

# **Police Reform in the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia**

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Many experts elaborated that there is the necessity for reforming the Macedonian police, and, at the same time, outlined this need in numerous important documents.<sup>1</sup> They all are convinced of the fact that a police reform is imperative for the further Macedonian integration to the European Union (EU).

In the first part of this short presentation about a successful reform of the Macedonian police, it should be outlined that it was not an easy and simple task for those who were and are involved in this very important activity on the Macedonian way to be as faster as possible completely integrated to the EU.

With the very important aid from the EU, a lot of different projects and activities have been realized within the framework of the police reform in the Republic of Macedonia. The projects are as follows:

- 2002: CHJAT PROJECT
- 2004: PRP
- 2005-2007: with the support of international police organizations such as EUPOL PROXIMA, OSCE, ICITAP, DFID and EUPAT.

## **Objectives of the Police Reforms**

The main objectives of the police reforms in the Republic of Macedonia were to achieve the following aims:

- Efficiency of the police,

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<sup>1</sup> Example:

- Stabilization and Association Agreement dated 9 April 2001
- Framework Agreement August 2001
- Draft Police Reform Strategy dated 2.9.2002
- MoI Police Reform Project Groupe

- Organization, expertise and cost effectiveness,
- Modern technical equipment,
- Responsibility, integrity and motivation,
- Police as a service for the citizens.

One additional step forward which will make the reform of the police more successful, is the adoption of the Police Law by the Macedonian Parliament on 30<sup>th</sup> October.

### **Twinning Projects for Police Reform**

The total value of this project which is entirely financed by the European Agency for Reconstruction, is Euro 2.8 million, and its realization is planned to be done in the period of 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2005 to 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2007. The Senior Macedonian partner for this project is the German federal state Brandenburg.

The realization of this twinning project is a logical follow-up after the military and robust-oriented projects in Macedonia. Of course, it should be mentioned that Macedonia passed from a user country to a stability provider country.

It is very important to mention that there is a compatibility of the twinning project with related projects and initiatives. Furthermore, the police reform in the Republic of Macedonia would not be possible if the Macedonian Police had not received different kinds of donation, totaling about Euro 50 million to this date.

The sensitive issues that should be achieved with the final realization of the twinning project for police reforms in the Republic of Macedonia are as follows:

- Devolution of the competencies,
- Number of the police employees and equal representation of the ethnic communities,
- Transfer of the personnel from the Army of the Republic of Macedonia to the Border Police,

- Legal framework,
- Education and training,
- Financial implication of the reforms,
- Inter–institutional co-operation and partnership,
- Coordination and
- Transparency.

However, following achievements have to be mentioned as the expected results of the Twinning Project:

- Successful projects realization,
- Contribution to an improved implementation of the rule of law and human rights,
- More liable police and more efficient police service and
- More secure citizens.

### **Transfer of Responsibilities**

A very important part of the Police reforms in the Republic of Macedonia is the transfer of responsibility for the green border. In the past, the Army of the Republic of Macedonia was responsible for the green border, but a period of 13 months (May 2004-August 2005) was sufficient for the Macedonian Ministry of the Interior (MoI) to overtake responsibilities for the green borders with the four neighboring countries.<sup>2</sup>

An internal analysis in the Ministry of the Interior indicated that all kinds of criminal activities across the borders were significantly reduced, in comparison to the period when the Army was responsible for the green border.

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<sup>2</sup> MoI overtook responsibilities for the green border in following periods:

- Greece, May 2004
- Bulgaria, September 2004
- Serbia and Montenegro, May 2005
- Albania, August 2005

The above-mentioned analysis is an additional fact that the reform of the Macedonian Police is really successful.

## **Cross-border Co-operation with Neighboring Countries**

The co-operation of the Macedonian MoI with the neighboring countries has already been established during the last two years and is very successful.

Regarding cross-border co-operation with Bulgaria, Albania and Greece, following activities should be highlighted:

- Regular meetings at two levels
  - regional (every three months)
  - local (once per week or per month),
- Exchange of information (appointed contact officers for information exchange),
- Improved co-operation in the field of deportation,
- Coordinated activities regarding the prevention of illegal crossings and the facilitation of traffic at the border crossing points,
- With Albania, an established joint working group which prepared a draft protocol on joint patrolling.

Regarding the co-operation with Serbia, there is an established co-operation at the border crossing points between the competent authorities (on information exchange and the co-operation in the field of deportation). However, at the same time, there is unfortunately a weak co-operation with the Serbian Army at the green border.

Nonetheless, there is expectation for further strengthening of the co-operation when the Serbian border police will overtake responsibility for the green border with Republic of Macedonia.

The last part of this this short presentation, which shortly describes what was achieved in the area of the police reform in the Republic of Macedonia, concerns the relations with the international organizations

that are still responsible for the security in Kosovo, and also still have responsibility for Kosovo's green border with Macedonia.

The Macedonian cross-border co-operation with UNMIK includes the following mutual and common activities:

- Regular meetings between border crossing points commanders,
- Regular meetings on the central and regional level in accordance with the Interim Protocol for Police Co-operation between the MoI and UNMIK,
- Exchange of information and
- Appointed contact officers for information exchange.

Furthermore, there are common activities for cross-border co-operation with KFOR as well:

- Regular meetings of the working group for border security established by KFOR and now led by the border police,
- Regular meetings on:
  - local level (two per month)
  - regional level (once per month),
- Exchange of information through the liaison officers (Multinational Brigade East) located at the Regional Centre North HQ (in Skopje).

Police reforms is a highly complicated and difficult process wherever it is done – in Macedonia, too. They are a very important and crucial step on the way to the EU and NATO, and this is the main reason why the efforts to make the police reforms in Macedonia as successful as possible must continue.