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OLIVER ANDONOV

**POLITICAL-CULTURAL ASPECTS OF INFLUENCE ON THE  
ABOLITION OF THE MACEDONIAN NATION<sup>1</sup>**

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*Abstract*

In the modern developments in the Balkans, we are witnessing continuous political action in order to abolish the Macedonian nation. This process, which was intensified with the signing of the Agreement with Bulgaria in 2017 and with Greece in 2018, in addition to the political aspects, included the cultural aspects.

This paper aims to make a brief overview of the connection between the political and cultural aspects through which Bulgaria and Greece influence or more precisely lead the process of abolition of the Macedonian nation. In the light of these aspects, one should look at the contemporary attitudes of Bulgaria and Greece (certainly not alternately together) towards Macedonia and issues related to history, language and culture as basic features of the Macedonian nation.

Through this paper we will make a scientific overview of current developments in political relations between North Macedonia and Greece, North Macedonia and Bulgaria, but with special reference to cultural issues affecting the Macedonian nation with consequences for its abolition, but also with political consequences for the region in terms of its destabilization, by moving similar processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina above all.

The focus of the review will be primarily on the Macedonian-Bulgarian relations and the dispute over history and language, which basically has an identity-political significance for the uniqueness of the Macedonian people and the creation of the Macedonian nation. Of course, the focus on North Macedonia's relations with Bulgaria is stimulated by the current developments in bilateral relations between the two countries and the consequences of the signed "Good Neighbor Agreement", on the basis of which Bulgaria openly shows strength by threatening North Macedonia with veto of the start of negotiations for full membership in the European Union.

Understanding this dispute motivated solely by Bulgaria's political and strategic motives is very important, especially for the scientific and academic public in Europe. The reason is that this is a socio-political construction as a unique phenomenon, but which can have extremely large political-security consequences on other regions in Europe in the first place, and as an empirical result of this process related to North Macedonia and the Macedonian question that for two centuries Europe has no power to solve it. North Macedonia is still a European country and the Balkans and North Macedonia as the root of the modern Christian European civilization are of great importance for Europe, its stability and future.

**Keywords:** Political aspects, cultural aspects, North Macedonia, Bulgaria, Greece, Europe, history

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<sup>1</sup> The author doesn't agree with some provisions of the Prespa Agreement but as a legal obligation he uses the new constitutional name of the country, North Macedonia throughout this paper. Nonetheless, „Macedonian” as an adjective like Macedonian nation, people, language etc. can freely be used according to the above mentioned agreement.

## Introduction

The achieved political goal of Greece and Bulgaria to politically-diplomatically break North Macedonia and to succeed in corrupting and politically and socially compromising the current Macedonian government, thus achieving the formal political goal called "changing the name of the state of (North) Macedonia", has become an accelerator for the continuation of their long-term strategic goal "abolition of the Macedonian nation and state".

This strategic goal is simply not able to be achieved exclusively through the political aspect of the name change and constitutional changes through the formal naming of Macedonians as "citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia", which is an unnational and vague synonym. For its full realization, it is necessary to realize the second segment, which we consider to be more important than the purely political one, and refers to the cultural aspects and characteristics of the Macedonian people. The nations, and thus the Macedonian nation, are not defined exclusively by the territory, the name of the state, the state system and the exercise of power. Above all, at the root of nations are cultural features - characteristics of the nation such as language, ethnography, folklore, tradition, culture and art and of course the common history and historical heritage that actually connects and shapes the nation by distinguishing it from an ethnic group, a religious group. or another social group, and especially it is the common memory of a people.

That is why the most important segments of the two agreements (with Bulgaria and Greece) are not the change of the name of the country, but the cultural consequences and the obligations undertaken in the agreements by the Macedonian government of Zoran Zaev. Those obligations refer to opening issues with neighbors for which there is no formula for a positive solution, ie they violate the characteristics of the Macedonian nation. In this way, in practice, it becomes pointless to talk about cultural changes in the characteristics of the nation, and which characteristics were built over the centuries and led to the formation of the Macedonian nation.

This is where the question of defined history begins, which completely destroys the fabric of the nation. This process, which is taking place in front of the eyes of the world and in Europe itself, instigated by EU member states, is a cultural genocide against a nation and a culture, but its eventual realization does not go back to the beginning. It brings us back to the political strategic goals of Bulgaria and Greece, which is the abolition of the Macedonian nation and turning Macedonia into an undefined territory with a geographical landmark "Northern", but without Macedonian people and politically defined nation, its cultural features and historical continuity as empiricism. and the collective memory through which the nation is created and maintained dynamically.

If we have in mind that in the agreement with Greece, Greece itself agreed to recognize the existence of the Macedonian language "as part of the group of Slavic languages, verified at the UN in 1974", it is not in the agreement with Bulgaria and here we have the use of terminology "The official languages of the two countries" or "the constitutional language". In conditions when the current government of North Macedonia, through the disputed Law on Languages on the entire territory of Macedonia introduced bilingualism, ie introduced Albanian as the second official

language, it is only a matter of time before that formulation in two official languages will be required to be included in the Constitution of North Macedonia, and as a political demand of the Albanian minority in North Macedonia. After this, the term "constitutional or official languages" will become extensible. Hence, one can see the depth of Bulgaria's political strategy in relation to North Macedonia and that the issue of language as a political, above all identity-cultural feature is only one of the key instruments for the abolition of the Macedonian nation.

When this is followed by the political tendency of Greece, which through the Prespa Agreement in 2018 managed to realize the distinction of continuity of the origin of the Macedonian nation from the Macedonian people as a historical process, and by creating discontinuity by appropriating the ancient history of Macedonia as exclusively Greek (Hellenistic) which is certainly a big untruth, because the cultural heritage of North Macedonia is extremely multicultural and even in antiquity, then we are amazed by the steps of Bulgaria to take over medieval and modern Macedonian history as Bulgarian. This is the way to take away the historical-cultural aspect of the creation of the Macedonian nation through the collective history, memory, culture and language of the Macedonian people as by far the largest in North Macedonia (about 67% of the total population). Precisely for these reasons, the conduct of the census and especially the column for declaring the population by ethnicity on an ethnic basis is politically manipulated. In this way, the Macedonian nation is abolished, but not only the Macedonian nation, but also the Macedonian people as a pillar and creator of the Macedonian nation, which means that on an immature simple political decision of a current political nomenclature in North Macedonia is created a new non-existent quasi nation in a territory called "North" Macedonia, which is not allowed to claim the right to historical, cultural and linguistic heritage, but is an undefined amorphous mass that has yet to be formed. In Bulgarian contemporary political thought it is called "re-Bulgarianization of Macedonia", and this process in the area of Macedonia<sup>2</sup> is known from the late 19th and early 20th century when Greece in the struggle to conquer territories, and with the help of the Constantinople Patriarchate carried out a "re-Hellenization" of the Macedonian Christian population, in accordance with their "Megali Idea".

The results of the processes around Macedonia as the last Ottoman province in Europe in the 19th and early 20th century were the Balkan Wars and the division of the territory of Macedonia. If at that time Europe was comforting and calming its conscience with the fact that Turkey was expelled from Europe, now in modern times, the games with North Macedonia, the tendencies to abolish the Macedonian nation and turn North Macedonia into an undefined territory with an amorphous mass of people, is a long-term Europe's political blindness, conformism and undemocracy, as well as disrespect for basic human rights and the right to self-determination. This inevitably leads to the opening of a crisis region which will include not only North Macedonia's neighbors, but also the wider region as well as global political actors. Consciously or unconsciously, Europe is pushing North Macedonia and the Balkans to repeat history. It is as if both neighbors and Europe have forgotten how bloody the Balkan wars were.

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<sup>2</sup> The territory of Macedonia as a historical, geographical and ethno-cultural region includes Aegean Macedonia in today's Greece and Pirin Macedonia in today's Bulgaria besides the area of today's North Macedonia or geographical name Vardar Macedonia

The political aspects of the influence, as well as the cultural influence and their consequences will be presented in the following text of the paper.

### **1. Political aspects of the influences for the abolition of the Macedonian nation**

The basic idea of political influence in order to abolish the Macedonian nation, and thus the Macedonian people as a bearer in the functioning of the nation is the historical annulment of "Macedonianism". The so-called "Macedonianism" is an inevitable historical and political process of the Macedonian people to create their own state and nation which is a positive process for the Macedonian people, while North Macedonia's neighbors interpret it in a negative connotation, using countless historical half-truths and untruths. In fact, through the so-called destruction of Macedonianism, it is a matter of implementing in practice a reverse historical process, ie the Macedonian people who in the last two centuries fighting for their national and church-spiritual independence and managed to create their own national state on August 2, 1944. It should now be brought back into a process of historical re-examination and dismantling. This process does not refer exclusively to the Macedonian statehood, but inevitably refers to the issue of the Macedonian Orthodox Church-Ohrid Archbishopric with a tendency to in the area of church autocephaly and spiritual freedom of the Macedonian people and their local church, the situation went back to 250 years, ie at the time of the abolition of the Ohrid Archbishopric. The Macedonian people, creating the Macedonian national state in practice laid the foundations of the phrase "Macedonia of the Macedonians" and the territory of Macedonia raised to the level of a nation-state at least a part of its geographical whole Macedonia, which with the Bucharest Peace Agreement in 1913 was completely unnaturally fragmented.

If we know that nations created on the principle of "nation-state" are composed of many different peoples, ethnic groups, religious or cultural minorities, but within which one nation is the bearer, then it is very clear that under the pressure of historical events Macedonian people, by shaping their nationality and fighting for the autonomy and independence of Macedonia, managed to create the Macedonian nation and state. This historical process is natural and de facto and de jure was completed, and it shows all the features of the formation of the nation and its modern dynamics.

The basic characteristic of the modern nation and everything related to it is its modernization<sup>3</sup>.

Therefore, we can say that the emergence of Macedonianism as a tendency to create a Macedonian nation and state is a process that took place for almost two centuries in specific historical circumstances and environment. That tendency in the relevant historical circumstances and the historical moment led to the formation of the Macedonian nation with all its attributes as an expression of Macedonianism in practice. At the same time, the national, historical, cultural, linguistic and ethnographic distancing of the Macedonians from the neighboring nations is literally

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<sup>3</sup> WAEVER, Ole – BUZAN, Barry – KELSTRUP, Morten – LAMAITRE, Pierre: Identity, Migration and the new Security Agenda in Europe; Printer Publishers, Ltd, London, 1993. p. 49.



realized, which achieves the political distancing represented by the formation of their own state as a political entity and international legal entity.

Therefore, the basic political goal of the influence for the abolition of the Macedonian nation is the historical annulment of Macedonianism as a national platform. Within this goal, each of North Macedonia's neighbors plays its role of influence within their national strategies. This game of North Macedonia's neighbors is directly related to the consequences that will occur as a result of the return of historical processes and the possible re-reduction of North Macedonia to a territory without a leading people and its own nation. That is why the question arises as to whether Europe has learned the historical lessons on the issue of North Macedonia and the Balkans, because it allowed the opening of the "Macedonian question" 70 years later after its closure in 1944 and the formation of the Macedonian state, and as a political interest first of Greece, awakened the appetites of all neighbors. In this way, Europe, through the institutions of the European Union, justifies and encourages abuse of the power that member states derive from the EU as a global actor. It is obvious that the Balkan countries see Macedonia as a potential territory for their political-territorial and national expansion in some form and in the long run, but also as one of the key regional interests in the implementation of their national strategies.

The opening of the Macedonian question under the pretext of protecting geopolitical interests in the clash of global actors, primarily the United States and Russia, which inevitably takes place on the territory of Europe, and there is no more suitable place for these games in the Balkans, is a political short-sightedness of Europe, which in its own backyard awakens and fuels a strong potential for conflict. If this conflict escalates, the situation will be even worse than in 1912-1913, because the conflict will inevitably involve Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Bulgaria and of course Turkey and Greece.

Realizing their chance for historical revisibility of the processes, Greece and Bulgaria, above all, set out towards the strategic destruction of Macedonianism, ie its presentation as a historical fabrication. In that context, both countries found themselves in the same positions of interest towards North Macedonia. Greece by appropriating Macedonia historically giving Greek character and appropriating the name of the entire geographical territory of Macedonia, while Bulgaria appropriating the Macedonian people for Bulgarian, and presenting the Macedonian language as a dialect of the Bulgarian language, as well as problematizing the events and personalities of the new history of Macedonia. In this way, they help each other, because Greece gets the historical heritage of the name Macedonia, which historically "justifies" its violence and ethnic cleansing during the conquest of Macedonia a century ago, as Bulgaria shows the "Bulgarian" character of Macedonia based on the composition of the population and the cultural features and history. The historical potential of "Megali idea" is visible in both concepts and the idea of "San Stefano Bulgaria",<sup>4</sup> a potential that led to several horrific wars in the Balkans, precisely among these current "allies" in the European Union.

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<sup>4</sup> Great Bulgaria including the territory of Macedonia was created as a result of the San Stefano Peace Treaty closing the Russian-Ottoman war in 1878 and abolished on the Berlin Congress by other great powers in the same year to avoid overwhelming Russian influence in the region. Bulgaria's national goal was to re-establish this „San Stefano's Bulgaria

However, let us not forget that Serbia also has its own interests in North Macedonia and that is why already for more than 50 years has kept the "church question" open regarding the recognition of the Macedonian Orthodox Church-Ohrid Archbishopric. It is actually a political issue which Serbia keeps open so that they can be an active player in relation to Macedonia, especially in the relations with Bulgaria and with Albania and their interests in Macedonia. Of course all the actors-neighbors of North Macedonia have one common goal, and that is the abolition of the Macedonian nation and the Macedonian people as the bearing people of the nation and the state of North Macedonia. That's the way for destruction of Macedonianism and turning North Macedonia into an undefined territory, amorphous mass of population. This tendency is not new, Macedonian revolutionaries and patriots have met it and fought against it in the 19th century, so the members of the "Secret Macedonian Committee" in Sofia in 1885: Naum Evro, Kosta Grupce, Vasil Karajovov and Temko Popov, who wrote in their native language - Macedonian, said: *"The main thing is for Macedonia to become more Macedonian"*.

Prompted by this situation around North Macedonia and the modern challenges of political - security aspect of regional security in Europe, within this paper, through the prism of the analysis of the Bulgarian strategy we will be able to see the synergies of every neighbors' strategies. Especially the Greek and Bulgarian strategy towards North Macedonia, their abuse of membership in the European Union and the European institutions, but also to see the concrete indicators of future conflict potential, precisely between the "allies", the neighbors of North Macedonia, regardless of whether they are members of the European Union or aspire to it, or NATO members just like North Macedonia.

### ***1.1. A look at the Bulgarian strategy towards North Macedonia***

In the context of the current developments in the relation North Macedonia - Bulgaria and the tendencies of Bulgaria for influence on the abolition of the Macedonian nation, we will consider the "Strategy for Bulgaria's relations with the Republic of Macedonia" by Ljubomir Ivanov, a study prepared in Sofia in 2008<sup>5</sup>. Considering the allegations and the strategic and operational political goals exposed in this strategy we will be able to understand why Bulgaria is pushing so hard towards realization of the cultural goals, ie the history, language and culture of the Macedonian people, with the main goal of destroying Macedonianism as a historical process realized in appropriate political-historical conditions.

The strategic basis of the Bulgarian strategy is: "The Macedonian nation is invented and the Macedonian doctrine is a product of Serbia and its geopolitical strategy in the region".

The explanation of this strategic basis given in the strategy itself is: "The Macedonian nation and state were formed in the process of realization and evolution of the Serbian political construction, first published in 1889, supported by a solution

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during three lost wars (Second Balkan War, First and Second World War). Date of San Stefano Treaty (3rd of March) is the National Day of Bulgaria.

<sup>5</sup> IVANOV, Lyubomir et al: Bulgarian Policies om the Republic of Macedonia; Eirst Edition, Manfred Worner Foundation, Sofia, 2008.

of The Communist International in Moscow in 1934 and realized between 1944 and 1991 year in the part of the historical-geographical region of Macedonia known as Vardar Macedonia".<sup>6</sup>

The accusations that the Macedonian nation is a Serbian concept are practical political phrase for calculating with Serbian interests in Macedonia, because it is a fact that when part of Macedonia (present-day Republic of North Macedonia) was under the administration of the Kingdom of Serbia, of The Kingdom of SHS and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in the period from 1912 to 1941, with certain interruptions in this territory called "Southern Serbia" or Vardar Banovina, Serbian hegemony dominated. The Macedonian people were not recognized, and in no way did a word came up for Macedonian nation, although in those state creations the Slovenian nation and the Croatian nation existed as an integral part of the state. Even today, in modern conditions the practical behavior of the Serbian Orthodox Church or part of its clergy towards the Macedonian Orthodox Church-Ohrid Archbishopric is a relapse of this Greater Serbian policy.

Basically, the approach of Bulgaria's strategy is much broader. It aims to lead the reader or analyst to the conclusion that the Macedonian nation is artificially created and that it is part of the Bulgarian nation, which is why "Macedonianism" should be destroyed<sup>7</sup>. The thesis was put forward that: "today's ethnic Macedonians, (non-Bulgarians) and the ethnic Bulgarians in the Republic of Macedonia are the same, that there is no difference between them, and this is understand in a completely opposite sense and by all of them some understand that they are all Macedonians or non-Bulgarians, while others bear in mind that they are all Bulgarians in some sense or at least in re-Bulgarianization process. "

The second phase of the process of destruction of the Macedonian nation is in fact "Re-Bulgarianization" of the Macedonian people and this is as clearly stated as we quoted, thus a more detailed explanation is not required. It is happening in Europe on the European political scene in regional and bilateral relations in the Balkans in the eyes of the European Union which through the European Parliament and the European Commission with various documents, and for short-sighted political goals sometimes support this "re-Bulgarianization". At the same time, Europe seems completely unaware for the consequences that will arise in the long run and escalate conflicts in the Balkans. First of all, the question is raised: *"Will at some point if the Bulgarian strategy for the re-Bulgarianization of North Macedonia "succeeds" in its realization, Greece will allow any form of enlargement, territorial or political domination of Bulgaria in the Balkans"?* How will react to that Serbia, Albania and Kosovo? The EU's capacity to influence and control such an escalating conflict process, with the escalating potential like the one into Bosnia and Herzegovina is questionable.

Details of operational political action in accordance with the objectives of the Bulgarian strategy towards Macedonia are operationalized in the "strange" so-called "Agreement for good neighborliness" which precisely covers the areas of history, education and of course inevitably the Macedonian language.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 33

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, part 1.1.3., p 37.

*"Termination of history education with textbooks that completely falsify history and contain offensive qualifications for the Bulgarian state and nation, bordering on open racism. At the Bulgarian request, in the textbooks, officially approved by the competent authorities of the Republic of Macedonia to explicitly emphasize the Bulgarian ethnicity (established by world historical science) of prominent figures from our general history as St. Clement of Ohrid, Tsar Samuel, brothers Miladinovci, Goce Delchev."*<sup>8</sup>

Here are in fact the disputed and unspoken Articles 8 and 11 of the "Agreement for good neighborliness" with Bulgaria, which was signed by the Macedonian government in 2017, and the consequences will be inconceivable on the further existence of the Macedonian nation and state, which in context of the Macedonian language and culture will be explained later in the text.

Analyzing Bulgaria's strategy towards North Macedonia, it is interesting to give a brief overview of the actions and implications for the other neighbors of North Macedonia, which is in fact a perception of the Bulgarian regional policy and its strategic and long-term positioning in the Balkans.

*"An insignificant part of the attempts for retrospective remediation of the Serbian-Yugoslav project for the creation of a Macedonian nation are the efforts of Skopje to join that project of the descendants of the Macedonian Bulgarians in Greek Macedonia and some areas of Albania and Kosovo."*

In this context of the use of the term "Greek Macedonia", we talk about the meaning of Greece in the implementation of politics in the Balkans through *"the relevance of politics and behavior of Greece towards the good neighborly relations between Bulgaria and the Republic of Macedonia."* *"...the Greek territory includes over half of the geographical region of Macedonia, as it is from the 19th century onwards and of course, thanks to their historical memory the Greeks – just like the Albanians - are aware of the Bulgarian ethnic character of Vardar Macedonia in the past and its evolution in recent decades."*<sup>9</sup>

*"Bulgaria and Greece could initiate, in the European Union elaboration, the development and acceptance of appropriate *acquis communautaire* of education, which should provide a certain general standard of objectivity in school and academic history education".*

This is a complete harmonization of the current policy of Greece and Bulgaria to Macedonia and their requests. Their EU membership is based on the fact that they will actively use all opportunities (instruments and mechanisms) to achieve their national goals which they set as demands to North Macedonia, and through the "Agreement for good neighborliness" with Bulgaria from 2017 and the "Prespa Agreement" with Greece from 2018. These disputed agreements have already been accepted by the Macedonian government, which only facilitated the procedure in front of the international community so that Greece and Bulgaria can act in a spirit of respect of international agreements.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, part 1.1.4., p. 39

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, part 1.2 and 1.3. p. 40-41.

This last statement is confirmed by the "Action Plan" in the above Bulgarian's strategy, which states: "In the first place, a solid internal Bulgarian preparation is necessary, of a package of historical, cultural, political, geographical, economic and other arguments, in favor of the above theses, a package that would become the basis for foreign politics and position of the state".

*"This Bulgarian package should be well balanced with a consistent policy of Athens to protect Greek interests from the bad neighborly policy of Macedonia, so that the general application is cooperative towards Skopje, and preferably - cumulative and coordinated ".<sup>10</sup>*

In the strategy it is visible that Bulgaria is making a strategy towards the Republic of North Macedonia which should be balanced, cooperative and cumulatively coordinated with Greece. For clarification and analysis, this means that no country in the world will support strategic national interests of another state if its own national interests are not more important and do not depend on the realization of the interests of that state, and refer to a third state. This is a simple rule in international relations.

In this context, it remains to emphasize the position of Bulgaria visible in the strategy, and that refers to opposing Serbian influence in Macedonia, which undoubtedly as historical experience will not deter Serbia from acting, but on the contrary will motivate it to implementing its own strategy that will undoubtedly confront the Bulgarian strategy.

Guided by these remarks and the interests of the Balkan states, the behavior of Europe is astonishing, especially the institutions of the European Union and their inaction in order of prevention. Certainly an exception to this EU behavior is the Resolution of the European Parliament of October 2020, regarding the situation in Bulgaria in relation to respect the human rights and the rule of law in Bulgaria in general, and in which the case of OMO Ilinden<sup>11</sup> is mentioned, which was rejected by the Bulgarian Parliament.

A key aspects in the new circumstances in North Macedonia are the cultural aspects which emphasize the Macedonian language which will be discussed in the next chapter of the paper.

## **2. Cultural aspects of influence for the abolition of the Macedonian nation**

The Macedonian cultural experience that has been crystallizing for more than a millennium is organically associated with the great civilizations of Ancient culture and Byzantine art. Hence, Macedonian culture will characterize the beauty, the art of the sublime of ancient Byzantine civilization. In particular, it will develop in medieval iconoclasm as its own authentic expression in painting, poetry and medieval music.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, part 2.2.1. and 2.2.2., p. 43.

<sup>11</sup> Human rights organization of the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria. Existence of Macedonian minority is denied by Bulgarian authorities.

Although the Macedonian culture in itself assimilates part of the ancient and Byzantine culture, it will get its own specific aesthetic autonomous experience.

Macedonian culture, predominantly Dionysian, consists of specific colors, sounds and words characteristic of the uniqueness of the Macedonian artistic fabric, with a specific sensibility in the aesthetic tragic experience of the world. The Macedonian cultural spirit not once was closed by the influences and penetrations of other cultures and arts. With that the Macedonian characteristic autochthony was not lost, but on the contrary, was enriched and deepened its unique essence.

Macedonian culture is characterized by the permanent opposition of the violence. For a century and a half, monstrous means have been created to destroy Macedonian culture, language and art and they do not stop to this day.

But it was through the opposition to violence that Macedonia managed to preserve its identity.

### ***2.1. Brief overview of the Macedonian language as a separate language in the group of Slavic languages and the goals that Bulgaria wants to achieve***

The basic conflict between the Macedonian and Bulgarian sides in terms of language is concentrated on the authenticity of the Macedonian language as a separate language in the group of Slavic languages. The problem is actualized by the Bulgarian side with reliance on some "facts" from the period of the 19th century and the influence that the church (later the Bulgarian Exarchate) had in that period through the Liturgical Church-Slavic language (or Old Slavonic). Exactly the Church Slavonic language or the Old Slavonic language is the basis of all Slavic languages, which below in the paper we will explain through a review of the Ohrid Literary School from the IX century, but to speak and encourage a tendency for non-recognition of a separate Macedonian language is certainly nothing more than simple political malice. Namely, it is clear that languages suffer changes, especially in the spoken part, but of course in the grammar and the literary part too. However, the Macedonian language began its differentiation at the beginning of the 19th century through The Church-Spiritual Awakening, the time of the "Renaissance" and a whole century of Cultural National turmoil in the period from 1802 to 1903.<sup>12</sup>

The chronology of the events in the crucial 19th century for the Macedonian national, and in that time linguistic differentiation and self-knowledge is actually a chronology of the output of The Balkans from the Ottoman "Millet System" and the movement of people towards the path of creation of nations. This chronology in the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century can be divided into several periods:

1. Cultural-educational and ecclesiastical-spiritual awakening of the Macedonian people (1802-1844).
2. "Our history" as a separatist expression of national consciousness in the struggle for its church and language (1845-1859).

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<sup>12</sup> RISTOVSKI, Blaze: Key Problems in the Macedonian Revival Process; The Development of Macedonian Literature, Institute of Macedonian Literature, Skopje, 2011. pp. 31-32.

3. The emergence of national and religious propaganda and the literature of national awakening (1859-1875).
4. National - political programs and acts, revolutionary liberation movements and mass uprisings (1876-1893).
5. Decade of Consolidation of National Liberation Thought and Action (1893-1902).
6. Ilinden as an expression of the political urge of the people for freedom and for their state, the unused Mirczest reforms, the Revel meeting and the anti-Macedonian Young Turk coup (1903-1908).
7. Period of historical feats and fateful defeats (1913-1918), struggle for the preservation of the territorial integrity for the unification of the Macedonian people and the affirmation of cultural-national identity.

In the mentioned periods of national, spiritual and cultural awakening of the Macedonian people and the affirmation of national identity there are constant attempts to represent Macedonian uniqueness before the international public, as well as the formation and codification of Macedonian as a separate language in the group of Slavic languages.

Thus, Milan Grasev, who is the editor of the magazine "Macedonia", in Sofia, in 1902 writes: "Ivan S. Aksakov advised his Macedonian students in 1866 to separate Macedonian literary jargon and to amaze the world with their independence... So far no one understood them. *"Recently we heard that a Macedonian student association was being formed in St. Petersburg, which will work on the Macedonian language"*<sup>13</sup>

In the newspaper "Denica", Sofia from 1890, the editor Ivan Vazov says: *"The Macedonian dialect, all too far away and even completely foreign to the dialect in western Bulgaria cannot be deprived of its right to remain completely special independent dialect."*<sup>14</sup>

In the newspaper "Svoboda", Sofia, year VI, no. 744 p.3. from 18.02.1892 it is said: *"This is not the first time such political and literary ideas have appeared among Macedonians. If our memory works fine, Mr. K. Shapkarev started writing books right from the very beginning of the revival of the national idea among the Macedonians in Macedonian dialect. His plan to create a special Macedonian letter failed as any unnatural thing fails, and his efforts are buried in the archives of eternity."*

This is a glaring example of how the Bulgarian authorities led in the late 19th century organized state struggle against the Macedonian language. Quite similar to today, which shows that Bulgarian politics is the same as in the 19th century which is not a feature of a member state of EU.

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<sup>13</sup> GRASHEV, Milan: New Fatal Roads and Prolomies – Macedonia; book IX, Sofia, 1903, pp. 27-28.

<sup>14</sup> Ivan Vazov (1850-1921) is Bulgarian author and academic, called father of the Bulgarian literature, and during the period from 1897 to 1899 was a Bulgarian minister of education and science.

## Conclusion

Detailed explanation of the political and cultural influence of Bulgaria and Greece on the dismantling of the Macedonian nation requires much more space for historical, linguistic, cultural and experiential retrospective of the creation of the Macedonian nation as a centuries-old struggle of the Macedonian people for their national and state independence. Therefore, at the end of this paper we will address exclusively the role of Europe through its institutions in relation to tolerating the politics of Bulgaria and Greece and the possible consequences on the security of The Balkans, and thus the security and political stability of Europe as a global actor.

It should be noted that the dismantling of the Macedonian nation, and the destruction of the Macedonian people and its "re-Bulgarianization" in the first place covers a large number of disputes that Bulgaria and then Greece will pose as a "problem" at the beginning of North Macedonia's accession negotiations for its full membership in the European Union. In the first place, these will be questions from a historical aspect, especially about the Macedonian revolutionary movement and the key figure in the Macedonian struggle for national and state freedom and independence from the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, Goce Delchev. Then, the attack will be focused on the uniqueness of the Macedonian language and all historical facts and features that make the Macedonian people special from the other Balkan nations and leaders in their formation of its national state and the Macedonian nation.

The role of Europe that consciously, for political reasons, allows Bulgaria and Greece to abuse their position as EU members and put pressure on North Macedonia through setting up blockades on membership in the Union is a self-destructive path of the European Union. This can be seen from two points in the Balkans:

First, as an example of abusing full membership for the sake of achievement of great state aspirations of individual members, which is contrary to the commitments of the Union. This abuse will arouse additional conflict in the Balkans over the Macedonian question, which will inevitably involve Serbia, Albania and Kosovo in the conflict, which will mean entering the next stage of a conflict with strong potential. That phase will be each of the neighboring countries of Macedonia to enter into conflict with each other for only one reason. An opportunity to satisfy their interests towards Macedonia without their mutual conflict in the literal sense, does not exist. Europe saw it once and allowed it in 1913, but the experience of that period showed us that not resolving the Macedonian issue and not allowing the Macedonian people to form their own independent state of Macedonia and in it Macedonian nation, have provoked wars between the states concerned, internal conflicts and tensions.

Second, if the destruction of the Macedonian people and the Macedonian nation and the state of North Macedonia is allowed, Europe will send a message that justifies these great aspirations, so that the next conflict without a solution will be Bosnia and Herzegovina in which undoubtedly will join Turkey (and in relation to North Macedonia, too), which will cause a regional conflict. One such regional conflict will not pass without the involvement of global actors, ie the United States and Russia, and all this will still happen on European soil. Such developments further will weaken



the Union, involve NATO in the conflict and create long-term instability in the Balkans and Europe.

The solution to avoid such a scenario and stabilize the European security and the construction of an European security identity in the Balkans is a support of The European Union of North Macedonia and the survival of the Macedonian people against the aspirations of Bulgaria and Greece. The Macedonian people as a special people in the Balkans with their own history, language, culture and all the attributes of a nation cannot be denied in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and subjected to violent assimilation, and Europe to be silent about it, because North Macedonia and the Macedonian people have its share in world culture both in the past and in the present.

In the end, there is only one solution expressed more than 150 years ago by The British Prime Minister William Gladstone on the occasion of resolving the Macedonian issue, who will summarize the solution in the maxim "Macedonia of the Macedonians".

It is meaningless 80 years after the creation of the modern Macedonian state and thirty years after its independence, to go back in history and again raising the resolved question of the existence of the Macedonian people and the Macedonian state and nation. Within the maxim Macedonia of the Macedonians and the Macedonian nation, all citizens, ethnic and religious groups living in Macedonia, are included, because they are part of Macedonia and together with the Macedonian people make up the Macedonian nation.

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