

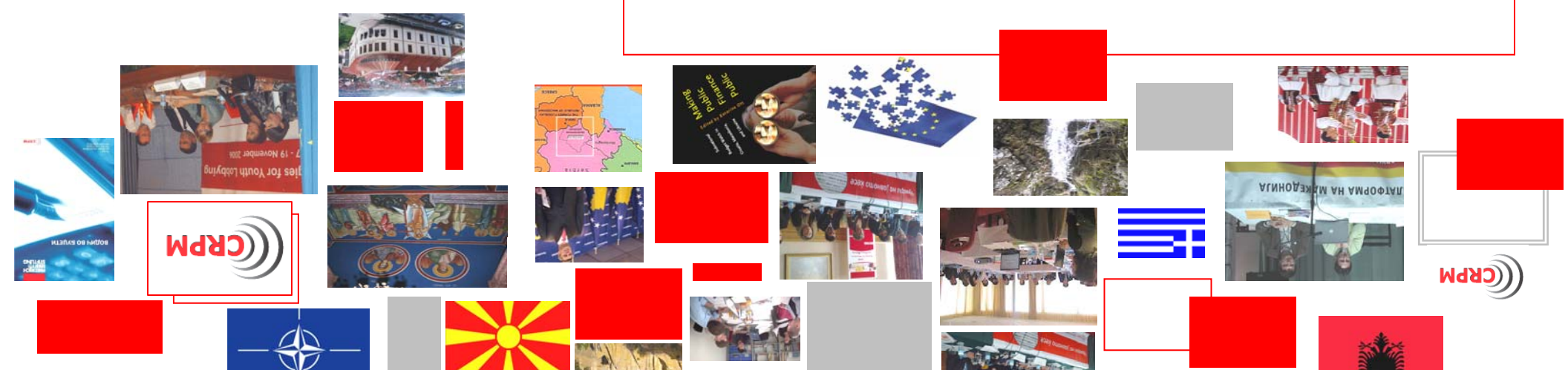


Center for Research and Policy Making



NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2008



Macedonia is once again facing turbulent times in a far from stabilized region. Concerns over the impact of Kosovo's independence on Macedonia have been raised. The government coalition is in shambles. Athens has continued its pressure on NATO and EU allies to stall or reject the Macedonian integration drive until the country changes its name. But forcing Macedonia to choose between its name and identity and NATO membership amounts to the choice David (Woody Harrelson) and Diana Murphy (Demi Moore) had in *Indecent Proposal* a 1993 drama directed by Adrian Lyne when billionaire John Gage (Robert Redford) offered them one million dollars to spend a night with Diana. You can also compare Macedonia's possibility of a choice with that of *Faust*, a protagonist of a classic German legend, the basis for many literary, artistic, cinematic, and musical works, in which he makes a pact with the Devil. Macedonian citizens instinctively know what is at stake, 83% refusing to changes of the name even if NATO membership is at stake. (see recent CRPM survey results) Tempering with the right to own identity of citizens of a democratic nation is not a good principle, doing it at this stage in the Balkans is inviting more troubles in the region. We at the Center for Research and Policy Making are focusing our efforts on cutting edge analysis that provides the public with relevant information on the most pressing issues facing the country. More details about our most current efforts you will find in this newsletter.

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Sincerely,
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Riste Zmejkoski edited the newsletter with the assistance of Zhidas Daskalovski and Marija Risteska. Stay tuned to the latest activities of CRPM via internet at www.crpm.org.mk.

A Survey

Are we to change the name to enter NATO ?

The vast majority of the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, 83%, do not agree for changes of the constitutional name of the country, if that is the price to be paid for NATO membership. A similar opinion the citizens have regarding the question of the official name of the country to be used in international communication. Whopping 81% of the citizens do not agree other countries and international organizations to refer to Macedonia with anything else than the constitutional name. These are some of the results of the survey made by the Center for Research and Policy Making based on a sample of 1100 surveyed persons respecting the regional and ethnic distribution among the population, during the weekend of 7th to 9th March 2008.

Among the ethnic Albanians 52% agree to changes to the constitutional name of the country in order to get NATO membership, while 51% of the Macedonian Albanians agree to a different than the constitutional name of the country to be used in international communication (i.e. Macedonia to be referred to differently by other countries and international organizations). On the other hand, 95% of the ethnic Macedonians, are against changes of the name in order to get NATO membership while 91% of them are against to changes of constitutional name of the country to be used in international communication. The other ethnic groups in the country (Turks, Serbs, Roma, Bosniacs, and others) in great numbers refuse any changes of the name to get NATO membership or to be used in international communication.

The current imbroglio over the Macedonian name and the final outcome of its bid for NATO membership might have repercussions on the perception of the Alliance among Macedonian citizens. Answering to the question "what is the level of your confidence in NATO today compared to the one last year" 16% answered that it is bigger, 22% answered it is smaller, while 35% said that it remains the same.

Although a vast majority of the citizens reject changes of the constitutional name of the country, when asked "in case the country must change the name would you agree to any of the following suggestions" reportedly made by the UN envoy Matthew Nimetz 36% would agree to the name Democratic Republic of Macedonia, 12% would agree to Independent Republic of Macedonia, 3% to Constitutional Republic of Macedonia, 5% to New Republic of Macedonia. 44% gave no answer indicating that they might be against changes of the name at any cost.

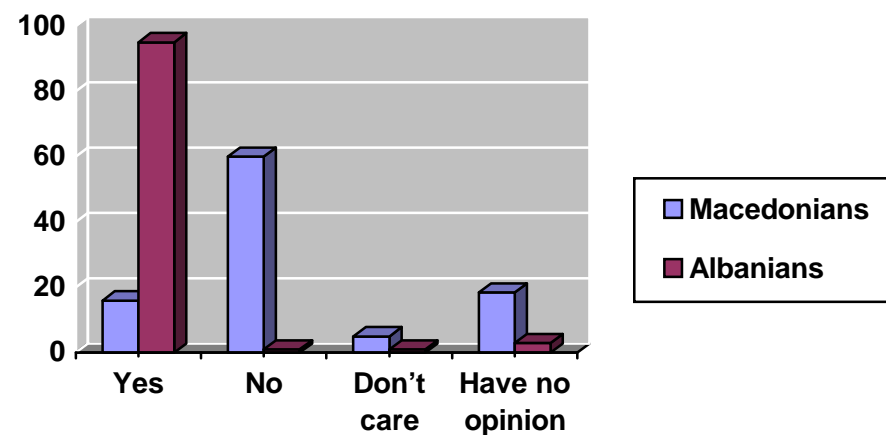
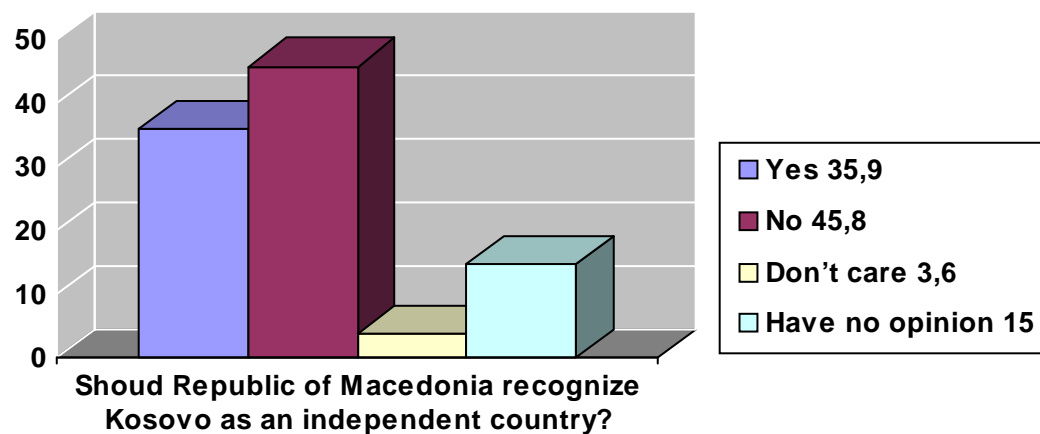
For more results please visit our web page www.crpm.org.mk



A Survey

To recognize Kosovo or not- a Macedonian dilemma

The results of the CRPM survey show that 45% of the Macedonian citizens do not agree Macedonia to recognize Kosovo. A smaller number of citizens, 35% would like Macedonia to recognize the northern neighbor, 4% do not care, while 15% have no opinion on this issue. Not surprisingly 95% of the Macedonian Albanians are in favor of the recognition while 60% of the Macedonians are against. These are the results of the survey CRPM conducted using a representative sample between 6th-8th March 2008. A majority of the citizens (56%) believe that before recognizing Kosovo the border between the two countries should be delineated. For 74% of the Macedonians this is a priority issue, while 85% of the ethnic Albanians believe that the demarcation of the border is not a priority and that it is more important that Skopje recognizes Pristina first. Macedonian citizens have a split opinion on the question whether the recognition of Kosovo will increase Macedonian security. Some 27.5% think that the Macedonian security will benefit from the recognition of Kosovo, 25% believe that the level of security will decrease, another 25% stated that the level of security will remain the same, while 22% did not answer this question. A vast majority of the Macedonian Albanians, 82% believe that the security will increase.



A Project

Macedonian Budget Project

In 2004, the Center for Research and Policy Making established the project Macedonian Budget Project. Four years later we are proud to say that we implemented five phases of this project. We started with the phase one, when we analyzed budget transparency on a local level. CRPM research was on sub-national budget monitoring in Macedonia. It offers a general analysis of the decentralization reforms in the country with a particular attention to the possibilities for budget watch on local government level. As examples from the two municipalities studied, Shtip and Gostivar, show, budgetary monitoring on sub-national level is very difficult to undertake in practice. The publication from this phase: *Making Public Finance Public* can be downloaded from our web site.

In phase two, we published the *Citizens Guide to Budgets*. This guide serves as a basis for improving good governance and fiscal transparency of local government units. The aim is also to have comprehensive, reliable, and useful budget information available for interested citizens. Another key issue is whether the legislature and the civil society are able to participate effectively in the budget process. Effective participation refers to the opportunities for the legislature and civil society to make their viewpoints known and to have these views taken seriously. This requires that the budget process must be opened for interested parties to influence the budget and assess whether government/local authorities undertook what it planned. The publication can also be downloaded from our web site.

In phase three CRPM delivered altogether seven trainings throughout the county. We trained more than 140 participants. The trainings will help the budgetary process through explaining the practical use of the *Citizens Guide to Budgets* and providing tailored- for- Macedonian audiences examples of the budget preparation and monitoring.

The fourth phase was conducted within the International Budget Project (IBP). International Budget Project (IBP) in coordination with the Center on Budget and Policy, currently working with partners in over 80 countries around the world (including the Republic of Macedonia). Hereby the aim was to produce an independent assessment of budget transparency and responsible budgeting practices at the central government level. The final outcome of the research will be creation of an Open Budget Index, a ranking of countries based on the information provided to the public on the national budgetary process.

A fifth phase of MBP is the project Unleashing Budget Watchdogs. CRPM in the past ten months has been working on this project. The aim was to strength the civil control of the national budget, the spending of public money. For that purpose the CRPM team built a national network¹ of Budget Watchdogs organizations from various regions of Macedonia. Supervised by CRPM the network members prepared five budgetary analyses. The analyses were promoted in Skopje and other cities in Macedonia. CRPM team envisions that the "Budget Watchdog" network will continue to work actively monitoring the spending of each denar of the Macedonian citizens. The publication can be downloaded from our web site.

More information for Macedonian Budget Project on our web site www.crpm.org.mk in MBP section.

¹The network „Budget watchdogs“: FORUM-CSRD, Center for Civil Communications, Center for Civic Initiative, Arka Consulting, Civil Association, Bairska svetlina, ORT-Kichevo and Association for Emancipation. Solidarity and Equality of Women - ESE



Local Economic Dynamics Series

Project: Discovering the hidden opportunities

CRPM has recently completed the project “Discovering the hidden opportunities”, carried out jointly with READ from Blagoevgrad. It aimed at conducting an in-depth policy research allowing identifying and analyzing the potential for socio-economic development in the Municipalities of Delchevo and Blagoevgrad, thus locating the opportunities for boosting the sustainable cross-border cooperation between both towns and municipalities.

The state of affairs in both municipalities has been rarely and insufficiently investigated, thus being hardly known for a wider public in Macedonia and Bulgaria. The policy research on comparative advantages and weaknesses of Delchevo and Blagoevgrad are hardly evident, thus minimizing the possibilities for deepening of the trans-border cooperation and extracting the mutual benefits for both municipalities. Though the petty cross-border trade activities between Delchevo and Blagoevgrad are thriving, there is lack of wider vision and strategy for more sophisticated development of bilateral socio-economic relations, thus preventing the exchange of experience and good practice. Such strategy is badly needed as the local economic development and regional cooperation are among the top priorities for EU. Analyzing the existing potentials for socio-economic growth in both municipalities as well as investigating the current state of affairs and intensity and quality of bilateral relations between Delchevo and Blagoevgrad should provide the opportunity for proposing concrete measures for utilizing the “undiscovered wealth” of both municipalities, i.e. its tourist and folkloristic attractions.

The publication is finalized, pending approval by the donor European Agency for Reconstruction.

Quick point ●

At the moment the vast majority of Delchevo companies are engaged in the assembly phase of the production of clothes through outward processing agreements/programs. One potential avenue for growth is the development of tourist industry. The CRPM analysis recommends to the municipality to base the short-term tourism strategy mainly on myths and legends. Delchevo abounds of them, they are appealing and convenient for presentation to various groups tourists and what’s more - they require no big investments. It is a kind of a Loch Ness-like approach. All it takes for a start is to devise a good story and link it up to a certain location; and then - to promote aggressively. The rest is likely to come by itself. For this occasion, we propose further elaboration and promotion of the following myths and legends: *The Rock that Saves Pregnancy*, *The Petrified Inlaws of Kukule*, *The Healing Powers of St. Panteleimon the All-Merciful* and *Raven - the Birthplace of the First Slavic Alphabet*.



In next period

Programme activities

“Assessing impact of Diagnosis Related Groups on unpaid work of women” - implementing partners: UNIFEM; ESMA; OZO Sveti Nikole; Aureola Struga

- Focus group with doctors and nurses held on 13 March 2008
- Assessment of public savings in the health policy area with the introduction of DRG undergoing
- Assessment of the impact the DRG measure will have on family budgets ongoing
- Study under the project being prepared and expected to be presented for consultation with peers in beginning of April
- Study published and disseminated in mid April

“Benchmarking study for EU integration of Macedonia- Economy and welfare” - implementing partner: CENS

- Study produced and peer reviewed
- Study to be published in April
- Study to be promoted in May

“Analyzing electoral legislation” - implementing partner OSCE

- Project launched
- Call for experts opened in March
- Experts selected
- Peer review board established in March and first meeting held
- Research on the various aspects of this policy area commences in April

“Analyzing women/minority employment constraints” - implementing partner World Bank

- Contract signed in March
- Project launched
- Focus group questionnaires developed in March
- Focus groups to be organized in course of April
- Report to be written and consulted in May

