



EU ENLARGMENT IN THE WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES: AN EQUATION WITH TWO UNKNOWNS

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GENERAL FRAMEWORK EU – WESTERN BALKANS RELATIONS AND THE PROCESS OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

North
Macedonia -
2004

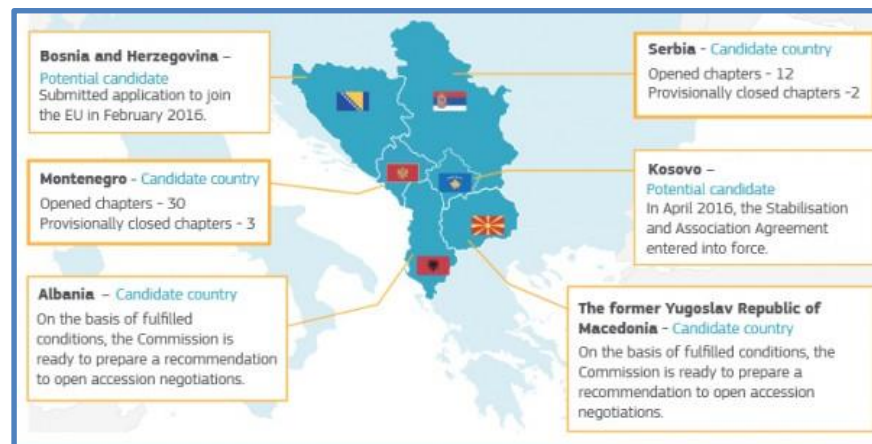
Albania - 2006

Montenegro -
2008

Bosnia and
Herzegovina -
2008

Serbia - 2010

Kosovo- 2016



ORIGINS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NAME DISPUTE :



- The name issue originates since the 1^o and 2^o Balkan wars when the geographical region Macedonia was divided between Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Albania
- The name issue *sensu stricto* refers to the Greek concern about the use of the name Macedonia (regarding possible territorial claims from Macedonia)
- The name issue *sensu lato* concerns:
 1. Historical-cultural claims related to Ancient Macedonia (especially after the discovery of the sarcophagus of Philip II Macedon in Northern Greece in 1977),
 2. The non-recognition of the Macedonian minority in Greece (discriminatory policy towards Macedonian minority after the Treaty of Sèvres from 1920 that was manifested with maximum intensity during the exodus of the Macedonian population during the Greek civil war between 1946 – 1949)

NAME DISPUTE:

- Referendum for independence of the Republic of Macedonia (8 September 1991)
- The country was not internationally recognized by the European Community (contrary to Opinion N.6 of the Badinter Commission)
- After the change of the Constitutional amendments (art. 3 e 49), the country presented an application for UN membership and became a UN member in April 1993 under the provisional name 'former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' in violation of art. 4 (2) of the UN Charter
- Imposition of a total embargo by Greece towards Macedonia (1994-1995)
- Interim Accord between Macedonia and Greece from 13 September 1995 (foresees the change of the flag)
- Matthew Nimetz, was a mediator nominated by the Secretary General of the UN in order to mediate the conflict from 1998 until 2018
- In 2008 Greece vetoes Macedonian membership to NATO and violates the Interim Accord from 1995
- In 2008 Macedonia initiates a case against Greece in front of the International Court of Justice for infringement of art. 11 of the Interim Accord, and in 2011 the Court rules in favour of Macedonia, condemning Greece for breaching the Accord
- In 2009 Greece blocks the opening of negotiations inside the EU
- In June 2018 the two countries conclude the Treaty of Prespa that resolves the name dispute and replaces the previous Interim Accord of 1995

THE SIGNING OF THE PRESPA AGREEMENT (JUNE 2018)



IDENTITY DISPUTE WITH BULGARIA:



- The identity dispute with Bulgaria originates since the formation of Yugoslavia in 1945. However, during the years of the federation no claims whatsoever have been advanced towards the country
- It has been with the signing of the Treaty of Friendship, good-neighbourliness, and cooperation between Bulgaria and Macedonia in 2017, in base of which Bulgaria initiated practicing revisionist foreign policy towards Macedonia, where Bulgarians consider that the Macedonian nation was an artificial construction under Tito and that the Macedonian language is a Bulgarian dialect
- The identity issue *sensu stricto* refers to the Bulgarian denial of the Macedonian identity and Macedonian language, sustaining that there is no such thing as a Macedonian nation, that the Macedonian identity is an artificial construction of Yugoslavia under Tito and that the Macedonian language is a Bulgarian dialect
- The identity issue *sensu lato* concerns:
 1. Historical-cultural claims related to Macedonian history, Macedonian historical figures and facts, but also territorial claims towards Macedonia based on the myth of Greater Bulgaria created with the San Stefano Peace Agreement in 1878
 2. The non-recognition and the assimilation of the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria, which previously has not been the case, has been a discriminatory policy towards Macedonian minority since the 1960's, and has been affirmed and repeated by the European Court of Human Rights in 11 judgments

IDENTITY DISPUTE WITH BULGARIA:

- In the census of 1946, Bulgaria recognizes the existence of a Macedonian minority of around 160,000 people
- From 1965 a strong policy of assimilation towards the Macedonian populations is being upheld by the Bulgarian government, whereby it resulted that only 10,000 people declared themselves as Macedonians in the 1965 census
- Macedonians have been refused the right to register political parties (OMO Ilinden – Pirin) and have been condemned several times on behalf of the European Court of Human Rights
- Since the signing of the 2017 Treaty of Friendship, good-neighbourliness, and cooperation between both countries, Bulgaria conducts a revisionist foreign policy towards Macedonia, whereby it denies the existence of the Macedonian identity and Macedonian history, it denies the existence of a Macedonian language sustaining that it is a Bulgarian dialect and it imposes falsification of historic events related to the period of Bulgarian occupation of Macedonia during World War II

THE TREATY WITH BULGARIA (JULY 2017)



ДОГОВОР ЗА ПРИЈАТЕЛСТВО, ДОБРОСОСЕДСТВО И СОРАБОТКА МЕЃУ РЕПУБЛИКА МАКЕДОНИЈА И РЕПУБЛИКА БУГАРИЈА

Република Македонија и Република Бугарија (нарекувани во понатамошниот текст заеднички “Договорни страни”),

Поаѓајќи од заедничкиот стремеж за понатамошен развој на добрососедството, пријателството и соработката меѓу двете држави,

Длабоко убедени во потребата од развој на соработката врз основа на меѓусебното почитување, доверба, разбирање, добрососедство и заемно почитување на интересите на нивните држави,

Верувајќи дека сеопфатниот развој и продлабочување на пријателските добрососедски односи меѓу нив одговара на интересите на народите на Република Македонија и Република Бугарија,

Убедени во неопходноста од зајакнување на безбедноста и мирот, соработката и довербата во Југоисточна Европа,

Поздравувајќи го стремежот на Република Македонија за интеграција во европските и евроатлантските структури,

Верувајќи дека конструктивниот дијалог за сите аспекти на билатералните односи, како и за регионални и меѓународни прашања ќе придонесе за понатамошен развој на врските меѓу двете држави на рамноправна основа,



CURRENT SITUATION:

- In July 2020, Bulgaria blocked the signing of the status agreement with FRONTEX
- In September 2020, Bulgaria imposed strict conditions upon the negotiation framework between Macedonia and the EU which are contained in the so called, Explanatory memorandum on the relationship between Bulgaria and Macedonia sent to EU Member States. In this Explanatory memorandum Bulgaria insists that the Macedonian identity of the Macedonian people is an artificial creation of Tito under Yugoslavia, and that the language is a Bulgarian dialect. Aside from this, it insists that Macedonia should reinterpret history in the part where Bulgarians are considered as occupators of Macedonia under fascist rule and insists to be reconsidered as liberators
- Upon this political advancement from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Austria raised objections towards Bulgaria and responded by withdrawing the whole package on European integrations in the European Council in December 2020

CONCLUSIONS?!

WHAT EQUATION = TWO OR MORE UNKNOWN?

**NOW
WHAT**

to be or not to be.

AND WHAT VALUES ARE BEING
FOLLOWED BY THE EU IN THE
EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
PROCESS?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION!

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