



PRESS RELEASE

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Macedonia: are we to change the name to enter NATO- part 2

The majority of (60%) the citizens of Macedonia do not agree the country to change its (constitutional) name in order to become a member of NATO. Still a significant number of respondents think that Macedonia should alter its name to enter NATO. These are the results of the survey that the Center for Research and Policy Making made 12-13 April 2008, based on a sample of 1100 surveyed persons respecting the regional, gender, and ethnic distribution among the population.

The citizens' perspectives on this question are **drastically changed** compared to the views they expressed in a CRPM survey conducted on 8-9 March 2008, when 83% of the citizens were against changes to the name of the country in order to get NATO membership. The latest survey reveals that the Macedonian **Albanians have changed their opinion**. While a month ago 52% of the ethnic Albanians agreed to changes of the name of the country so that Macedonia gets NATO membership, now 94% of them agree to such a change. In fact **two thirds of the respondents** that would change the name of the country for Macedonia's NATO membership are ethnic Albanians. Meanwhile, the number of **ethnic Macedonians** that are against changing the name in return for NATO membership decreased from 95% to 80%.

Most of the citizens (78%) of all ethnic backgrounds are for **continuation of the talks with Greece**; while 19% are for Macedonia to stop the talks (3% gave no answer). Interestingly, about half, or **49% of the ethnic Macedonians** were in favor of continuing the negotiations with Greece, 23% would stop talking, while 28% did not give any answer. Contrary to them a great majority of the ethnic Albanians were against stopping the negotiations.

Macedonian citizens are against changes to the name of the country but support the negotiation process to continue. These attitudes are not coherent having in mind that Greece insists on negotiations that would lead to and **changes of the name of the Republic of Macedonia** that are **mutually acceptable**. It is very unlikely that Macedonia can keep its name through negotiations. The Macedonian political leaders should publicly state the truth



that continuing the negotiations will most likely mean changes to the name of the country, i.e. a “compromise.”

Answering to the question “what is the level of your confidence in NATO today after the NATO Summit in Bucharest ” 30% answered that it is bigger, 23% answered it is smaller, while 28% said that it remains the same (9% gave no answer). What is important to notice is that among the Macedonians the confidence has decreased among 30% of the surveyed, increased among 6%, remained the same among 37%, while 27% did not answer the question. The attitude of the ethnic Albanians is quite uniform, as 96% of them have increased level of confidence in NATO after the Summit in Bucharest.

The Center for Research and Policy Making already [wrote](#) that siding with Greek nationalism and telling Macedonia that it should find a solution to the “name dispute” is among others telling Skopje to **accept changes of its name and identity** and that there is a danger that the public opinion will turn against EU and NATO. There is a real danger that nationalism and ethnocentrism will be on the rise. In a situation where ethnic Macedonians and Albanians have a diametrically opposite views on two crucial questions for the future of the country, regarding the changes to the name of Macedonia in order to get a NATO membership and the need for recognizing Kosovo (see the results of the 19th of March [CRPM survey](#)) there is a **clear and present danger for increasing the antagonism** which in electoral campaign and the post-electoral government coalition making can be explosive.

The problem is that with its support to the Greek objections to the Macedonian name the leverage of EU on Macedonian politics is decreasing and the possibilities for further soft mediation of Macedonian- Albanian political disputes will diminish. There is a risk that both Macedonian and Albanian nationalism will grow. Radicals among the Albanians have anyways been encouraged by the recent declaration and recognition of Kosovo’s independence. Supporting the Greek position **signals to nationalist around the Balkans** that Macedonia is not yet a “normal” country, a state that has a secure and prosperous future in the EU.

With Kosovo’s independence and Serbia’s objections already complicating Balkan realities the EU does not need another crisis. **Macedonian stability is crucial** as any new conflict there could cause a wider conflict including Bulgaria, Turkey, and Albania. At the moment the US seems to understand this and pledges support to Macedonia. The time is ripe to do more. Denying the existence of Macedonians and their country as such did not help solve the



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Macedonian problem and did not contribute to Balkan stability in the past, and it will not do so in the future. Only a settlement that recognizes the Macedonians and respects their national rights will be of lasting value and contribute to stability and tranquility in Southeastern Europe.

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CRPM PROMOTING POLICY DEBATE ON THE ISSUE

CRPM recognizes the need for a greater public debate on the issue both domestically and internationally and accepts views by different authors. Read at our web site a short [analysis](#) by a distinguished Macedonian political scientist, Dane Taleski, a legal [brief](#) by Ms. Jana Lozanoska, LL.M., as well as the [opinion](#) of Dr. Igor Janev, senior researcher at the Institute for Political Studies in Belgrade. In addition, at the CRPM website check the links to an [interview](#) and an [op-ed](#) by the world renowned director Milcho Manchevski, as well as the [letter](#) to the New York Times by the CRPM associate and Deputy Minister of Health Mr. Vlado Lazarevik.