

EUROPEAN INTEGRATION POLICY CHALLENGES FOR ETHNIC INTEGRATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to better understand the impact of European integration policies on the position of ethnic minorities in the Republic of North Macedonia and the development of an integrative society. The study was based on an examination of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, which served as one of the primary indicators of success in areas identified as critical to development and compliance with European standards. The paper particularly focuses on the third principle, which relates to the preservation and reflection of society's multiethnic character in public life, and its implementation and contribution to the European integration process.

Keywords

ethnic integration, multiculturalism, public sphere, Ohrid Framework Agreement, EU integration

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Introduction

At the Zagreb Summit in November 2000, it was announced that all participants in the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) were potential candidates for European Union (EU) membership. The reform of public institutions and legislation proposed by member candidates was intended to strengthen the rule of law and respect for human and minority rights in order to improve inter-ethnic relations and democratic stability. The Republic of Macedonia (RM¹) was the first country to sign the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) (during the armed conflict) in April 2001 and the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA) four months later in August 2001 (which ended the conflict). While the SAA established the framework of relations between the EU and Western Balkan countries for SAP implementation, the OFA was an agreed framework for securing the future of Macedonia's democracy and allowing the development of closer and more integrated relations between the RM and the Euro-Atlantic community. This Framework was intended to promote the peaceful and harmonious development of civil society, respect for ethnic identity and the interests of all Macedonian citizens. Four years later (December 2005), the country was designated as a candidate for EU membership. This year (2022) marks the 31st anniversary of the Republic of North Macedonia's (RNM) independence, the 21st anniversary of the OFA and the 17th anniversary of gaining candidate status. It is valid to examine Macedonia's status in the EU integration process and the level of ethnic integration within society.

1. Minority protection as a condition for European integration

1.1. A brief historical overview of Macedonia's relations with the EU

The Cooperation and Transport Agreement (CTA), signed in April 1997 in Luxembourg, formalized the political and economic relations between the RM and the EU. On this occasion, the European Council of Ministers established political and economic conditions for the development of bilateral relations between the EU and the region's states. In January 1998, following the entry into force of the CTA, the Macedonian Parliament approved the Declaration for the Development of Relations with the EU, which stated that 'becoming a member of the European Union represents the Republic of Macedonia's strategic goal'. The European Commission proposed a regional approach programme (the SAP) in May 1999. The goal of the SAP strategy is to promote cooperation programmes (via the signing of SAAs) and to provide economic and financial assistance (via the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS) programme) to candidate countries in order to support their development processes. The Country Strategy Paper was planned for the period 2000-2006, divided into three-year plans (2002-2004), two-year plans (2005-2006) and annual programmes. The main goal of these programmes was to support government agencies at the national and local levels, as well

1 The author uses the term 'Republic of Macedonia' and the abbreviation 'RM' for the period until February 2019; and 'Republic of North Macedonia' and 'RNM' for the period after February 2019 when Amendment 33 to the Preamble introduced/added the term 'North'.

as civil society institutions, in order to strengthen democracies and economic and institutional stability in the countries. In fact, the SAA did not include any provision for minorities' protection; however, following the events of 2001 (the armed conflict), the CARDS programmes were supplemented with priorities derived from the OFA, such as the provision for the preservation and reflection of society's multiethnic character in public life. The implementation of OFA began immediately with the adoption of amendments to the Macedonian Constitution and the SAA was ratified by all EU member states in February 2004. Macedonia's EU membership application was submitted on 22 March, 2004, the Commission issued a positive opinion on 9 November, 2005 and the Council granted the country candidate status in December 2005. Based on the Commission's analysis, the European Council decided to grant Macedonia candidate country status, citing the significant progress made in completing the legislative framework related to the OFA and the country's track record in implementing the SAA since 2001. Following the completion of the CARDS programme, the RM began to receive financial assistance through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), which was divided into IPA I (2007-2013) and IPA II (2014-2020). The measures funded are primarily concerned with the promotion of democracy, good governance, the rule of law and the protection of fundamental rights. Three years after being granted status, the Council adopted the revised Accession Partnership with the RM on 18 February, 2008. One of the political criteria was the continuation of OFA implementation, which includes the promotion of inter-ethnic trust. The following year, in October 2009, the Commission recommended starting accession talks and moving to the second stage of the SAA. On 10 February 2010, the European Parliament adopted the Resolution on the 2009 Progress Report with the RM, in which it called on the Council to confirm the Commission's recommendation, at the March 2010 Summit, to decide on the opening of negotiations for membership with the RM. The decision was made 10 years later (2020), having regarded the fulfilling of the conditions identified in June 2018 by the Council conclusion on enlargement and stabilization and association process, and after having examined the Commission's updated report of 2 March 2020 on the progress made by the Republic of North Macedonia (RNM). However, in November, Bulgaria vetoed the decision to open EU membership negotiations with the RNM (because of historical and linguistic reasons) and in May and October 2021, ruled out reversing its veto. In July 2022, the process for membership negotiations of the RNM finally was opened.

1.2. Minority protection in EU support programmes

The SAA did not include a clause regarding minority protection, but it did impose guarantees and respect for minority rights in accordance with European and international norms. However, this issue was later incorporated into the CARDS programme objectives. Following the signing of the OFA, the purpose of the assistance was to support its implementation by assisting refugees and displaced people in their return, with the goal of reducing inter-ethnic tensions and promoting communication between and within communities. This will necessitate measures to protect the legitimate rights of the ethnic Albanian minority while also ensuring the state's territorial integrity. The OFA's Preamble states that the Framework will promote the peaceful and harmonious development of civil society while respecting the ethnic identity and interests of all Macedonian citizens. Its points form an agreed framework for securing the future of Macedonia's democracy and allowing the RM and the Euro-Atlantic community to develop closer and more integrated relations. One of these points is the provision for the preservation and reflection of society's multiethnic character in public life. In order to implement this and other provisions, the CARDS programme of 2001 aimed primarily to provide the restoration of trust and the promotion and development of good inter-ethnic relations. In order to

fund projects that will lead to the restoration of trust and interpersonal tolerance, and the overcoming of existing prejudices, the CARDS programme for 2002 planned to involve government organizations and the population in mixed-ethnic communities in the fields of culture, conflict and youth. Subsequently, the European Commission reiterated in all CARDS programmes that the implementation of the OFA was critical, stating that the biggest challenges in the CARDS programme for 2003 were the implementation of the decentralization process, the principle of equal and equitable representation, the promotion and consolidation of civil society, and the maintenance of good inter-ethnic relations. In 2004, the CARDS programme aimed to provide assistance to several aspects of inter-ethnic relations, including improving the situation of municipalities where various ethnic groups live, commencing the process of cooperation between municipalities and ethnic groups, implementing the provision for equal and equitable representation, completing the project for the establishment of the state university in Tetovo, and supporting dual use of language in courts and the public prosecutor's office. The Council of the EU adopted the Council regulation n.533/2004 on the establishment of European partnership for Western Balkan countries on 22 March of the same year, to support efforts to move closer to the EU. The CARDS programmes for 2005-2006 included projects to enable: (i) an increase in the number of employed members of non-majority communities in state institutions (via training of 250 non-majority community experts and 100 translators for the Macedonian and Albanian languages), in order to strengthen communication between citizens from non-majority communities and administrative bodies and to provide better and quality translation; (ii) participation of the Roma community in public life; strengthening civil society and participation and awareness-raising of members of the Turkish non-majority community; (iii) reducing the negative effects of administrative stratification, such as ethnic isolation; (iv) improving the quality of life of multiethnic communities through the effective functioning of the democratic model in the division of power.

Following the completion of the CARDS programme, the RM became a beneficiary country of the IPA, which was implemented in accordance with Council Regulation n.1085-2006 and which replaced a series of financial programmes (Poland and Hungary Assistance for the Restructuring of the Economy (PHARE); CARDS) aimed at potential/candidate countries for EU membership. Through IPA, potential candidate countries were assisted in gradually aligning themselves with EU legislation, including the *acquis communautaire* and in supporting the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and greater respect for the rights of minorities, gender equality and non-discrimination. The comprehensive IPA assistance programmes in the RM addressed reforms in various sectors while also meeting SAA commitments and ensuring equal representation in accordance with the OFA.

The research in the present paper will devote detailed analysis of the implementation of the OFA's principle related to the preservation and reflection of society's multiethnic character in public life. The following section provides definitions and theoretical perspectives on the concepts of multiculturalism, multiethnicity and public sphere (life).

2. Definitions and theoretical aspects of multiculturalism in the public sphere

2.1. Conceptual definitions

Culture as a term can be defined in several ways. Some theorists define it as being something learnt—what gives people ‘a sense of who they are, of belonging, of how they should behave, and of what they should be doing’ (Moran, Harris and Moran, 2011)—or as a learned meaning system that consists of patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, meanings and symbols passed on through generations and shared to varying degrees by interacting members of a community (Ting-Toomey and Chung, 2012). Article 1 of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity states that culture takes different forms across time and space and that diversity is embedded in the uniqueness and plurality of identities of groups and societies making up humankind. Cultural diversity is also considered a common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of the present generation and future generations.

When talking about cultural diversity or cultural differences within a society, the terms *cultural pluralism* and *multiculturalism* are the most commonly used. These terms refer to a set of multiple cultures, but differ in their role and meaning. The term *biculturalism* is limited to two cultures or ethnic traditions (e.g., one of ethnic heritage and one of culture lived in). Language is one of the most important parts of any culture. The terms bilingualism/multilingualism are used in different circumstances, to describe multi/bilingual individuals (who speak two or more languages from birth or early age), for institutions such as schools (bilingual education), or for public signs (street signs written in two or more languages). Language is also one of the basic elements to define a society as bilingual or multilingual, or a state as binational or multinational. In the first case, it means that the society is inhabited by people who speak different languages, while the second case indicates that the state is constituted by two or more language communities (e.g., Canada, Switzerland). According to John Edwards, personal and social manifestations of bilingualism are important, and it should be noted that the emphases are quite different: individual bilingualism involves, for example, linguistic and psycholinguistic dimensions which figure much less prominently, while at the social level, other dimensions (historical, educational, political) arise (Edwards, 2006).

In this context it would be valuable also to explain cultural heritage. Olimpia Niglio proposes that the timeline of history is traced by the heritage each generation receives, as a gift handed down via a transaction based on a concept that intimately links to matters of inheritance and identity. ‘*Generally, the community describes the “cultural heritage” such as historic, artistic, scientific and traditional. These definitions often coincide with the attribution of “value” and “identity”. Many answers about what “cultural heritage” could be are explained as a set together with their specific value, such as landscape and architecture of high artistic value and historic materials of scientific value*’ (Niglio, 2014). In her opinion, it is fundamentally important to know and analyse individual cultural identities, and therefore the heritage bequeathed to them, favouring the capability of each individual to recognize and place value on their own specific identity, which is also an expression of freedom and social equality.

Scholars are careful to distinguish between the concepts of cultural pluralism and multiculturalism when discussing general cultural distinctions registered in a modern society. According to the Italian sociologist Vincenzo Cesareo, cultural pluralism acknowledges the existence of different cultures within the same social reality, while also attempting to draw a rigid boundary between the public sphere, which is governed by universally accepted laws, and the private sphere, which allows for the free expression of differences (Cesareo, 2000, p.35-37). He argues that cultural pluralism, in its *conflicting version*, emphasizes the existence of counter-cultural universes, i.e., opposition between dominant and dominated cultures or a dialectic between an educated culture and folk culture. In its *consensual version*, he points to the typical American pluralism of various groups that have retained their traditional aspects while adapting to certain models that are widely shared and related to the 'American way of life'. Cesareo distinguishes these two versions from multiculturalism, which is based on demands for the recognition of cultural differences and the affirmation of the equal dignity of particular cultural identities, i.e., the affirmation of the equal value of different cultures.

Giovanni Sartori elaborates on the distinction between the meanings of these two terms. In his article *Pluralism, Multiculturalism and Foreigners*, he emphasizes the differences and similarities between pluralism and multiculturalism, promoting the former while criticizing the latter (Sartori, 2000). Pluralism, in his opinion, supports and nurtures an open society that reflects spontaneous order and respects the multicultural society that exists, has existed and will always exist. Its primary goal is to ensure intercultural peace, not to incite cultural enmity. According to Sartori, pluralism is born of tolerance, which does not exalt the *other* and *otherness*, but rather accepts them. This means that pluralism both defends and hinders diversity, because tolerating means to be peaceful and to fight against disintegration, and thus recommends assimilation to the extent necessary to create integration. He claims that multiculturalism multiplies differences, is not based on tolerance, is anti-assimilation and reflects a widespread desire for authenticity and recognition through modern subjectivity. It could be understood as a wide range of languages, cultures and ethnic groups, and as a carrier of an ideology, i.e., as an ideological project. As a result, if multiculturalism is understood as an accepted existing fact, as a diction that simply registers the existence of numerous cultures, it poses no problems to the pluralistic worldview, because it is only one of a number of possible historical configurations of pluralism. However, when multiculturalism is expressed as a priority value, pluralism and multiculturalism clash.

The concept of multiethnicity refers to the coexistence of multiple ethnic groups in a larger society where each group is set apart and bound together by common ties of race, language, nationality or culture. The meanings of the terms *ethnicity* and *nation* are frequently complementary and intertwined. The term *ethnos* is of Greek origin and was used to distinguish non-Greek communities in antiquity. Weber's definition of an ethnic group refers to a set of characteristic features, whereas the term *nation* refers to the political capacity to constitute a state. He contends that not all ethnic groups are nations and not all nations are ethnic (Marta, 2005a). The anthropologist Arnold L. Epstein, on the other hand, maintains that an ethnic group is a group equivalent by extension to the nation, not a segment or a subgroup of larger units (Marta, 2005b). According to historian Herbert Adams Gibbons, for the nation, geographical features are more important than blood: the terms *nation*, *nationality* and *nationalism* all legally refer to a people living within defined boundaries, recognized as defined by nations of the world; it is assumed that people living within established political boundaries recognized by other nations have some social reason to stay together; the fact of the place of residence presupposes that they accept the common sovereignty, to live loyally under such sovereignty, sharing any privileges or obligations (Gibbons, 1930, as cited in Tosevski, 2003).

Although originally denoting the same thing, the terms *ethnicity*, *nation* and *people* differ in their definitions of who constitutes a state's nation or people, as well as the status attributed to minority communities living within its borders. *Nation* is used in modern democratically liberal states in both a political civic and a state sense. However, the same term is used in ethnic, linguistic and cultural contexts, as was the case in former socialist Eastern European countries. In modern language, *ethnos* refers to the uniqueness of a community and thus its linguistic, cultural and traditional characteristics, whereas *multiethnicity* refers to a social community that includes multiple ethnic groups that coexist and share the same space. Recently, multiethnicity has been promoted as a modern civil society concept that is required to promote inter-ethnic coexistence, equal status and mutual respect among ethnic groups who live in the same country.

As highlighted above, one of the OFA's fundamental principles is the preservation and reflection of society's multiethnic character in public life. This means it is necessary to examine the related terms of public life, public sphere, public sector and public affairs.

According to Wessler and Freudenthaler (2018), the *public sphere* is generally conceived of as the social space in which different opinions are expressed, problems of general concern are discussed and collective solutions are developed communicatively. Thus, the public sphere is the central arena for societal communication.

Similarly, to public sphere, *public life* includes all aspects of social life that are (happening in) public, in the open, governed by shared norms and values, as opposed to more private social interaction within families, private clubs, etc., that are governed by intimacy, personal identity and free will (Chandler and Munda, 2011). The vast collection of political, cultural, social and economic structures, organizations and institutions, including the workplace, that comprise cohesive societies is referred to as *public life*.

The right to participate in political and public life was first set out in Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and further elaborated in Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). According to Article 21 of the UDHR, the right guarantees all citizens the right and the opportunity, without unreasonable restrictions, to take part in the conduct of public affairs directly or through freely chosen representatives, to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections, and to have equal access to public service. Article 25 of the ICCPR recognizes the right to participate in *public affairs*, including the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, the right to vote and to be elected, and the right to have access to public service.

The term *public sector*, in its broader sense, represents the public administration, i.e., all public institutions that perform public functions and activities. These institutions are financed from public funds and are established by the state (including the professional services of the government, the assembly and the judicial authorities) or the municipalities. It excludes the private institutions (private hospitals, private schools, private kindergartens, etc.) and private companies that provide public services.

2.2. Theoretical aspects of multiculturalism promotion in public sphere

In the classical liberal distinction between the public sphere (which characterizes common life) and the private sphere (which concerns primary socialization), British sociologist John Rex proposes that requests for recognition of differences must be favoured in order to find full expression in the private sphere, but the state, as the main actor in the public sphere, must primarily guarantee equality in individual opportunities (Colombo, 2002). Rex distinguishes between the various institutional and cultural sets that exist in each society. He distinguishes between public and political institutions aimed at promoting equality of opportunity for all individuals, and private or community institutions referring to language, religion, family customs, cultural and ethnic traditions (Cesareo, 2000). According to Rex, public and political institutions constitute a type of civic culture, which means that this area cannot be called into question in order to adapt to the needs of minority cultures.

The American academic Amy Gutman, writing on the same subject, wonders whether public institutions should do more to recognize the identities of cultural and discriminated minorities. In this context, she contends that citizens of various identities will be represented equally if public institutions do not recognize our specific identities, but only our universal interests. In support of this argument, Gutman cites the neutrality of the public sphere as a guarantee of civil liberty and equality, that is, universal needs such as health protection, education, freedom of faith, freedom of conscience, freedom of the press, freedom of association, justice, the right to vote, and the rights of public function (Gutman, 2004). Since these liberties are common to all, public institutions are not required to formally recognize them based on ethnic, racial, cultural, or religious grounds.

The Italian professor Enzo Colombo also distinguishes between the public sphere, which characterizes common life (common interests), and the private sphere, which includes primary socialization, or the acquisition of basic social skills. According to his distinction, education, like laws, politics and economics, belongs to the public sphere, at least in terms of skill selection, skill transmission and civic culture reproduction, that is, activities that have to do with the transmission, development and conservation of a shared culture that allows for a certain degree of identification and development of solidarity. In this regard, Colombo contends that every individual and every group has the right to maintain and manifest their differences in private spaces, because public spaces must be devoid of differences, guided by universalism and equality ideals (Colombo, 2002).

Considering this last statement, the French sociologist Alain Touraine, an advocate of egalitarian multiculturalism (also known as liberal multiculturalism), contends that a society's democracy is measured by the extent and quality of cultural, social, ethnic and religious differences, and its ability to manage and include these aspects in public space. A society with a diversity of values, judgements and perspectives on reality allows for greater freedom of choice, thereby expanding individual possibilities and opportunities. As a result, the high degree of individual freedom is important. The public sphere must be able to accept some degree of difference. However, for this to be compatible with an effective liberal democracy, it must be understood and accepted as an individual right rather than a collective right. According to Touraine, the freedom of choice necessitates recognition and respect, rather than belonging to a specific group in order to make claims of preferential treatment or self-determination. Requests for recognition of differences, he believes, must be heard and possibly accepted in the public sphere (Colombo, 2002).

3. Policies for the promotion of multiculturalism in the public sphere in Macedonian society

3.1. Macedonian multiethnic society and legal framework for development

Macedonian society is defined as a multiethnic society because of the ethnic diversity of the population. According to new census data from 2021², 1,836,713 of the population in the RNM are resident citizens and 260,606 are non-resident citizens. The total enumerated population is 2,097,319 citizens, of which 54.21% declared themselves as Macedonians (representing 58.44% of the resident population and 24.45% of the non-resident population), 29.52% as Albanians (24.30% of resident and 66.36% of non-resident population), 3.98% as Turks (3.86% of resident and 4.79% of non-resident population), 2.34% as Roma (2.53% of resident and 1.02% of non-resident population), 1.18% as Serbs (1.30% of resident and 0.35% of non-resident population), 0.87% as Bosniaks (0.87% of resident and 0.81% of non-resident population) 0.44% as Vlachs (0.47% of resident and 0.19% of non-resident population), 0.98% are members of other ethnic communities (non-nominated), 0.02% non-stated and 0.03% unknown.

According to religious affiliation, 46.14% of the RNM population are Orthodox Christians, 32.17% Muslims, 0.37% Catholics, 13.21% Christians, 0.07% Protestants, 0.04% Evangelist, 0.05% Evangelist – Methodist, 0.06% Jehovah's Witnesses, 0.48% atheists, 0.12% non-stated, 0.07% others and 0.5% unknown (persons whose data are taken from administrative sources are 7.2%).

Considering the mother tongue, 61.38% of the population speaks Macedonian, 24.34% Albanian, 3.41% Turkish, 1.73% Romani, 0.61% Serbian, 0.85% Bosniak and 0.17% Vlach, while the rest of the population declared other languages, including English, Polish, Italian, Serbo-Croatian, Croatian and Russian.

Given these cultural differences, Macedonian society can be defined not only as multiethnic, but also as multiconfessional and multilingual. Multicultural diversity has always existed in Macedonian society and has been protected by various measures within various social and political systems. According to the Preamble of the newly adopted Constitution of the Independent Republic of Macedonia from 1991, the RM is constituted as a national state of the Macedonian people, ensuring full civil equality and permanent coexistence of the Macedonian people with Albanians, Turks, Roma, Vlachs and other nationalities living within. According to Article 7 of the Constitution, the Macedonian language and its Cyrillic alphabet are the official languages of the country, and the official use of the nationalities' languages can be applied in units of local self-government where they live in significant numbers, as well as in primary and secondary education. Article 19 guaranteed religious freedom and free and public expression of faith, whether alone or in community with others, and equality of religious communities and groups with the Macedonian Orthodox Church. Article 48 was fully committed to nationalities, guaranteed the right to free expression, nurturing and developing identity and national characteristics, and the Republic guaranteed the protection of nationalities' ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identities.

2 Census of the population, households and apartments in the RNM, 2021 - first set of data, 30 March, 2022. Within the framework of the 2021 Census, Macedonian citizens living and staying abroad for more than a year were enabled to register themselves through a web application that was available on the Census website. Some data were taken from the administrative sources.

Ten years after the adoption of the Constitution, in 2001 constitutional and legal changes were made in accordance with OFA provisions, with the goal of promoting and developing civil society, respecting ethnic identity and the interests of Macedonian citizens. The OFA brought about several modifications, discussed below.

The Preamble content was changed twice, once in 2001 with Amendment IV and again in 2019 with Amendment XXXIV. According to Amendment IV, the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, the Macedonian people, as well as citizens living within its borders who are part of the Albanian people, the Turkish people, the Vlach people, the Serbian people, the Romani people, the Bosniak people and others... in accordance with the tradition of the Krushevo Republic, the decisions of the Anti-fascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM) and the Referendum of 8 September, 1991, have decided to establish the Republic of Macedonia as an independent, sovereign state. Amendment XXXIV deleted the words 'as well as citizens living within its borders who are', replaced the words 'the decisions of the ASNOM' with 'the legal decisions cited in the Proclamation of the First Session of the ASNOM to the Macedonian people about the said session of the ASNOM' and added the words 'which expressed the will to create an independent sovereign state and the Ohrid Framework Agreement'.

Regarding the expression of identity, point 7.1 of the OFA determined that with respect to emblems, next to the emblem of the RM, local authorities will be free to place on the front of local public buildings emblems marking the identity of the majority community in the municipality. To that end, Amendment VIII replaced Article 48, stating that members of communities have the right to freely express, foster and develop their identity and community attributes, as well as to use their community symbols. It also clarified that the Republic guarantees the protection of all communities' ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identities. Concerning the use of non-majority community symbols, two laws were passed: the Law on the Use of Community Flags in the Republic of Macedonia (in 2005) and the Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law on the Use of the Flags of the Communities in the Republic of Macedonia (in 2011). According to Article 4 of the Amended Law, in units of local self-government where citizens belonging to the community constitute more than 50% of the population, the flag of the RM and the flag of that community are constantly displayed in front of and inside the buildings of local government organizations. Furthermore, in order to reflect multiculturalism in society and strengthen ethnic identity, an amendment to the Law on Holidays of the Republic of Macedonia (2007) introduced new holidays, classified as 'state holidays of the Republic of Macedonia' and 'holidays of the Republic of Macedonia'. Orthodox Christmas and Easter, and Islamic Eid al-Fitr, are celebrated as 'holidays of the Republic of Macedonia'. Every religious community in Macedonia, including Orthodox Christians, Catholics and Muslims, observes their most important holidays, while each constitutional non-majority community (including the Jewish community) observes one holiday per year.

In terms of religious issues, in addition to the Macedonian Orthodox Church, Amendment VII to Article 19 cites the Islamic Religious Community in Macedonia, the Catholic Church, the Evangelical Methodist Church, the Jewish Community and other religious communities and groups.

In terms of language, Amendment VI that replaced Article 7 states that the Macedonian language and its Cyrillic alphabet is the official language throughout the RM and in its international relations. Any other language spoken by at least 20% of the population is also an official language, written using its alphabet, as specified in the Constitution and laws. In accordance with the Annex B of the OFA, the new Law on the use of the languages from 2018 (enforced from 2019) states that throughout the RM and its international relations the official language shall be the Macedonian language and its Cyrillic alphabet, other language spoken by at least 20% of the citizens (Albanian language) and its alphabet is also the official language, in accordance with this Law. In local self-government units, in

addition to Macedonian and its Cyrillic alphabet, the language and alphabet spoken by at least 20% of the citizens is also the official language; autonomous decisions (by the organs of units of local self-government) are made regarding the use of languages spoken by less than 20%. The new Law broadened the spheres of use of language spoken by at least 20% of the citizens and its alphabet and mandated that banknotes, coins, postage stamps shall contain symbols representing the cultural heritage of the citizens speaking Macedonian language and its Cyrillic alphabet and the language spoken by at least 20% of the citizens and its alphabet (Art.8).

OFA point 6.2 declares that state funding will be provided for university level education in languages spoken by at least 20% of the population Macedonia. In accordance, a Law on the establishment of a state university in Tetovo was passed in 2004, allowing the legalization of the University of Mala Rechica (which was founded in 1994 and had operated illegally). In accordance with Article 5, the status of current students at the University of Tetovo, organized as a civic initiative, will be decided in accordance with Article 198 of the Law on Higher Education from 2000, Article 46 of the Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law on Higher Education from 2003, and the University's statute.

Amendment VI has added new fundamental values to Article 8: equitable representation of people from all communities in public bodies at all levels and in other areas of public life. The essence of this principle is the full respect for the principle of non-discrimination and equal treatment of all persons before the law, which will be especially applied in public administration, public enterprises, the military and the police. In terms of implementation, item 5 of Annex C of the OFA lists the activities that should have been carried out to increase the representation of members of communities that do not constitute the majority in the RM. The international community organized training for police officers and civil servants to begin the implementation of this principle, while several laws were reformed and strategies, plans and work programmes were developed. Every year, the state institutions prepare an Annual Plan for Equitable Representation in collaboration with the Secretariat for Framework Agreement Implementation, while the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination, the Ombudsman's Reports, the Committee's recommendations Inter-community relations and the Agency for Exercising the Rights of Communities and other non-governmental organizations are continually analysing the situation.

In order to put some of these provisions and laws into effect, the Law on Local Self-Government (2002) and the Law on Territorial Organization of Local Self-Government (2004) were passed. The first improved the use of community languages at the municipal level by lowering the official use threshold from 50% to 20% and allowing languages spoken by less than 20% of the local population to be recognized as an official language within the municipality. In accordance with Article 90, besides the Macedonian language and its Cyrillic alphabet, the language and the alphabet, used by at least 20% of the inhabitants of the municipality shall be official language in the municipality. The council of the municipality shall decide on the use of the languages and alphabets spoken by less than 20% of the inhabitants of the municipality. The second Law resulted in the merging, dividing and changing of municipality borders, leading to the reduction of municipalities from 120 to 84, plus the city of Skopje, which saw further reduction to 80 in 2013 when four municipalities became part of the municipality of Kichevo.

3.2. The impact of the OFA on multiethnicity in public life

Considering the previous definitions related to terms *culture* and *public* (life/sphere/sector), emphasis is given to provisions related to language and symbols of non-majority communities, and principles relating to discrimination and equitable representation. The results of OFA implementation have had several impacts, discussed below.

According to the Constitution amendments, the state's constitutive element has several characteristics: on the one hand, it is based on and promotes the civic principle (citizens of the RM), while on the other hand, it retains and emphasizes the ethnic element (descriptions of the citizens as Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Vlach, Serbian, Romani, Bosniak and other people). In addition to ethnic differences, citizens differ in their definitions of being a *people* and *parts of a people*. The determination of *parts of a people* indicates that they are part of a nation that exists outside of Macedonia; some have a 'mother' country (Albanians, Turks and Bosniaks) and others do not (Roma and Vlachs). Aside from ethnic distinctions, the Constitution uses the term *communities*, while certain laws distinguish between *communities* and *non-majority communities*, emphasizing the size of the community. The language spoken by the communities is used as a criterion for determining community size. The term *spoken* refers to a person's ethnic/linguistic community membership. Thus, according to OFA provisions, those who are part of a people, i.e., who belong to non-majority communities, are divided into communities according to the 20% threshold for language use, which reflects the requirement for official use of the language at a national or local level.

Article 1 (2) (3) of the new Language Law implies that Albanian, in addition to Macedonian, is also an official language 'in all organs of the central government in the Republic of Macedonia, central institutions, public enterprises, agencies, directorates, institutions and organizations, commissions, legal entities that discharge public authorities in accordance with the law and other institutions' (Opinion No. 946 / 2019). It therefore appears that the Law promotes bilingualism and in accordance with the official Opinion of the Venice Commission, there is a lack of clarity and precision. Therefore, the Commission has invited the legislator to re-examine some provisions of the Law, in particular regarding bilingualism in judicial proceedings and use of Albanian in internal and interinstitutional communication, e.g., by limiting its scope to written official communication (Opinion No. 946 / 2019). It is also noted that it is not always clear which provisions of the Law ('language(s) spoken by at least 20 % of the citizens'; 'the official language spoken by the citizens'; 'an official language other than Macedonian') refer to Albanian only and which also apply to other community languages (Turkish, Vlach, Serbian, Bosnian, Romani etc).

According to Article 8, banknotes, coins and postal stamps must contain symbols representing the cultural heritage of citizens speaking Macedonian and a language spoken by at least 20% of the population. The Venice Commission commented that the Article provides bilingualism, but perhaps a more appropriate term is biculturalism. The symbols currently in circulation are part of the common cultural heritage, as frescoes from churches, symbols and artistic elements of churches and mosques, and as flora and fauna (e.g., shepherd dog, trout, lynx, peacock). The new Law specifies that they should contain symbols of Macedonian and Albanian cultures, ignoring the other smaller communities.

In contrast, the new Law on flags (from 2005) allows reflection of multiculturalism in a public sphere and promotion of ethnic diversity in the RNM. This Law determines the use of flags (chosen by communities) through which the members of the communities in the RNM express their identity and particularity. This provision explains why the flags of Turkey, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina are displayed on certain occasions and in certain places. The council of the local self-government de-

cides on the use of the flags in public and official life, if citizens who are members of that community constitute more than 50% of the local population. The Law mandates that the flag of the community is displayed together with flag of the RNM. However, certain examples of non-compliance with the rules for displaying flags and the use of languages demonstrate that in some cases, ethnicity takes precedence over state affiliation³.

The new Law on languages also encourages multiculturalism at the local level in units of local self-government where at least 20% of citizens speak a language other than Macedonian. Thirty of the 81 municipalities, including the City of Skopje, are required to ensure official use of one of the non-majority languages. In 2014, in 27 municipalities the Albanian community made up at least 20% of the population, some significantly so, with over 50 % or close to 90% (Blizanakovski, 2014). Three municipalities are required to provide official use of Turkish. Furthermore, Turkish has been made official in five municipalities, despite the fact that the Turkish population there is less than 20%. In one municipality, 28.56% of the population are Serbian and another municipality adopted Serbian as an official language in 2010. The Romani community has a majority in one municipality (60.60%) and has the legal right to use the Romani language officially. From 2010, one municipality introduced both Serbian and Romani as working languages of the Municipality Council. In one municipality where the Vlach language has been made official by a Council decision, the Vlach community makes up 10.53% of the population. In another municipality, the Bosniak community accounts for 17.54% of the population, and the Bosniak language has been designated as official. Thus, 22 of the 31 municipalities have official multilingualism; two non-majority languages are officially used in seven of these municipalities, and three non-majority languages in two of these municipalities.

Results related to education language (OFA Review on Social Cohesion, 2015) show that students from the Albanian community learn primarily in their mother tongue in primary and secondary school; in primary school, more than half of the Turkish community studies in their mother tongue; Serbian is the language of instruction for a small number of Serbian communities; there is some experimental teaching in other languages, but curricula for the Roma, Vlach and Bosniak languages have been developed and came into effect from 2016/17. Higher education is offered Macedonian and Albanian, and state universities offer degrees for teachers in Albanian, Turkish and Serbian.

Implementation of principles of non-discrimination and equitable representation started immediately after the signing of the OFA and has continued for 20 years. There are several pieces of research and reports relating to this principle, but in the present paper, the results obtained by the Ministry of Information Society and Administrations (MISA) of the RNM and by the Ombudsman of the RNM are considered. Several data sources showing the level of implementation in the public sector are explored.

According to MISA's most recent annual report (Register of Public Sector Employees for 2020), the public sector employs 111,589 people, of which 72.49% are Macedonians, 20.85% Albanians, 2.18% Turks, 1.40% Roma, 1.16 % Serbs, 0.51% Bosniaks, 0.49% Vlachs and 0.91% others (or not declared). Albanian community members have highest proportion in the Ombudsman (36.36%) and Ministries (36.14%), particularly in the Ministry of Political System and Inter-Community Relations (85.58%) which

3 Article 8 of the amended Law regulates the manner of displaying community flags, while Article 8-a stipulates that the flag of the RM is displayed with other flags in accordance with the law, a third larger than the other flags. There have been numerous examples of non-compliance: in 2012, a 6m Albanian flag on a 35m mast was placed in Kichevo during Albanian flag day; in a three-month period in 2013 in Kichevo, an Albanian flag with the same dimensions as the state flag was flown; 20m masts with Albanian flags were placed on the Kicevo-Zajas road and in front of the municipality of Arachinovo, in front of the memorial centre (of the victims from 2001) ; in 2020, during Albanian flag day in Kichevo and Tetovo, the Macedonian flag was not displayed; in 2017, some municipality websites (Chair, Saraj, Bogovinje, Studenichani, Vrapchishte and Zhelino) only had data in Albanian.

replaced the Secretariat for the Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. The Ministry of Self-Government has 46.15% Albanian employees and the Ministry of Economy has 50% Albanian employees. Albanians make up 29.09% of the Government's Secretariat, 28.57% of Public Prosecutors (PAP), 26.85% of Parliament, 24.53% of legal entities with public authorities and 21.26% of Public Institutions (PI). Bosniaks are most represented in the Ombudsman's Office (3.90%), the Secretariat of the Government (1.82%), the Government (1.25%) and the Ministries (0.93%; 5.77% in the Ministry of Self-Government, 1.97% in the Ministry of Economy and 1.41% in the Ministry of Culture). Vlachs are most represented in the institution of President of the State (3.51%), the Ombudsman (2.60%), the Government Secretariat (2.73%) and Government (1.25%). Roma are most represented in Government (6.56%), followed by the PI (4.43%), the Ombudsman (2.60%) and the President of the State (1.75%). Serbs have the highest representation in the Judicial Council (5.88%), the Constitutional Court (5%), the Ombudsman (3.90%) and the Independent State Authority (ISA) (1.93%). Turks have the highest representation in the Government (4.06%), the Secretariat (3.64%) and the Ministries (3.28%).

In December 2021, the Ombudsman of RNM published the *Status monitoring report for principle of adequate and equitable representation of 2020*. In 1209 institutions/bodies (89.89% of the 1345 institutions that have a duty to present this kind of report), 75.6% are Macedonians, 17.7% Albanians, 1.6% Turks, 1% Roma, 1.7% Serbs, 1.7% Vlachs, 0.5% Bosniaks and 0.3% others. Compared to 2018, there has been a noticeable decrease of Macedonians (1.2%) and Serbians (0.1%), and an increase of Albanians (1.1%) and Turks (0.2%).

In summary, the OFA's implementation has led to important changes, but in both reports (of MISA and the Ombudsman) it is noted that in some institutions, there is still inadequate representation of minority communities. For the biggest non-majority community (Albanians), inadequate representation was registered in the Government of the RNM (9.38%), Public Prosecutor's Office (10.79%), Public Enterprises (16.73%), National Bank (9.74%), President of the RNM (8.77%), Regulatory Body (12.73%), ISA (16.82%), Government Service (6.53%), Court (15.07%) and Judicial Council (8.82%). For other non-majority communities, there is no representation in the Council of Public Prosecutors, nor in the Judicial Council and the Constitutional Court with the exception of Serbs (5.88% and 5.00%, respectively). In some institutions, all but one of the smaller non-majority communities have less than required representation. Examples include PIs, in which, apart from Vlachs (0.42%), show low figures for Bosniaks (0.45%), Roma (0.69%), Serbs (1.04%) and Turks (2.11%); Public Enterprises, in which, with the exception of Roma (4.43%), show low figures for Bosniaks (0.66%), Vlachs (0.44%), Serbs (1.44%) and Turks (2.27%); the Ministry, in which, apart from Turks (3.28%), show low figures for Bosniaks (0.93%), Vlachs (0.53%), Roma (1.88%) and Serbs (1.25%).

In the following institutions, with the exception of the Vlachs, there is inadequate representation among all other non-majority communities: Government Service (Vlachs 1.26%, Albanians 6.53%, Bosniaks 0.75%, Roma 1.01%, Serbs 0.75%, Turks 0.50%); Independent Body of State Administration (Vlachs 0.67%, Bosniaks 0.64%, Roma 1.36%, Serbs 1.88%, Turks 2.27%); Independent State Body (Vlachs 1.93%, Bosniaks 0.39%, Roma 1.03%, Serbs 1.93%, Turks 0.77%); President of the RSM (Vlachs 3.51%, Bosniaks 0.00%, Roma 1.75%, Serbs 0.00%, Turks 1.75%)

In the Courts, there is a higher representation of Bosniaks (1.07%) and Vlachs (1.16%), and a smaller representation of other non-majority communities (Albanians 0.49%, Roma 0.89%, Serbs 1.56%, Turks 0.44%). The same situation is registered in the Public Prosecutor's Office, where Bosniaks (0.87%) and Vlachs (0.58%) are adequately represented, but Roma (1.46%), Serbs (0.58%) and Turks (2.04%) are less represented. In the Government Secretariat, Bosniaks (1.82%), Vlachs (2.73%) and Turks (3.64%) are represented more than required, while Roma (0.91%) and Serbs (0.00%) are less represented.

There are examples of inadequate representation in several Ministries, including: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (a lower representation of Albanians (16.88%), Roma (1.39%) and Vlachs (0.40%), while Bosniaks (0.70%), Serbs (2.09%) and Turks (2.98%) are better represented); Ministry of Information Society and Administration (Albanians 21.28%, Bosniaks 0.43%, Vlachs 0.43%, Roma 1.70%, Serbs 1.70%, Turks 2.13%); Ministry of Defence (Albanians 12.39%, Bosniaks 0.70%, Vlachs 0.42%, Roma 0.70%, Serbs 1.27%, Turks 2.25%); Ministry of Finance (Albanians 13.07%, Bosniaks 0.34%, Roma 0.85%, Serbs 0.34%, Turks 1.87%); Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Bosniaks 0.46%, Vlachs 0.23%, Roma 0.68%, Serbs 1.14%, Turks 2.28%; Albanians (22.55%) almost reach the required percentage).

In the Ministry of Economy, there is a lower representation of Roma (0.66%) and Serbs (0.66%), while in the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Culture there is inadequate representation of Roma (0.00%) and Turks (0.49% and 0.70%, respectively). Serbs (0.90%) and Turks (2.69%) are less represented in the Ministry of Justice. In the Ministry of Health, Turks have 0.88% representation, while Roma and Serbs are not represented. A similar situation of complete underrepresentation exists in the Ministry of Local Self-Government, where the representation of Serbs is 1.92%, while Roma and Turks are not represented at all.

In the Ministry of Education and Science, the lowest representation is registered among Roma (0.84%), with Serbs (2.11%) and Turks (2.95%) also less represented. Macedonians (1.20%), Vlachs (0.14%) and Serbs (0.35%) are inadequately represented in the Ministry of Political System and Inter-Community Relations. In the Ministry of Transport and Communications, Albanians (13.82%), Serbs (1.63%) and Turks (1.63%) are inadequately represented, while in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Albanians (19.51%), Bosniaks (0.41%) and Turks (0.81%) are inadequately represented.

These data confirm that the smaller ethnic communities are not represented at all in some institutions, once again corroborating a lack of desire and capacity to fully implement the principle of adequate and equitable representation. The Ombudsman's research over the last 14 years (2007-2020) quantitatively indicates apparent progress, but no qualitative progress. However, it is important to note that the number of employees in the public sector has more than doubled since 2007 (from 59,629 to 134,979). The biggest increase is registered among Albanians (9.7%), with increases also seen among Turks (1%), Roma (0.5%) and Bosniaks (0.2%). There has been a large decrease of the number of ethnic Macedonians (10.4%) and Serbs (0.4%), while the number of Vlachs is unchanged. In its report, the Ombudsman directs public criticism towards the Public Prosecutor's Office of the RSM, the Council of Public Prosecutors of the RSM, the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption and the Higher Administrative Court of RSM, who are responsible for implementing annual employment plans according to proper application of the principle of equitable and adequate representation.

In light of the EU Commission's most recent report (6 October 2020), the Council applauds the progress made in advancing the EU reform agenda, but emphasizes the importance of a depoliticized and merit-based public administration. The Council emphasizes the importance of good inter-ethnic relations and welcomes a number of steps taken to increase community trust and further implement the OFA. Special care must be taken to ensure that the rights of smaller non-majority communities are respected and that underrepresentation is addressed. The new Ministry of Political System and Inter-Community Relations should actively implement the 'One Society for All' strategy and work closely with stakeholders to build social cohesion.

Conclusion

Given that the EU is a collection of different nations that work together to shape the Union's future, each new potential member should promote harmony and mutual participation within its national borders, in order to accept differences within the Union. As a result, as in the criteria and in all other European documents, one of the key principles is the rights, respect and protection of minorities in member states. In accordance with the report of the Arbitration Commission of the European Community (Badinter Commission) from 1992, the Macedonian Constitution met the requirements regarding the protection of minorities. Nevertheless, since 2001 the OFA has become one of the basic instruments for supplementing those rights (according to the needs and demands of minorities) and for measuring the progress achieved in the European integration process. In the present research, emphasis is given to the OFA's principle of preservation and reflection of society's multiethnic character in public life. Considering Macedonian multiculturalism (the coexistence of Macedonians, Albanians, Turks, Serbs, Romani, Vlachs, Bosniaks and others, each with their own culture, mother language and religion) and the definitions related to term public, the analysis has explored equitable and adequate representation in the public sector, and the provisions related to use of non-majority language and symbols in public life. The analysis was guided by two questions: whether these provisions have been implemented and whether the results of implementation have led to inter-ethnic integration.

The preservation and reflection of multiethnicity is enabled by the Constitution and various legal norms which guarantee use of non-majority symbols in public places, languages in education, state and public institutions at national and local levels, celebratory holidays and public sector employment levels. The results show that the principle of equitable and adequate representation is partially but not completely implemented, as non-majority communities are not adequately represented in all institutions. This inadequacy may also be due to the lack of adequately educated staff, which is the biggest problem with this type of employment. In recent years, the emphasis in employment processes was on reaching the adequate percentage, which neglected the merit system and can result in quantity over quality.

The theoretical analysis raised the question of whether this approach (in the Macedonian case) is consistent with theoretical views on the preservation and reflection of diversity. Macedonian multiculturalism corresponds to the possible situation Sartori speaks of, in which multiculturalism is expressed as a priority value (its reflection in the public sphere); in such a form, it conflicts with pluralism, which supports and nurtures an open society that reflects spontaneous order, defending but also hindering diversity. This departs from Rex's democratic model of multiculturalism, as there should be a clear distinction between the public sphere (where public and political institutions should provide/promote equal opportunity) and private spheres (where the institutions of the private or community sphere refer to language, religion, family customs, cultural and ethnic traditions). In the Macedonian case, the position for the public sphere argued by Rex, is achieved by respecting the principle of adequate and equitable representation of all citizens belonging to all communities in state bodies and in all public institutions at all levels. However, the application here does not correspond to Rex's model, as it is realized through ethnic employment that disregards the merit principle. This contradicts Rex's claims that public and governmental institutions constitute a kind of civic culture, which is why this area cannot be questioned in order to adapt it to the needs of minority cultures. In this context, the Macedonian model does not correspond to Gutman and Colombo, who argue that public institutions should not recognize specific identities in order to represent citizens equally, because public space must be blind to differences and guided by ideals of universalism and equality. To justify the policy implemented in the Macedonian case, we can refer to Touraine's claim that democracy can be measured

by the ability to manage and include differences in the public sphere, and that it can accept a certain degree of difference but only in the form of individual rights rather than collective rights. Again, this is not the case with the Macedonian example, because the language condition and the '20%' rule are examples of collective rather than individual rights.

Regarding the provisions related to the use of language and symbols of non-majority communities, the results show that their implementation contributed to the reflection of multiculturalism in public life, primarily at the local level. Although there is a requirement of 20% for the use of the languages in the municipalities, a positive example is that in many municipalities the languages of smaller ethnic communities represented by less than 20% are also in official use, by decision of local government. Regarding the use of language at a national level, the present study highlights the newest Law on language (2018) and the comments of the Venice Commission. The key provision is in Article 1 (2), in which, in addition to 'the language spoken by at least 20% of the population', it is specified in parentheses that it is the 'Albanian language'. Two dilemmas arise here. The first is whether the provision will ensure official use of Albanian if the percentage of the population that speaks Albanian falls below 20%. The second is what will happen if another ethnic community reaches the 20% threshold and thus whether the 'Albanian language' clause hinders realization of the language right of the other ethnic community. The Venice Commission also commented that some parts of the Law are confusing and recommended that the legislator re-examine them. However, in its official Opinion, it specified that many provisions of the Language Law go beyond the European standards (defined especially in the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages) and welcomed the willingness of the authorities of the RNM to improve the linguistic situation of communities. The legal provision specifying which two cultural symbols must be used on banknotes alludes to the promotion of biculturalism rather than multiculturalism. However, although the provision of use of flags contributes to the reflection of multiculturalism in the public sphere, it is confusing to see other national flags flying (e.g., Albania, Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina).

One of the main questions in the present study is whether the implementation of these laws led to integration. According to the dictionary, integration is defined as the incorporation of a certain ethnic entity into a society, with the exclusion of any racial discrimination; or the insertion of the individual within a community, through the process of socialization. In the Macedonian case, the main instrument for incorporation is the principle of equitable and adequate representation. Considering the definition of integration as incorporation, in the Macedonian case this is conducted via principle of positive discrimination, i.e., with respect for equitable and adequate representation of all communities in the public sector. Although the issue of ethnicity and employment conflicts with certain theoretical views, it is possible that in the Macedonian case it was the best alternative for integration.

Unlike this principle, the provisions related to use of communities' language and symbols represent instruments for expressing ethnic identity, rather than mechanisms for integration. This seems to foster ethnic identity and contributes to the neglect of common citizen identity. Certain examples of non-compliance with rules for displaying flags and use of languages demonstrate that in some cases, ethnicity takes precedence over state affiliation.

Another key question is whether the use of languages and symbols led to inter-ethnic integration. It seems that these provisions are a double-edged sword; they contribute to the social incorporation, promotion and reflection of each minority community culture separately, but this is not a contribution to common multiculturalism that would be recognizable as Macedonian multiculturalism. Common values in which every community would be recognized are missing.

It may be concluded that the European integration process continues to represent a challenge for the RNM. Achieving the European standards, set through conditions for implementing the OFA, is one of the basic challenges that led to the promotion of multiculturalism and the inclusion of ethnic communities in many social spheres. This means that the European integration challenges directly affect the implementation of each provision, including the promotion of multiculturalism, inclusion in society and inter-ethnic tolerance that the EU requires. Some inclusion processes are still in progress, but generally the state has taken important steps in fulfilling the European conditions.