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Macedonia's Preparations for Civilian Contribution to Peace Operations: the Next Big Thing After the Withdrawal From Afghanistan

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Abstract: Macedonia is lacking a strategy for civilian contribution to peace operations. There have been initiatives and sporadic attempts to address the issue but these were never intertwined into a coherent policy. Civilian participation in peace operations remains on the radar of Macedonia's authorities and would largely benefit from external involvement in the form of provision of guidance both at strategic and operational levels. In times of austerity, blockade of EU and NATO processes and withdrawal from Afghanistan, putting an emphasis of civilian contributions to peace operations may be viewed as a natural continuation of Macedonia's input to international peace and security. This paper aims to assess the developments related to Macedonia's contribution to peace operations through civilian means by mapping its potential capacities and areas of expertise. It therefore outlines and recommends the development of civilian components for peace operations and post-conflict societies growing out of the experience that Macedonia has had in policing, crisis management and media training.

Keywords: civilian capacities, police, media, power-sharing, EU, NATO, UN

Introduction¹

The existing efforts for building and employing civilian capacities for peace operations² in the case of Macedonia are closely related to the steps taken by the country to become a full-fledged member of the Euro-Atlantic family. Both the EU and NATO are now paying more attention to the need to establish and actively employ civilian capacities as well as beefing up the interagency cooperation on this issue.

1 This article is based on findings from the project "Building Civilian Capacities from the Western Balkans in Peace Support Operations", supported by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, project No SRB-13/0021.

2 This paper, when referring to peace operations, takes the explanation of this term offered in the Handbook on United Nations Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations developed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in 2003. <http://www.peacekeepingbestpractices.unlb.org/Pbps/library/Handbook%20on%20UN%20PKOs.pdf> p.1,2.

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Macedonia, being part of the enlargement strategy of both organisations, has been involved in holistic modernisation and transformation of its security sector in order to be aligned with, and follow, the developments of the countries that already are members of the two clubs. Therefore, building Macedonia's civilian capacities for peace operations can be seen as an externally driven process that should ultimately aid Macedonia's bid for entry into these structures. In line with this the Macedonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, following the EU's policy on international aid, started harmonising the country's legislation with the EU and has prepared a draft Law on International Development Cooperation. This Law could serve as one of the foundations for greater contribution of Macedonia to international peace and security. Furthermore, Macedonia's involvement in NATO's Partnership for Peace Planning and Review Process regularly identifies tasks related to the development of civilian capacities for post-conflict reconstruction.³

According to an official from the Ministry of the Interior, Macedonia has an interest to see itself as a country that exports peace around the world through "safeguarding and promotion of international order on the basis of the rules and principles of international law."⁴ Broad as it looks, such a vision could be unpacked and in Macedonia's case could see the light of day through making use of the country's accumulated know-how from its turbulent past. Yet, the contribution regarding civilian capacities in peace operations has so far been minimal and sporadic.

This paper starts by untangling important and recent historical events that led to the thinking of civilian capacities today. The beginning of the text borrows from country's EU and NATO integration track record together with its turbulent past providing context and background in which the country has been operating. The text continues with a presentation and analysis of Macedonia's achievements advocating the reasons for making the country stand out from the rest of the Western Balkans. The main argument used in this part is that Macedonia managed to successfully address the inter-ethnic divisions through the signing and implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. The central part of the text is devoted to illuminating and discussing country's niche capacities in the segment of international policing, crisis management and power sharing and media training. The article is also analysing the pertaining issues affecting Macedonia's civilian contribution to peace operations mainly through the normative and institutional angle. The article concludes by pointing to number of recommendations that should speed up and further develop Macedonia's civilian contribution to peace operations.

3 Official from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Personal interview in Skopje, February 2014).

4 Stalevski 2011.

Historical Background and Context

Ever since Macedonia proclaimed its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, and unlike some of the countries that used to be part of the federation, the political elites at home have made it clear, from the start, that the country should align itself more closely with the Euro-Atlantic family of countries. Looking upon the rest of the countries from Central and Eastern Europe which, at that time, were already queuing for EU and NATO accession has created a momentum at home for putting Macedonia on the same track.

The delayed admission of the country to other international organisations, mainly the UN, Council of Europe and other as a result of the name dispute with Greece made catching up with the countries from Central and Eastern Europe virtually impossible. The pro-Western rhetoric coming from Macedonia's officials was later transformed into concrete steps by first joining NATO's Partnership for Peace program in 1995 as well as signing the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU in 2001, placed Macedonia among the first countries from the Western Balkans to establish tangible cooperation with these two organisations.⁵

Managing to get out of the violent break-up of Yugoslavia in the 1990s without a scratch profiled the country as "peace loving" throughout much of that decade and it very often served as exemplary one. This experience shaped the contours on Macedonia's foreign policy at that time, which was mainly focused on strengthening its statehood and building relations with the neighbours. The Kosovo War of 1999 had destabilising effects of Macedonia mainly through the influx of illicit weapons and the infiltration of radical structures into the country. The experience of Macedonia with the refugees from Kosovo in 1999, when around 350,000 people were provided with shelter, additionally strained the internal dynamics of this country of two million. Shortly after the Kosovo war, in 2001, Macedonia was faced with an armed conflict of its own, between Macedonia's security forces and the (ethnic) Albanian rebels.⁶ The conflict ended the same year with the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement which, in its essence, is a power sharing deal providing substantial improvement of the position and rights of non-majority communities in the country.

Yet it was not until the Kosovo war in 1999 that the political leadership in Macedonia started understanding the importance of having a role in dealing with questions of international security. With the start of NATO's intervention in Yugoslavia in 1999 Macedonia served as a logistical base for NATO forces in Kosovo, providing access to

⁵ Macedonia was the first of the countries of the Western Balkans to sign the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU and the second (after Albania) to become a member of NATO's Partnership for Peace program.

⁶ For more information on the conflict please consult: International Crisis Group: Report No. 109, The Macedonian Question: Reform or Rebellion, 5 April 2001 (available at: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/europe/balkans/macedonia/109-the-macedonian-question-reform-or-rebellion.aspx>).

transportation corridors, communication lines, healthcare for KFOR personnel, etc. This support to KFOR since 2007 (though vastly reduced) has been fully transferred to and accepted by Macedonia's Ministry of Defence.

The relevance of Macedonia's case to the concept of international security is centred on the idea that the country successfully managed to go through an inter-ethnic conflict, which had the potential of transforming itself into a sectarian one and breaking the country in two. Moreover, the policies stemming from the Ohrid Framework Agreement that have been subsequently implemented contributed to keeping the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country intact, which in 2001 were seriously at risk. This is particularly important because many of today's intrastate conflicts have a tendency to transform themselves into territorial ones within which the legal government representatives cannot project authority and govern the entire territory.

Macedonia, unlike most of the countries from the Western Balkans, is in a unique position to share experiences that can address a number of scenarios in times of conflict, post conflict stabilisation and reconstruction efforts, as well as preventive diplomacy. The latter is especially of importance since it was one of the first countries worldwide which asked for a UN preventive presence in order to deter possible spill-over from the crisis of Kosovo (Yugoslavia) in the 1990s. The mission was terminated in 1999, just on the onset of the Kosovo war, as a result of Chinese disagreement with the extension of the mission.⁷

Even though the armed conflict of 2001 had negative effects on the overall performance of the state (political, economic and security), for the purpose of this research it may be viewed as a key development that serves as an important ingredient in the development of civilian capacities for peace operations. The overall experience from the armed conflict provided the country with first-hand knowledge of crisis management, employment of its security forces in guerrilla fighting and, from the perspective of this research probably the most important, the ending of the conflict with a power sharing agreement together with subsequent activities undertaken to make Macedonia a viable country. The Ohrid Framework Agreement contains provisions that incorporate a number of tasks which are applicable in any post-conflict society, such as security sector reform (SSR), democratisation, disarmament and reintegration of former combatants, adoption of confidence building mechanisms, etc.

The state apparatus was put to test in 2001 and the inadequate response to the deteriorating security and political situation made room for the involvement of the international community – mainly US, NATO and the EU – which eventually led to the signing of a power sharing agreement and the cessation of hostilities. It was natural for the EU and NATO to step into mediation of the conflict because of the geographical location of

⁷ Read more about the reason on the following website. <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/1999/19990225.sc6648.html>.

Macedonia (being in the backyard of both organisations) and the proclaimed interest of the country to join those organisations.

From 2001 to 2006 Macedonia has hosted several international missions, led mainly by the EU and NATO.⁸ The EU has sent civilian missions, such as EUPOL Proxima as well as EU military missions (e.g. Concordia) which represented EU's attempt to reform Macedonia's security sector. NATO has also had a few short run missions during this period, such as Essential Harvest directed at the disarmament of the Albanian rebels.⁹ The experience Macedonian authorities have had through hosting international missions can also, from today's perspective, serve as a potential export product to other post conflict regions. International organisations are often seen struggling with and facing blockades from political elites, and fighting parties or society in general in their attempt to provide support in conflict environments.

While Macedonia has very quickly accumulated knowledge that could be potentially exported abroad, especially stemming from the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, challenges affecting country's absorption capacity started rising, preventing from transforming them into a foreign policy tool.

Ongoing Preparations and Spoilers

Even though Macedonia seems to have considerable experience, having experienced a smaller scale armed conflict, its track record in exporting peace and stability through civilian capacities is rather limited. A possible explanation why more serious attention has not been paid to developing a more structured approach to this question can be traced to the fact that more weight was given to military participation abroad, which was supposed to make Macedonia's alliance with, first and foremost, NATO and then the EU, more visible, ultimately leading to full membership in these institutions. What may have additionally hampered more in-depth work on the issue are thorough political changes, when new political structures came to power, which prevented the continuation of development and implementation of the strategies of the previous leadership.¹⁰

The limited experience that Macedonia has with civilian capacities so far stems mainly from country's experience with the Kosovo war from 1999, when Macedonia provided logistical and coordinative support for NATO's KFOR forces, as well as shelter to 350,000

8 Dobbins *et al.* 2008.

9 For more on the involvement of the EU in modernisation of Macedonia's police see Duro *et al.*, 2013 "Progress in the Europeanization of the Security Sector in Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia", available at: http://analyticamk.org/images/stories/files/Progress_of_Europeanisation_of_the_Security_Sector_in_Albania,_Kosovo_and_Macedonia.pdf;

NATO had in total three missions: Amber Fox, Essential Harvest and Alliance Harmony.

10 Ljupco Stevkovski, Professor at the American College Skopje (personal interview in Skopje, 9 December 2013).

Kosovo refugees. The conflict management and power sharing knowledge through the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement in 2001 was employed thoroughly in number of state building efforts. In order to secure this positive trend the international community was actively participating through international missions: preventive, policing, military and good offices. Last but not least EU and NATO integration efforts resulted in concrete and tangible results related to the civilian participation abroad.

Combined, all of these experiences contribute to an institutionalisation of the knowledge across different segments of the state apparatus, which in theory should provide the know-how required for sending civilians to contribute to peace operations. Yet knowing that most of the conflict and post-conflict related developments took place mainly between 1999 and 2006, there was a prolonged period after the armed conflict without any substantial activities in the field of civilian capacities. Instead, Macedonia chose to pursue its contribution to peace operations mainly through military participation, leaving the know-how that it had gained from the conflict of 2001 unused to its full potential.

Members of Macedonia's Armed Forces are currently serving in NATO's ISAF mission in Afghanistan with 242 personnel, EU's ALTHEA mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina with 12 personnel, while one member of the Armed Forces serves in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. Such a small involvement in UN-led operations can be traced to the political leaderships putting all efforts and resources available towards EU and NATO participation so that the activities correspond with the main foreign policy objective of Macedonia - membership in the above-mentioned organisations. However, the avoidance of closer interaction with the UN may soon be changed as there are ongoing talks and preparations for enhanced UN (military) involvement.¹¹

In recent years, due to increased alignment with the EU, especially in respect to its Common Foreign and Security Policy¹² and the well-advanced NATO integration, Macedonia is looking for ways to keep the enlargement momentum ongoing despite the Greek blockade which is preventing the country's formal accession. In those circumstances political and professional leadership is actively seeking venues, primarily within these two organisations, that could add to the country's track record so that the integration processes can continue. For example, Macedonia is the only non-EU country from the

11 Col Ljube Dukoski, Director for Politics and Planning, Finances and International Cooperation, Ministry of Defense (personal interview in Skopje, February 2014).

12 Usually the alignment of Macedonia with EU declaration and Council Decisions as part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy is above 90 percent.

Western Balkans that contributes to EU's Battle Groups.¹³ Additionally, in order to keep EU accession related reforms going, the European Commission launched in 2012 the so-called High Level Accession Dialogue with Macedonia, setting annual benchmarks in areas such as public administration, market economy, electoral reforms, etc.

After the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan in 2014, Macedonia will not have any major combat units abroad, which will render the country's contribution to global peace and security rather limited, with only a medical team dispatched to Bosnia and Herzegovina and one military observer in Lebanon. Even though there was no clear shift towards civilian capacities as a "replacement" strategy, the current small scale preparations, on the one hand, and the withdrawal of the "heavy guns" on the other, may give the impression that the deployment of civilian capacities as a new policy may be slowly gaining in prominence.

In this respect, Macedonia signed an agreement with the European Union in 2012 that formalised the country's involvement in EU crisis management operations, covering the participation in civilian crisis management operations as well as military ones.¹⁴ This is a significant step towards the preparation for building civilian capacities because so far under the EU umbrella Macedonia has participated only in EU led military operations, namely the one in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This agreement opens the door for participation in EU civilian crisis operations that, according to the conclusions from the European Council meeting in 2000 in Portugal, should include: police, rule of law, civil administration and civil protection.¹⁵ With the ever-bigger role that the EU is assuming on the global stage as a civilian actor, understandably the demand for staff in relevant missions is increasing. This trend also reflects the number of staff seconded by third states (non – EU) as well as those being internationally contracted.

<i>Year</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>
Third countries	163	93	29	37	215
Internationally contracted	77	55	73	187	391

Table 1: *Staff deployed to civilian CSDP Missions*

Source: *Civilian CSDP Missions: lessons and best practices (Report 2009) May 2010, p.3*

13 Macedonia's recent participation in EU Battle Groups together with Belgium, Luxembourg, Spain, Netherlands and Germany (July–December 2014) is believed to further strengthen the country's bid for EU accession. Previous participation was in 2012 (July–December) under the leadership of Germany. EU's Battle Groups are rapid reaction forces of the European Union that can be employed abroad by the decision of the EU Council dealing with military, humanitarian and peace operations. For more information on EU's Battle Groups visit: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/esdp/91624.pdf.

14 European Union 2012.

15 European Union 2009, 2.

Macedonia's preparations for civilian contribution are at embryonic stage. The initial learning phase that came out as a result of the experiences after the 2001 internal armed conflict were not systematically used for creating a foreign policy strand based on these know-how (for example power sharing, conflict management etc.). Instead, active participation with military was chosen believed to greatly support the enhanced preparations for joining NATO and the EU. As Macedonia is progressing de facto with its EU integrations (for example, adoption of the EU *acquis*) the country becomes formally obliged to do concrete steps forward in the segment of civilian contribution to peace operations.

Normative Framework and Institutional Capacities

The first important legal document in the context of civilian missions is the Law on Sending Personnel to International Missions and International Organisations which clears the way, legally speaking, for sending civilian personnel to peace operations in the capacity of experts. By "international mission" this legal act means missions that are meant to support internal order, establish democratic institutions and provide aid to civilians affected by a crisis. Likewise, it clearly states that the mission should be dealing with: security sector reforms, public order, judicial reforms, rights of minorities, elections, freedom of the media, etc.¹⁶

So far there seems to be reluctance on the part of officials in both the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to fully apply this Law. Even though it has been in place since 2007, neither ministry has sent personnel abroad by implementing it.¹⁷ Both sides have identified the Law as too complicated and not necessarily covering all the aspects when it comes to sending of personnel. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has even suggested changes to the current version of the Law and is now in the process of consulting other relevant ministries.¹⁸ Furthermore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs circumvents the Law, for example when it sends seconded personnel through the OSCE. Comments on the current version of the Law are mainly to the effect that it is not sufficiently detailed when it comes to selection procedures, decision making, etc. Also, additional parts of the relevant secondary legislation are yet to be adopted.¹⁹

Certain security actors like the Police are also subject to legal provisions regulating their participation in peace operations and international missions. Article 115 of the Law on Police stipulates that police officers can participate in international civilian operations and peace missions. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has also adopted a rulebook on the selection of police officers for missions abroad, making no legal obstacles for such

16 Law on Sending Personnel in International Missions and International Organisations, Article 4.

17 Information obtained by use of the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Character.

18 Official from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. (Personal interview in Skopje, February 2014).

19 Official from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. (Personal interview in Skopje, February 2014).

participation. Yet, the current legislation regulating the work of the Police only provides for the possibility of police officers taking part in non-executive peace operations or posts where there is no use of firearms (reserved for use only within the territory of Macedonia). This restriction makes Macedonian police officers suitable for posts dealing only with monitoring, mentoring and advising authorities in countries that have such a need.²⁰

Complying with the obligations stemming from Chapter 30 from EU's *acquis* (external relations) the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has prepared a draft version of the Law of International Development Cooperation that was supposed to go through a government procedure by the end of 2013 but was delayed; with the revision of the National Program for adopting the EU law (2014–2016), the deadline was extended to September 2014.²¹ Since the consultation phase regarding the Law with other relevant Ministries has been completed, such a delay signals that the Macedonian authorities do not feel urgency and pressure to adopt the Law.

One of the particularities of the draft Law, according to its text, is that its implementation will begin when Macedonia officially becomes part of the EU. Even the most optimistic scenario for the accession of Macedonia to the EU would assume a time span of some 7–10 years, which would definitely create a time gap in the implementation of the law. The decision to have the Law enter into force when Macedonia joins the EU might be perceived as a relief, bearing in mind that the passing of such a Law would entail considerable costs from the state budget required for development aid. For the time being Macedonia has identified the Slovak Republic as a model country from which to draw experiences regarding the implementation of the Law.

The draft version of the Law clearly prescribes several priority areas that very much coincide with the notion of involvement of civilian capacities in peace operations such as: rule of law, democracy building, human rights, social and economic development, poverty reduction, education, etc. Article 4 of the draft Law clearly states the possibility of participation of Macedonian personnel in “international development and humanitarian missions” as well as “international civilian missions.” Furthermore the text of the Law defines international development cooperation as “development aid that the Republic of Macedonia provides to developing countries through funding aimed towards development...”²² According to the draft Law, the program for international development should be multiannual, covering four years in accordance with the EU's development aid goals, and should be approved by the Macedonian Parliament.²³

Overall, legislation for contribution to peace operations by civilian means is largely in place, what seems to be lacking is a strategic turn towards more civilian contribution.

20 *Ibid.*

21 Secretariat for European Affairs 2014, 53.

22 Draft Law on International Development Cooperation. 2013, 1.

23 *Ibid.*, Article 2.

Even though there are certain areas that could be improved by being more detailed, such as decision-making and command once civilians are deployed, this for the time being does not necessarily represent a major obstacle for sending civilians abroad.

Institutional Capacities

Developments are embryonic when it comes to the building of institutional capacities for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2010, for example, there was the opening of a Unit for Humanitarian and Development Aid, which was mainly tasked with dealing with humanitarian issues such as coordinating assistance during natural or man-made disasters. The unit was also in charge of preparing and coordinating activities around the draft Law on international development cooperation. For most of the time there were only two employees, but now the number has dropped to one.²⁴

Even though the basic legal framework, which can be seen as a precondition for the deployment of civilian capacities abroad, has been set, in practice the number of civilians opting for going to operations abroad remains very low. The lack of strategic direction towards contribution to peace operations using civilian capacities affects the overall approach towards this question. It makes it still appear very remote to, for example, a public prosecutor or a teacher. Furthermore, many of those who may be potentially interested still look at it with scepticism, primarily due to the safety risks that exist and are indeed real. For example, even though there were UN calls for civilian presence in hotspots such as South Sudan and Syria, no applications came from Macedonia, demonstrating the reluctance of potential candidates to become involved.²⁵ This is something that could potentially be mitigated with pre-deployment training, but such a scheme for civilians does not officially exist.

Macedonia has so far sent one police officer to Liberia (2007–2008) as part of UNMIL's civilian presence in that country tasked with Democratisation, Demobilisation and Disarmament activities and with a focus on increasing the number of women in Liberia's police.²⁶

Even though Macedonia has a modest economic performance, most of its contributions to international peace and security have been channelled via military participation through NATO in Afghanistan and Iraq. Amounting to around four million Euros per year,²⁷ this involvement is quite costly to Macedonia's citizens. At the same time, the contribution to

24 Sanja Zografaska Krsteska, Assistant Director for Multilateral Economic Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Personal interview in Skopje, March 2014).

25 *Ibid.*

26 Lazarova, A. Packa. 2007. "I crashed the taboos in Liberia." *Vest*, March 2. Accessed December 20, 2013. <http://star.vest.com.mk/default.asp?id=130624&idg=7&idb=1987&rubrika=Revija>.

27 Budget of the Republic of Macedonia for 2013.

UN-led missions, where the costs are generally lower and are mostly reimbursed or paid by the UN, is neglected. When speaking about financing civilian operations and civilian capacities there is an impression that those that are leading the process tend to forget the business logic as well as the financial benefits that both the country and individuals may gain from this process.²⁸

There have been some modest steps in this direction such as the opening of a Unit for Humanitarian and Development Aid within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dealing with issues around humanitarian aid, mainly disaster relief. Civilians working for the public administration such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Public Prosecutors Office etc. are very hesitant when it comes to participation in missions abroad due to lack of experience and information. There have been no promotional campaigns and tailored trainings and this additionally alienates the process. Part of the problem may lay in the notion that this question is looked as a sectoral issue, affecting only the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Justice, Internal Affairs and not approached through a holistic lens.

Macedonia's Niche Capacities

Policing

The use of Macedonia's police capacities in peace operations is probably the most likely scenario in the medium term, considering the existing adopted legal framework, the limited experience with UNMIL and some (though sporadic) track record of training. At the same time, Macedonia is lagging behind the other countries from the Western Balkans when it comes to sending police officers to peace operations abroad. The only experience so far is the deployment of one police officer as part of UNMIL (Liberia) in 2007. Macedonia's Ministry of Interior acknowledges the need for increased participation of police officers abroad and has a clear commitment towards participation in non-executive peace operations. This commitment can be seen on both strategic and operational levels. During her visit to the peacekeepers in Afghanistan in 2009 Macedonia's Interior Minister Gordana Jankulovska highlighted that there is room for participation in civilian missions aimed at supporting the institutional development and democratisation of Afghanistan.²⁹ Additionally, at the time of purchase of new helicopters for the Macedonian Police the same year, the Minister once again highlighted the country's readiness to use such equipment in civilian missions.³⁰ According to the media, in 2010 the Government approved the participation of police officers in peace operations; sending of the first police officers engaged in peace operations abroad should have taken place in 2011 but so far no

28 Metodi Hadzi Janev, Assistant Professor at Military Academy General Mihailo Apostolski (Personal interview in Skopje, December 2013).

29 Ministry of Internal Affairs 2009.

30 Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2009.

such thing has happened.³¹ Also in 2011, the Ministry of Interior launched an analysis of its capacities for contribution to stabilisation and reconstruction missions as part of UN, NATO and EU.³² Since 2013 the Ministry of Interior has been working on creating a roster of police officers willing to be sent to missions abroad. So far they have received around 200 applications. At the moment fifteen police officers, many of them high ranking, are certified for peace support operations following the training organized by the Swedish authorities in 2003.

With the completion of fourteen NATO Membership Action Plans and the decision that Macedonia does fulfil the criteria for NATO accession, the Alliance today is also moving beyond the traditional army related reforms and can be seen as one of the drivers of the civilian participation of Macedonia in peace operations in the segment of policing. The 2014 Operational Goals for Macedonia, as part of NATO's Partnership for Peace Planning and Review Process, list "post conflict reconstruction and stabilisation" as one of the goals for Macedonia's authorities similarly to the 2013 one named "stabilisation and reconstruction, specialised capabilities contribution". Unlike 2013 when the operational goals in this segment were strictly related to the police, the 2014 goals expand for the first time covering also the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Centre for Crisis Management, judiciary, customs, etc. More specifically, the new goals for 2014 include activities related to the development of civilian capabilities in special investigations, criminal information support, customs, border security, crime prevention, police training, etc. According to an official of MoI, the knowledge and expertise possessed by the Macedonian police can be grouped into the following areas: community policing, electoral assistance, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, and reforming the police sector.³³

When it comes to the preparations for sending police officers abroad, one of the weak areas is the lack of consistent and targeted training. Efforts in this area have been sporadic and minimal. In 2006 the Ministry of Defense hosted a multinational NATO exercise that dealt with peace support operations and was named "Cooperative Association." Members of the Ministry of Interior also participated with three representatives.³⁴ Similarly, in 2010 members of the special units of the Macedonian police together with the Armed Forces conducted a joint training in order to transfer experiences and provide a foundation for Macedonia's police special units joining international operations.³⁵ It seems that the

31 "Police officers will serve as peacekeepers as of next year." March 27, 2010. Accessed December 5 2013. <http://forum.kajgana.com/threads/Македонски-специјални-единици-полициски-и-воени.10885/page-47>.

32 Stalevski 2011.

33 Stalevski 2011.

34 Ministry of Internal Affairs 2013.

35 "Police officers will serve as peacekeepers as of next year." March 27, 2010. Accessed December 5 2013. <http://forum.kajgana.com/threads/Македонски-специјални-единици-полициски-и-воени.10885/page-47>.

strategy dealing with the preparation and training of police units for peace operations has shifted from in-house training capabilities to borrowing expertise from the Armed Forces who possess solid experience when it comes to peace operations. The infrequent training scheme also suggests the need for a more coherent approach to this question. This goes in line with an observation of an official of the MoI who identified individual, collective as well as pre-deployment training as inadequate.³⁶

The MoI seems to have recognised the need for external support and has identified Sweden and Norway as possible countries from which to draw experiences and lessons learned.³⁷ One of the reasons why the deployment of police officers proceeds slowly is the lack of a strategic partner in this process that would support Macedonia's police all the way, from identification of a troubled region to financial support, joint pre-deployment training and support on the ground.³⁸

Crisis Management and Power Sharing

Many of the conflicts today that have the potential to threaten international peace and security are driven by different inequalities such as poverty, poor governance, and ethnic and religious divisions. In some cases the way out of the conflict is a power-sharing solution which should promote greater inclusion in society and overall better governance but most importantly involve the cessation of violence.

The main outcomes of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, being a power sharing deal itself and signed more than a decade ago, were that it retained the sovereign and territorial integrity of the country at the same time increasing the competences and powers of local self-government units, including those relating to education, policing, social services, etc. A major task stemming from the Ohrid Framework Agreement was the introduction of policies of equitable representation, which also included greater participation of non-majority communities in the police and in the overall public administration. Lastly it addressed the identity rights including the use of non-majority languages as official ones along with the Macedonian in areas where more than 20 percent of the population are from a non-Macedonian community.

The Ohrid Agreement served as an inspiration for Marti Ahtisaari's status proposal on Kosovo which was, later on, partially embedded in the constitution of this country.³⁹ Macedonia's government however did not capitalise on this step, not even for public

36 Stalevski 2011.

37 *Ibid.*

38 Official from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Personal interview in Skopje, February 2014).

39 Austin, C. Robert. 2007. "The Ahtisaari plan – what's inside." SETimes.com. 21 June 2007. Accessed 1 July 2013. http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/articles/2007/05/21/reportage-01.

relations purposes. Throughout the years of implementation, a number of people working directly or indirectly on the Ohrid Framework Agreement, such as governmental officials as well as non-governmental activists, gained valuable expertise in areas such as community and multi-ethnic policing, integrated education, equitable representation, and alike. Political posts dealing with mediation between conflicting parties, drafting power sharing agreements, review of legislation, such as constitutional changes etc., would be applicable to many of the posts currently offered in conflict areas across the world. EU's biggest civilian mission EULEX in Kosovo can serve as a starting point for civilians from Macedonia who have experience in areas such as rule of law and democratisation. Kosovo's geographical, cultural and linguistic proximity, combined with incentives such as a higher salary, international experience and stability, can be seen as motivating factors that should remove the psychological obstacles. Centralising such various first hand experiences into national or regional rosters of expertise would be the logical step forward.

Media Training

Since 2005, at the initiative of Macedonia's Ministry of Defence and supported by the Norwegian government, the country has been hosting the Public Affairs Regional Centre which offers training in media and communications. Even though the centre has a military character, meaning that its end users are intended to be primarily military structures, it also has significant civilian potential. As of 2013 it became the 26th accredited NATO Partnership for Cooperation and education centre tasked with providing education for the personnel of the ministries of defence, as well as the armed forces on communicating military-related affairs to the public. Such a decision opens up opportunities for NATO member states, Partnership for Peace countries, Mediterranean Dialogue countries, etc. to send personnel for training to Macedonia, which at the moment is mainly focused on countries from the region. The ambition of seeing the centre operating as more than just a regional hub is also backed by the State Secretary at the Ministry of Defense who has stated that "the aim of the centre is to be visible, not only on a regional but also on a global scale."⁴⁰ The experience and know-how from the experience so far can evolve and be transferred into other non-military areas, such as policing and crisis management. Even today some of the training curricula include purely civilian content such as how the news is created and how the National TV broadcasting house functions.⁴¹ This project could play a major role in societies that are in the process of transformation from authoritarian rule to democracy, as is the case with the MENA region. Support in terms of expertise, when it comes to how the armed forces communicate with the public in a democratic fashion, especially in this region, will always be welcomed.

40 Ministry of Defense 2013.

41 *Ibid.*

Conclusion

Although the contributions of Macedonia to peace operations so far have almost exclusively been military, there are clear opportunities to increase the provision of civilian capacities to EU, NATO and UN peace operations in the future. From the study it emerges that this is also a goal shared by many policy-makers in Macedonia. However, a number of steps will need to be taken to realise this ambition.

Civilian participation in peace operations has not been high on the agenda of Macedonian policymakers. The focus was put on military operations, mainly through EU and NATO missions, which in turn has side-lined UN participation. Most of the legislation is in place and visible potential for participation can be seen in the example of the police. Civilian contribution to peace operations in the Ministry of Interior is not an unknown concept and some preparatory work, such as initial roster and basic trainings, have been organised. The experience with the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement through which Macedonia glued some of its inter-ethnic divisions could be applicable to many similar cases abroad. Finally, the potential for exporting knowledge in media and public affairs through the Public Affairs Regional Centre to more civilian stakeholders abroad could strengthen Macedonia's expertise sharing in new regions which could unlock much new potential.

There should be a public debate on the draft Law on International Development Cooperation, which should be implemented regardless of Macedonia's EU accession.

The Law on Sending Personnel to International Missions and International Organisations should be amended in the areas that prescribe the selection of personnel as well as decision-making procedures; this should be followed by amendments to the Law on Police so that police officers can be employed in executive missions abroad.

Institutional challenges are the following: The Unit for Humanitarian and Development Aid within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should assume additional responsibilities and start coordinating Macedonia's civilian contribution to peace operations. The Ministry of Internal Affairs should reach out to the authorities in Norway and Sweden (being previously identified by Macedonian officials as possible supporters), asking for comprehensive support for sending police officers to peace operations abroad. Moreover, the Public Affairs Regional Centre should consider the possibility of its staff members providing training in post conflict regions. More outreach efforts should also be made by approaching the Kosovo authorities and offering assistance in the state building efforts and small scale assistance to EULEX Kosovo as a Third State. Apart from the on-going discussions about the possible enhancement of Macedonia's military participation in UN missions, there should also be space for augmenting Macedonia's contribution by civilian means. Institutions from which contribution to civilians to peace operations is mostly expected should organise public awareness events in order to introduce their employees to the possibilities of being seconded or contracted by international organisations and

inform them about the security risks (if any). However, bilateral relations between Greece and Macedonia that are hampering further engagement of Macedonia with international organisations remain an obstacle.

The provision of civilian capacities to peace operations could be a tangible proof of Macedonia's willingness to provide relevant and timely assistance to countries emerging from conflict. These efforts could also greatly strengthen the engagement of Macedonia with international organisations and further its international policy agenda in the region and beyond.

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