. It also says that Greece shall ratify “any of the Second’s Party accession agreements” to them. Regarding, especially the EU and NATO, it is stated that Greece shall openly support the accession of North Macedonia under the condition that framework, terminologies and constitutional amendments in the Agreement are being adhered.³⁰

THE AGREEMENT AND THE 2020 ELECTIONS IN NORTH MACEDONIA

7 The July 2020 parliamentary elections were the first to take place in North Macedonia after the ratification of the Agreement. Along with the economy and COVID-19, the Agreement played a central role in the elections. Zaev’s center-left SDSM party hoped that voters would re-elect them redeeming their efforts to seal the agreement, fulfil the NATO-membership and open the EU accession process. Unfortunately, Zaev failed to obtain a starting date from the EU council so he declared national elections to renew his mandate.

VMRO, on the other side, which had led the “boycott” campaign during the referendum (2018), aimed to appeal to the citizens who were disappointed by the agreement. As already mentioned, VMRO accused Zaev of failing to start EU accession talks and certain VMRO members promised to revoke the Prespes Agreement if elected. While being in favor of EU membership, VMRO promised that a setback in the name issue would not harm the accession process if there were a change of the government. Prominent SDSM figures such as Foreign Minister Nikola Dimitrov condemned such calls as mere nationalism and a blow to the rule of law and justice, if materialized.³¹

Thus, social division over the Prespes Agreement was evident throughout the election period, as it became the main factor for jeopardizing the country’s accession process (if the coalition of VMRO-DPMNE had won). The election results confirmed a tight lead for SDSM and its ethnic Albanian coalition partner BESA, winning 46 of the 120 seats (SDSM: 35,89%, VMRO-DPMNE: 34.57%, DUI: 11,48%). The VMRO-DPMNE coalition came second with just two seats less, meaning that the Social Democrats coalition needed further partners to form a government.

Indeed, the ethnic Albanian Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) accepted to join SDSM, with both counting 62 votes in the parliament. Likewise, Zaev’s victory –amidst the COVID-19 pandemic- was also a confidence vote to the Prespes Agreement.³²

THE REFORM PROCESS IN NORTH MACEDONIA AND THE PRESPE AGREEMENT

8

As of 2017, North Macedonia’s domestic situation, both politically and economically, has shown significant signs of stabilization, as compared to tensions, scandals and clashes of the past. When first elected, Zaev promised to initiate a reform path with “more democracy, more freedom, and more justice”. Key challenges include fighting corruption, strengthening the rule of law, harmonizing legislation with the EU acquis, advancing economic development, combating poverty, and –as of 2020- recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the last years, the European Commission and other observers such as the Freedom House have recognized the good progress North Macedonia has made in the areas of the separation of powers, rule of law and democracy. Corruption, which poses negative consequences for the judicial system as well, remains a blind spot where further improvement is necessary in view of the country’s accession to the EU.

The Prespes Agreement has been critical for paving the way for EU membership and therefore continuing or even stepping up North Macedonia’s reform process. At this stage, it is unclear whether the Agreement has induced a strong push for reforms considering that over the past two years the country has undergone national elections, a severe diplomatic dispute with Bulgaria, and the pandemic. It has, however, contributed to the country’s positive track in areas such as the quality of democracy, checks and balances, transparency in the public administration, judicial reform strategy, regional cooperation, and overall, the construction of a stable political environment. The European Commission’s Progress Report (2020) recognizes the increased cooperation between Greece and North Macedonia, as described in the Prespes Agreement, focusing in the areas of trade, economy, energy, defense and cross-border security. Greece and North Macedonia have established diplomatic contacts and high-level political meetings have taken place following the agreement including in the context of COVID-19.

Regarding the full implementation of the Prespes Agreement, there are still pending issues. Both countries have started implementing the different names prescribed in the agreement but there have been cases where the old names remain, such as the National Theater of (North) Macedonia or the “Macedonia 2025 Summit” (November 2020), in which the President of the Republic and Zaev himself participated as speakers. We observed that Zaev is rather tolerant to similar cases, possibly wishing to keep the balance in the internal political relations.³³ It is also observed, that media outlets in both countries do not refer to North Macedonia or its citizens with the names agreed under the Prespes Agreement.

For the near future, it is doubtful whether the two countries will manage to fully implement all the name changes, especially since they have no authority in the private/individual domain. The Agreement predicts the establishment of joint parliamentary committees of experts in matters relating to history, archaeology, education, commercial names and trademarks, as well as a Standing Joint Border Committee. While all committees had been established at first place when the Agreement was ratified, the change in Greece’s government resulted in unnecessary delays to restructure these committees with members who are friendly to the conservative party. To the day, no concrete results are apparent from the work of these committees.³⁴ Accordingly, it appears that, despite some progress in some areas, there is a lack of political will from the Greek side to push for the implementation of the different provisions of the Agreement.³⁵

NORTH MACEDONIA AND BULGARIA AFTER THE AGREEMENT

9 The Prespes Agreement ended the long dispute with Greece but revealed the concerns of Bulgaria, who was hiding all these years behind Greece’s veto. Bulgaria weakens quite suddenly, arguing for issues such as language, identity and history. With an unprecedented statement as of 12 October 2020, the Bulgarian Defense Minister Karakachanov, said that North Macedonia had violated the bilateral Friendship Agreement of 2017 (which prohibits the falsification of history) when they celebrated the Ilinden’s uprising, earlier that year, which Bulgaria considers part of its heritage.³⁶ Escalating the tension, Bulgaria blocked the start of EU accession talks with North Macedonia.³⁷

Bulgaria’s young obsession with North Macedonia threatens to open another wound inside of NATO, since Greece and Turkey and now, Bulgaria and North Macedonia, are moving in a trajectory of confrontation over bilateral differences rooted in the last century. All states are vital players in the Balkan region; at this point, the “bras de fer” between Bulgaria and North Macedonia does not seem to worry NATO, as it looks like an EU internal affair. For the EU, the Bulgarian veto does not derive from North Macedonia’s reform failure but from a bilateral challenge that it is expected to be settled in the context of the European integration.³⁸

While both Bulgaria and North Macedonia continue saying that they are maintaining frequent contacts and that they are open for more talks to resolve the problem, the problem remains and in the beginning of 2021, the relations between the two countries are at lowest possible level.

Bulgaria’s main objection is the name of the language (Macedonian). Regardless of UN’s recognition, Bulgaria insists that it is just a Bulgarian dialect and demands North Macedonia to accept it.³⁹

Sofia urges Skopje to accept its views on certain parts of the two countries’ shared history, most notably the alleged Bulgarian origin of Goce Delcev - a national hero in both countries. Again, identity issues pose another challenge in Balkan relations, putting another obstacle to North Macedonia’s EU pathway.⁴⁰

Zaev, on the other side, condemned the Bulgarian veto (02.12.2020) saying that it shows “neither friendship nor brotherhood.” He added that Bulgaria is the one who violated the agreement of 2017⁴¹ and thus it stood in the way of the country’s European integration for which the EU institutions and member states (including Bulgaria) have repeatedly confirmed. Zaev said that the dispute touched the core of his country’s national identity, which includes its language. However, the Prime Minister stated that they remain committed to a solution convinced that it is possible without disputing the “Macedonian identity.”⁴²

North Macedonia’s Foreign Minister, Bujar Osmani, said that North Macedonia’s EU accession process has always been hard, it was hard in the past and it will be hard in the future. He added that the country should not look at this blockade as an impenetrable wall but as an obstacle on the road, which would mobilize and reorganize the country. For him, the European path and good neighborly relations have no alternative.

The Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ekaterina Zaharieva, said that Bulgaria wants legal guarantees

before it gives the green light to membership negotiations. In an interview for the German radio ARD, she said that good neighborliness should be part of the negotiating framework. She justified her claim by saying that these are the strongest guarantees for Bulgaria that the signed documents will be fulfilled and monitored throughout the negotiation process, with clear criteria for progress, sending a message to Skopje that there should be less emotion and more pragmatism.

Bulgaria's Minister of Justice, Desislava Ahladova, answered in the Parliament about North Macedonia's claims for the existence of a Macedonian minority in Bulgaria. She said that from the 1 January 2010 to 22 October 2020, 77.829 Macedonian citizens applied for Bulgarian citizenship, of which 77,726 were of Bulgarian descent. "In all cases, the basis for granting citizenship is evidence of Bulgarian origin," she added.⁴³

Speaking to Reuters, Zaharieva said that if Skopje agrees, Sofia was ready to recognize Macedonian as one of the official languages of its neighbor and acknowledge the "Macedonian identity." "We are ready to re-confirm the current realities, but they have to acknowledge the historical truth", said Zaharieva.⁴⁴

DOMESTIC POLITICAL RELATIONS IN NORTH MACEDONIA

10

VMRO has attacked the government accusing Zaev for holding secret talks with officials from Bulgaria. It started with Zaev's interview to Bulgarian media as of November 2020, in

which he acknowledged that his people share some segments of common history with Bulgaria.

His views provoked a mini-crisis in Skopje, igniting tribalism and nationalism. Zaev suggested that Bulgaria should stop being seen as a "fascist occupying force," as it is the popular narrative since World War II. Ignoring the political cost, he stood up to defend his position.

VMRO leaders, however, argued that Zaev "had offended all Macedonians," calling for protests in Skopje under the slogan "Protest now, before it's too late!"⁴⁵ Zaev tried to counter-attack, defusing the growing anti-Bulgarian sentiment. He said that he does not regret what he said in that interview adding that the only one who celebrated when

North Macedonia was vetoed was VMRO. In this context, Zaev appointed former PM Vlado Buckovski, a longstanding advocate for friendship between the two countries, as a special government representative to Sofia.

GREECE FOR THE BULGARIAN VETO

11

Greece keeps a discreet eye on the current developments between its northern neighbors.⁴⁶ Specifically, for the Greek government, the Bulgarian veto towards the European accession process of North Macedonia was an

expected but harmful move for both Greece and North Macedonia. Even though it was a political and diplomatic setback, the Bulgarian veto currently pushes Mitsotakis to fulfill his own obligations.

The Greek Foreign Ministry declared the promotion of multiple bilateral agreements with North Macedonia, in order to avoid a similar stalemate. This was urgent after some troubles from actions of various associations. For example, the Greek Exporters Association (GEA) had created the label "Macedonia the Great" for Greek-Macedonian products which, however, the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) restricted. This incident created a climate of suspicion towards Greece, which consequently decreased the expectations about the protection of the products of origin.

Athens strongly supports the prospect of EU enlargement in the Western Balkans and, in contrast to what ND was saying as an opposition party, today it finds compatible with the spirit of the Prespes Agreement.⁴⁷ An Athenian scholar supported that Greece will remain faithful to the Agreement and, as long as North Macedonia does the same, there is no other option. After all, the issues raised by Bulgaria are close with the Prespes Agreement.⁴⁸

GERMANY AND THE BULGARIAN VETO

12

In view of the German presidency of the EU Council (07-12.2020), Chancellor Angela Merkel and Foreign Minister Heiko Maas aimed to yield Bulgaria's refusal to give the green light for the negotiations. This was not the case since Sofia was not satisfied with the

state of affairs with Skopje.⁴⁹ The German Minister of

State for Europe, Michael Roth, explained that Bulgaria posed obstacles to Germany's mediating efforts to resolve the issue.⁵⁰ For Skopje, identity matters and Sofia is pushing too hard, according to German officials.⁵¹

On 9 December 2020, at the EU summit, Bulgaria's stance remained adamant, frustrating the German Presidency. Roth said that it was a bitter blow to Germany's policy for Western Balkans, which aims to promote stability and prosperity⁵² giving this way his apology for the stalemate.⁵³ He also expressed his disappointment with the outcome of the negotiations and marked the Bulgarian veto as a very severe political mistake at the expense of stability and security in the Balkan Peninsula and Europe as well.⁵⁴

In a final effort to provide good will services, the German Federal President, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, suggested that they could assist in the rapprochement, but Bulgaria rejected this offer.⁵⁵

CONCLUSIONS

13

The Prespes Agreement has ended a complex and bitter dispute between Greece and North Macedonia. The historic compromise has paved the road of cooperation and mutual understanding in the Balkans.

Although before the ratifications of the Agreement, in both countries many populists exploited the situation for political gains, today the two countries

have a stable relationship. North Macedonia has secured Greece's support in a long-term alliance, while Greece has closed a thorny issue, which was consuming diplomatic resources the last 3 decades.

Nevertheless, the problems are not over. Bulgaria was silent for decades and only after the Prespes Agreement, it stood up to express historical and identity claims from North Macedonia. Bulgaria is now puzzling the EU leaders, as it is blocking the enlargement process. In that sense, Greece has been benefited.

However, the Agreement has not been fully implemented yet. As it was discussed above, there are pending issues regarding commercial and educational aspects that have not been addressed yet.

The recent survey of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (October 2020) shows that the majority of the Greek citizens endorses the Agreement (58%). This is a clear sign that the public changes stance. Similarly, approximately 60% of the citizens in North Macedonia understands the importance of the Agreement, linking it with the country's EU accession process.

This report has described the situation in the first period after the signing of the Agreement, when new untoward challenges arose for both countries. There is a lot of work yet to do, especially to details that may undermine in the future stability and cooperation. Moreover, it is of mutual benefit for Greece and North Macedonia to cultivate a strong partnership, because this is the way to tackle radical nationalism and foreign affections in the Balkan region.

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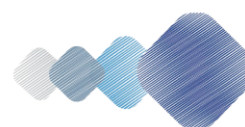


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