Research in Social Sciences in Macedonia

State-of-Affairs, Challenges and Recommendations for Public Policy Improvements

FOUNDATION OPEN SOCIETY MACEDONIA
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Prepared in the framework of the Regional Research Promotion Programme in the Western Balkans (RRPP), which is run by the University of Fribourg upon a mandate of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, SDC, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

CONTENTS

The present publication titled *Research in Social Sciences in Macedonia: State-of-Affairs, Challenges and Recommendations for Public Policy Improvements* is the result of our joint efforts aimed to promote policies that govern research and status of young researchers in the field of social sciences in Macedonia; activities implemented as part of the *Regional Research Promotion Programme in the Western Balkans (RRPP)*.

The publication is comprised of two sections. The first section includes public policy papers developed by seven young researchers on four different topics. Both, the topics and the authors were selected on a public call. Presented papers are result of applied research conducted in the course of 2012. During the development of these papers, young researchers were provided with mentoring support by docent Veli Kreci, PhD, docent Neda Zdraveva, PhD, and associate professor Irena Stefoska, PhD. Training in writing and development of effective public policy papers and additional consultations were provided by Neda Korunovska and Lidija Dimova. However, research findings, positions and opinions expressed in the papers are copyrighted.

The second section of this publication presents the views of some of the advocacy team members: prof. Maja Bojadzievska, PhD, prof. Katerina Kolozova, PhD, Irena Cvetkovik and Dane Taleski, PhD students, and journalist Biljana Jovanovska. Their positions were presented at five public debates organized in the course of 2012. (More information on the debates is available at: http://rrpp-westernbalkans.net/en/policy-dialogue/Macedonia.html).

Creation of framework for dialogue is one of the key components aimed to promote policies in the field of research in social sciences in Macedonia. Despite significant amendments adopted to laws and policies governing this area, we believe that recommendations presented in this publication represent a substantial contribution to improving the status of young researchers and promoting support to research in social sciences. We would have been much happier with the achievements if we had also attracted the interest of representatives of relevant ministries to take part in our activities. Nevertheless, it is our belief that we have created one of the rare opportunities these days – under analytical and consultation process to pursue public, critically-oriented and constructive analysis of state-of-affairs in this field.

Having in mind that Programme's timeframe and financial scope impose obstacles to covering situations and challenges in entirety, we hope that in the next programme period (2013 – 2016) we will join efforts and use the opportunity to make more valuable contribution and achieve given goals.

More information on the RRPP is available at: http://rrpp-westernbalkans.net/en/about.html

From editors

POLICY PAPERS

CONTENTS

FROM ECONOMIC DEMAGOGY TO ECONOMIC RESEARCH IN MACEDONIA: SISYPHEAN TASK?

Marjan Petreski, PhD
University American College Skopje
(October, 2012)

ABSTRACT

Economic research in Macedonia, both in terms of paper/article publication in international papers and in terms of applying for and implementing international projects, is characterized by low quality and quantity. Reasons thereof can be divided into three groups. First, reasons related to economic researchers are identified in the lack of personal motivation, insufficient funding available, teaching workload and lack of technical and skills on developing methodology frameworks. Second, reasons related to research institutions include insufficient financial and motivational support provided to researchers and non-allocation of funds for research work. Third, reasons related to public policy imply relative non-transparency, lack of objectivity, occasional enforcement and low level of budget funds allocated to support research work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To adjust the legislation governing this field to the actual situation and to provide legal differentiation between technical and social sciences and humanities, as well as to create comprehensive procedure on valuing all aspects of scientific research, which in addition to publication of international papers with impact factor also includes international publications and other forms of scientific and research work;
- to allocate more funds from the Budget of the Republic of Macedonia to support scientific and research work ;
- at university level, to adopt rulebooks that regulate academic staff's science workload, as well as a system on rewards and sanctions based on results from scientific and research work;
- to organize training on research and quantitative skills for the teaching stuff, and to ensure broad dissemination of information on projects, scientific journals and conferences;
- project managers to motivate project team members, especially the younger members, for the purpose of ensuring their active involvement in applying for and implementing international projects, accompanied with clear delegation of tasks and responsibilities;
- researchers to make personal effort to learn from more experienced colleagues within or beyond the institution, especially in regard to appearing as co-authors in international papers, involvement in joint projects, and like.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades, economic science and research in Macedonia was in transition. System on economic research promotion in the former Yugoslavia was mainly based on publishing books, which often implied publication of course textbooks. In that system common was the perception that publication of books or textbooks is the summit of academic staff's scientific career. Number of scientific journals was relatively limited, and they predominantly included papers and articles authored by domestic scientists, which often prevented international scientific and theoretical and methodology comparability and rigorousness of papers published.

In the course of the overall transition in Macedonia (from 1991 to present), this starting position for *economic researchers* was not only neglected in terms of promotion, but suffered from further degradation as well. The perception that publication of textbooks is the summit of scientific work is still broadly present. In the academic arena, there are only three scientific journals profiled in economy issues, those being: CEA Journal of Economics, UTMS Journal of Economics and SEEU Review. Moreover, their international character is threatened due to absence and/or virtual presence of international editorial board, as well as due to complete absence or absence of rigorous review process. Number of *economic research papers published* in the international arena is very low, i.e., in the period 1991-2012 only 18 economic papers were enlisted in the scientific journals database hosted at *Web of Science,* authored by around 280 economic scholars in Macedonia. Failure to differentiate between papers published in academic journals and articles/columns published in daily newspapers represents another problem and can be easily determined by brief glance at the official websites of many Faculties of Economy in the country. Namely, in the section on scientific work researchers enlist columns published in daily newspapers, seminar papers, opinions given to the press, papers presented at conferences, and like. Similar is the situation concerning applications for and participation in *international projects.* Universities and other scientific centres in the field of economy reported around 50 international projects, but more than half of them are of non-competitive (donor) character.

As regards the in-country *public policy,* ideas and solutions that might contribute to overcoming the unfavourable situation concerning (economic) research work in

Macedonia were present until recent times. Namely, the state-of-affairs characterized by ineffective public policy to support (economic) research work was further complicated with the adoption of the Law on Higher Education,[1] which includes legal provisions stipulating the requirements for appointment to academic titles whereby teachers are required to have *published papers in international journals* (with impact factor)[2]. In that, from a position of public policy based on minimum and loosely defined criteria and complacent enforcement thereof in the past, new legal changes have led to another extreme: maximizing criteria for academic career advancement. This means that if in the past candidates for academic titles were requested to have an insignificant number of published papers with impact factor, today another extreme is introduced whereby teachers are required to have published at least two papers in international journals with impact factor, although the journal's impact factor cannot be considered the single criterion for paper's quality assessment by the international academic community. On the other hand, in terms of project funding, the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) has announced several calls/open competitions for funding small projects and young researchers, but the selection procedure and the outcome remain unknown in public.

On this account, the **problem with economic research work** in Macedonia is identified in low quality and quantity. The **problem with public policy making** aimed to encourage and provide a framework on (economic) research work in Macedonia is identified in the fact that policy making is inconsistent, random, does not reflect the actual state-of-affairs, and is often intermittent, unpredictable and non-transparent. In other words, public policy does not reflect the actual situation. Hence, this **research survey aims** to determine the reasons behind problems affecting economic research work in Macedonia and to provide recommendations for policy makers at state level and at the level of universities and research centres, in order to advocate for development of adequately structured, up-to-date, public and institutional policy that encourages and supports economic research work.

This research targeted all economic researchers active on the territory of Macedonia. It uses a two-fold methodology approach, i.e., desk research and survey. The desk research aims to assess the state-of-affairs concerning publication of international scientific works and papers and is based on lists compiled from the *Web of Science*, as well as the state-of-affairs concerning realized international projects on the basis of lists compiled by Faculties of Economy and Research Centres. Also, the desk research portion analysed the state-of-affairs concerning public policy making in science, and provides critical review of legal solutions contained in the Law on Higher

[1] More specifically, the Law on Amending the Law on Higher Education ("*Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*" no.17/2011).
[2] This provision will enter into effect on 1st January 2014.

Education, the Law on Scientific and Research Activity and the accompanying bylaws, as well as analysis of open competitions for research projects in (economic) science announced by the MES. Methodology's second component implies a field-based survey, for the purpose of diagnosing the status of economic research work in Macedonia. The survey questionnaire inquired about the reasons behind the current situation concerning publication of works and papers in international journals; the reasons behind the poor engagement in applying for and implementing international projects; and inquired about interviewees' opinion on the role of policy makers in Macedonia in improving the overall situation. Based on the parameters of the target group, the survey identified 270 economic researchers in Macedonia. It was conducted in the period 1 May – 15 June 2012. Only 74 of all interviewees answered all questions and this accounts for a response rate of around 28%, which is within the margins of common response rates. The survey sample is considered highly representative on the basis of several parameters, as shown in the Annex.

This policy paper has the following structure: section two provides an overview of survey results accompanied with adequate discussion of findings; section three summarizes the findings; section four proposes an alternative solution to the problem issue; and section five lays down detailed recommendations for policy makers in science.

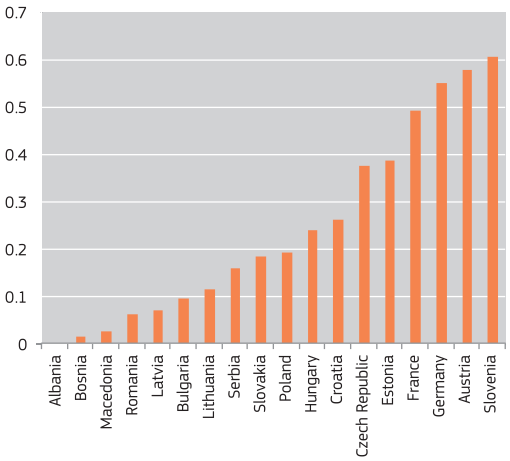
2. PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

This section describes the problem issue addressed by the present policy paper, and presents survey results. Survey results are divided into three thematic areas: publication of papers, projects, public policy.

2.1. ECONOMIC RESEARCH AND SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATION

In Macedonia, separate statistics on the number of international papers published in the field of economic sciences is not collated. However, according to several indicators available, publication of economic science-related research papers on international level is very low. In 2012, Web of Science (database with scientific journals and papers) enlisted 18 economic papers published in the period 1991 – to present, where some institutions appear not to have a single staff member (teacher or scholar) included in the database. Broken down on annual level, less than one economic paper or 0.00044 papers per 1,000 citizens are published annually. According to the State Statistical Office (SSO, 2009), only 204 papers in social sciences and humanities were reported for the year 2009, 7 of which were of international character (which does not necessarily mean that they appeared in the Web of Science and/or that they were papers published in the field of economy). In comparison, the World Development Indicators (2012) provide an overview on the number of international scientific papers published per 1,000 citizens for several countries, some of which are shown in Chart 1. It should be noted that the number of papers indicated per country refers to papers published in all scientific disciplines, where the relevant figure for Macedonia indicates that average number of papers published per 1,000 citizens is 0.028 and places Macedonia on the third lowest rank.

Chart 1 - Number of published scientific papers per 1.000 Citizens

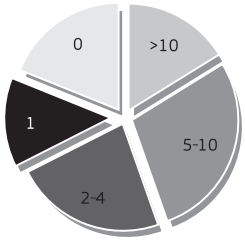


Source: World Development Indicators, 2012

Chart 2 shows that almost one third of interviewees reported that they have published none to one international paper, but more interesting is the fact that 52% of those who reported at least one paper, also added that the paper in question is

enlisted in a different database from the basic economic databases or is not enlisted in any database. Additional qualitative impression on the state-of-affairs related to publication of international papers in the field of economy can be obtained by quick glance at lists indicating scientific activity of teachers and scholars, published on the official websites of respective institutions, i.e., the list of scientific works/papers are minimalistic in terms of number of papers published and most frequently include columns published in daily newspapers, presentations given at roundtables and conferences, reports, public policy papers, seminar papers and like. Data shown in Table 1 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the average number of international papers published by researchers according to

Chart 2 - Number of published international papers



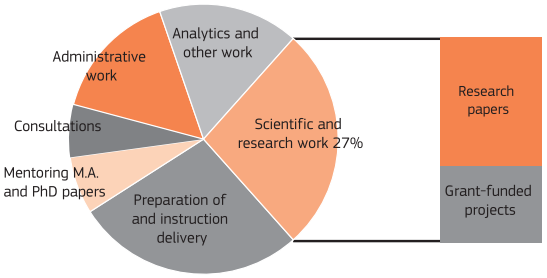
Source: Research survey conducted by the author

Table 1	Number of internationally published papers	
	t-Statistics	Outcome
Country where the interviewee completed the highest education degree - Macedonia versus abroad	1.00	No difference
Highest education degree - M.A. holders and PhD students versus PhD holders	5.35***	On average, PhD holders have published more papers
Research field - Macro-, micro-economy, finances versus marketing, management, business	-2.14**	On average, researchers in macro, micro economy and finance have published less papers
Type of institution - public versus private	-0.09	No difference
Years spent on economic research - up to and equal to 5 years versus more than 5 years	3.63***	On average, researchers who have spent more than 5 years on economic research have published more papers
Researcher's age - up to 35 years versus older than 35 years.	3.83***	On average, young researchers have published less papers

Source: Calculations made by the author on the basis of survey results.

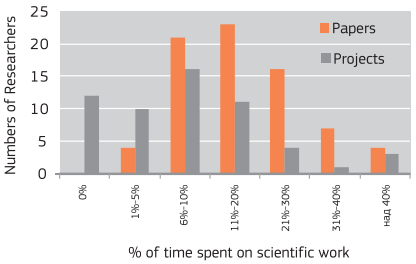
Note:*,** and *** refer to statistical significance of variables at 10, 5 and 1%, respectively.

Chart 3 -Breakdown of economic researchers' working hours



Source: Research survey conducted by the author

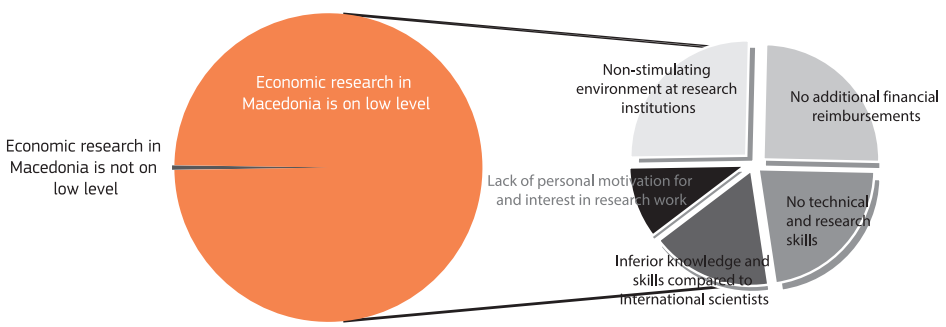
Chart 4 - Number of researchers versus time spent on scientific and research work



the country where they have completed the highest education degree or the type of institution (public or private) where they work. Nevertheless, researchers with PhD degree, researchers in the field of business and management, and researchers who have worked for more than five years on economic research and those above the age of 35, on average, publish more international papers.

Survey results on the question concerning the number of working hours interviewees spend on economic research (Charts 3 and 4) and on the question inquiring about their opinion on the scope and reasons for economic research in Macedonia (Chart 5) are in line with the low number of international papers published. On average, economic researchers spend only 27% of their working hours on research work, i.e., they spend more time on administrative and other technical work (Chart 3). In addition, Chart 4 shows that most researchers dedicate 30% of their time on research papers and up to 20% on research projects. Similarly, only three from the 76 interviewees (Chart 5) disagree with the statement that economic research is on low level, while others indicated that reasons behind this situation are: no additional reimbursement for research work, non-stimulating environment at their institution, lack of required

Chart 5 – Reasons for low level of research work in the field of economy



Source: Research survey conducted by the author

research skills, inferior knowledge compared to their international peers, and lack of personal motivation for research work. Except for the personal motivation, these reasons are almost equally important for and result in low level of research work performed in Macedonia

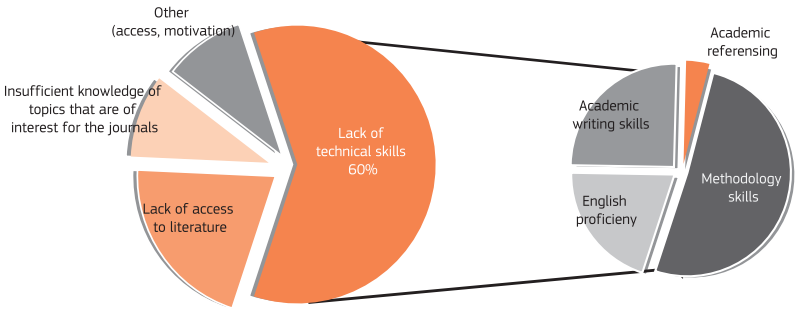
However, a more detailed analysis of reasons behind the low level of research activity and, consequently, the low number of international papers published in the field of economy, shows that the following are of crutial importance:

- lack of or insufficient technical and researching skills required;
- lack of information on the requirements for and the process on publishing scientific works/papers;
- lack of or insufficient financial incentives.

As high as 60% of interviewees responded that problems related to preparation for research work are due to lack of technical skills required for preparation of papers such as (Chart 6): no knowledge on academic referencing practices, no academic writing skills and English language proficiency, as well as no skills for methodology and empirical research design and implementation. Also, as high as 73% of interviewees indicated that problems related to publication of research papers are due to lack of information on the requirements for and the process on publishing international papers, such as (Chart 7): insufficient knowledge on the range of international journals, lack of contacts with editors of journals; lack of knowledge about, as well as duration and rigorousness of the procedure on publishing papers and the desire to avoid disappointment from possible negative response. Be that as it may, surprising is the fact that almost three quarters of interviewees responded that if the research process that results with publication of papers implies additional financial reimbursement, they would engage in more research activities, and none of the interviewees stated that they would not engage in research work due to the complexity of the process on publishing international papers, and/or due to the poor motivational environment at their institution (Chart 8).

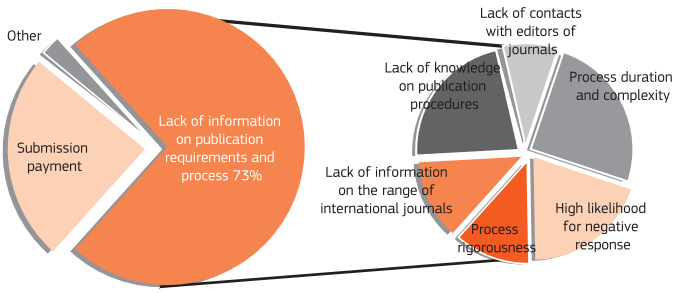
Evidence in support of the lack of information on the requirements for and the process on publishing international papers can also be seen in the fact that the interviewees reported on total of 84 scientific papers enlisted in the Web of Science, but the cross-referencing exercise showed that this database enlists only 18 papers published by economic researchers from Macedonia.

Chart 6 - Obstacles to preparations of scientific papers



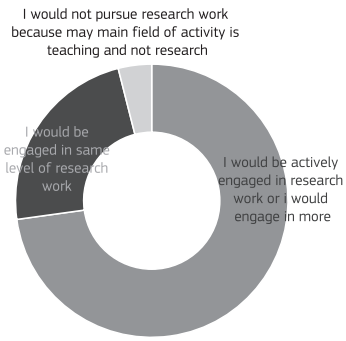
Source: Research survey conducted by the author

Chart 7 - Obstacles to publishing scientific papers



Source: Research survey conducted by the author

Chart 8 – If hours spent on scientific work are subject to additional reimbursement, then:



Source: Research survey conducted by the author

Finally, Table 2 provides a statistical analysis on the probability for publishing more international papers or the probability for these papers to be enlisted in the journal databases such as Web of Science, IDEAS/RepEC and EconLit, calculated on the basis of variables concerning past preparations on research methods, participation in implementation of research projects, participation in preparation of project proposals, country where the interviewee obtained his/her postgraduate degree (Macedonia or abroad) and time spent on research work (preparation of international papers) versus time spent on teaching activities.

Table 2	Statistical analysis on the probability for publication of papers in international journals	
	Dependent variables	
Independent variables	Number of international papers published†	Does the international paper appear in a database: Web of Science, IDEAS, EconLit?‡
I studied research methods, formal education (Yes=1)	0,005	-0,342
I studied research methods, informal education (Yes =1)	-0,120	-0,144
Number of engagements in implementing international projects (None = 1; More than 10 = 5)	0,336***	0,324*
Number of engagements in developing international project proposals (None = 1 to More than 10 = 5)	0,253**	-0,108
Highest education degree completed (Macedonia=1)	0,239	0,108
Hours spent on preparing international papers versus hours spent on preparing lectures	0,014**	0,020***

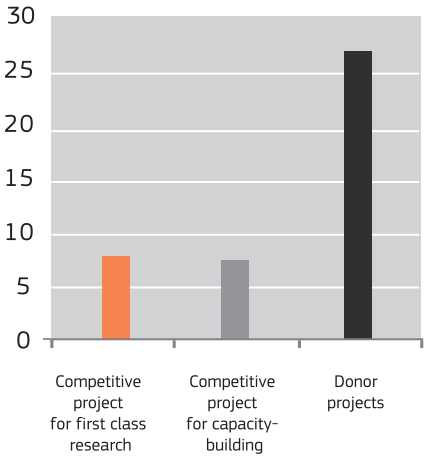
Source: Calculations made by the author on the basis of survey results.
Notes:*, ** and *** refer to statistical significance of variables at 10, 5 and 1%, respectively. † refers to regression calculated with ordered probit modelling technique; ‡ refers to regression calculated with probit modelling technique.

Results of these statistical calculations show that participation in developing project proposals and implementation of international projects increase the probability for publication of papers in international journals. Surprisingly, formal education on research methods does not affect the probability for publication of international papers. Also, the more hours researches spend on research work versus teaching work the higher is the probability for publication of international papers, while the country where they have completed the highest education degree does not play an important role in that regard. When the dependent variable is reduced to publication of international paper in at least one scientifically significant database, such as Web of Science, IDEAS and EconLit, then the statistical significance is given to experience in implementing projects and time spent on preparation of international papers. This dependent variable may be of greater significance given that many interviewees reported that they have international papers, but the paper in question does not appear in any of the databases, which ultimately brings under question the paper's eligibility for publication in scientific journals.

2.2. INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND RESEARCH PROJECTS

In Macedonia, the universities and other scientific and research institutions do not keep statistics on the number of international research and scientific projects implemented in the field of economic science. Analysis of information available on the official websites of Faculties of Economy, Economic Institutes and Research Centres shows very low number of international projects implemented in the period 1991-2012 (Chart 9), i.e., the 12 institutions implemented a total of 49 projects, which accounts for 4 projects per institution for the entire period or 2.5 projects per year for all institutions. Moreover, around 60% of projects were of so-called donor character, i.e., they were directly agreed with the funding entity and were not subject to rigorous process on competition and selection for project implementation. Namely, majority of projects implemented were funded by donors and programs such as USAID, UNDP, Tempus, the World Bank, the Foundation Open Society, etc. On the other hand, obvious is the absence of projects implemented with financial funds from the Seventh Framework Programme, the Global Development Network, and like.

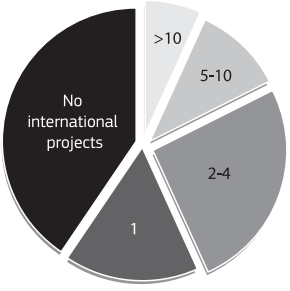
Chart 9 – Implemented scientific projects



Source: Official websites of Faculties/Institutions

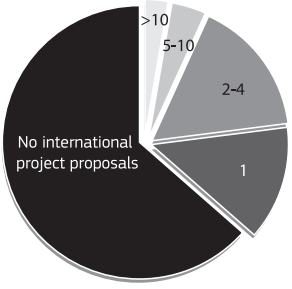
According to official statistics, from the total of 200 projects reported to the SSO in 2009, only 35 are projects implemented in the field of social sciences and humanities (which is a category of disciplines broader than economic sciences, but SSO does not keep desegregated statistics), where 11 projects were funded by the MES and only 6 projects were funded by an international fund. Low level of applying for and implementing international projects, as well as the nature of handful of projects implemented, is supported by the fact that more than 40% of interviewees have not participated in implementation of international projects (Chart 10), and 63% of them have not participated in developing international project proposals (Chart 11). Moreover, the average success rate among researchers who participated in developing international project proposals is 22%. Table 3 shows there is no statistically significant difference in the number of projects implemented according to the country where the

Chart 10 - Particiaption in international projects



Source: Research survey conducted by the author

Chart 11 – Participation in international project proposals



Source: Research survey conducted by the author

researchers completed the highest education degree, the type of institution (private or public) where they work and their field of research, however, on average, researchers with PhD degrees who have spent more than 5 years on economic research work and those above the age of 35 have implemented more international projects.

Table 3	Number of international projects implemented	
	t-Statistics	Outcome
Country where the interviewee has completed the highest education degree - Macedonia versus abroad	0,25	No difference
Highest education degree - M.A. and PhD students versus PhD holders	3,67***	On average, PhD holders have more projects
Research field - Macro-, micro-economy, finances versus marketing, management, business	1,51	No difference
Type of institution - public versus private	-0,11	No difference
Years spent on economic research work - up to and equal to 5 years versus more than 5 years	3,63***	On average, researchers who have spent more than 5 years on economic research work have implemented more projects
Researcher's age - up to 35 years versus older than 35 years.	3,62***	On average, young researchers have implemented less projects

Source: Calculations made by the author on the basis of survey results.
Note:*,** and *** refer to statistical significance of variables at 10, 5 and 1%, respectively.

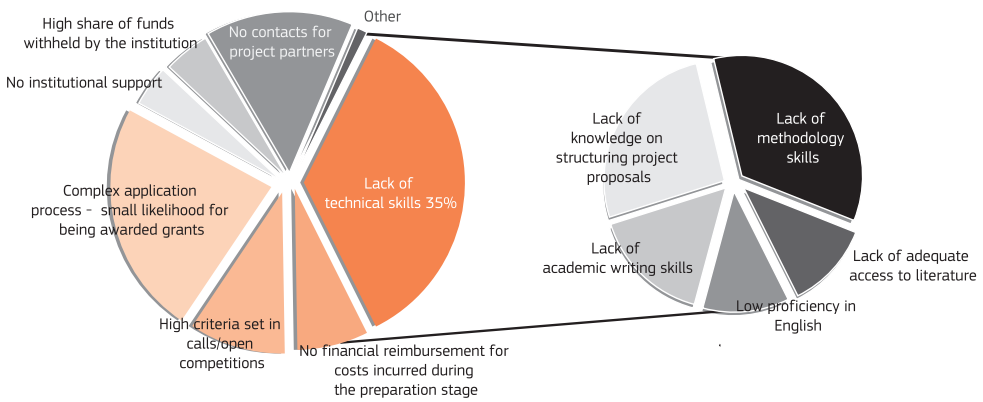
Reasons behind the low level of applying for and implementing international projects can be divided into three groups:

- lack of or insufficient technical and research skills required;
- rigorous criteria in the process on applying for and selection of international projects applications;
- pre-conception that research results would not be taken into account in the policy making process for which they are intended to.

Chart 12 provides an overview of opinions related to obstacles to submitting successful applications for international projects. Although lack of or insufficient technical and research skills were indicated as the main reason behind the low number of international projects implemented (35%), it is ranked as twice less important reason in regard to publishing papers in international journals (Chart 5). Nevertheless, the same share of interviewees (33%) believes that high criteria on the calls for international projects and the complexity of the application process are among main obstacles to applying for international projects and reduce the likelihood for success.

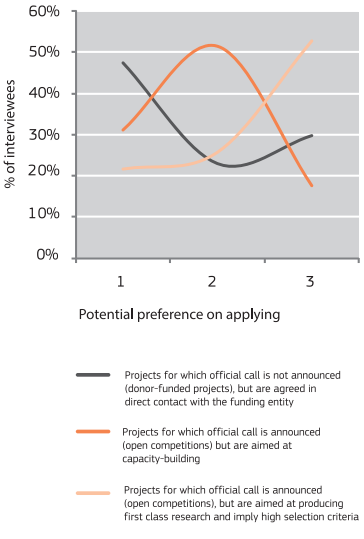
In this regard, almost half of the interviewees indicated that they prefer to apply to calls for international projects announced by donors, in particular because usually they do not imply open competition, while their second choice would be calls for international projects that imply competition and lower criteria, but are aimed at capacity building, whereas applying to open calls for international projects characterized by competition and high selection criteria would be their third choice (Chart 13). Signifi-

Chart 12 – Obstacles to applying for international projects



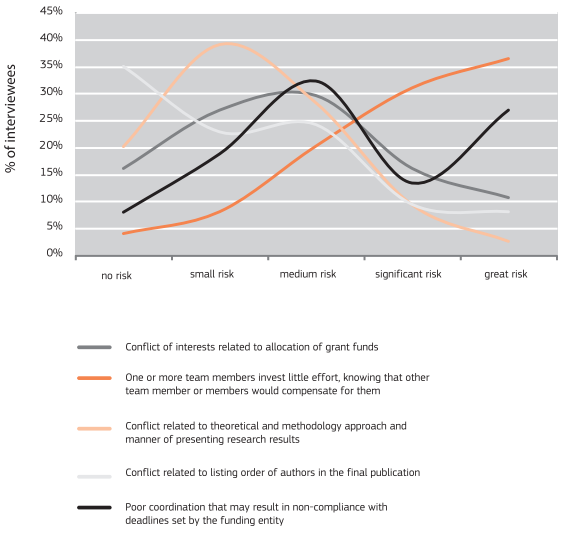
Source: Research survey conducted by the author

Chart 13 - Preferences on applying for international scientific projects



Source: Research survey conducted by the author

Chart 14 – Risk related to implementation of international projects



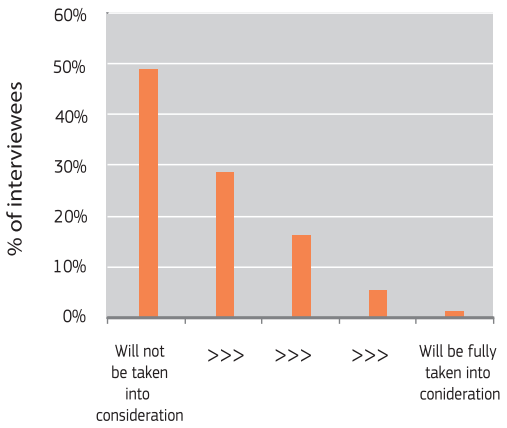
Source: Research survey conducted by the author

cant 15% of interviewees indicated that lack of international contacts for potential project partners is an obstacle to applying for international projects.

As for implementation of international research projects, interviewees indicated several potential problems. Data on Chart 14 show that majority of interviewees indicated that once an international project application is approved, the biggest risk to project implementation is one or more team members failing to carry out their share of work knowing that other team members would compensate for them. Non-compliance with project deadlines set by the funding entity, which may jeopardize the project completion, is assessed as medium to high risk. Potential conflicts in terms of allocation of grant funds and methodology and theoretical approach to project implementation are assessed as low to medium risks.

According to interviewees' responses, the last but not the least important reason behind the potentially low engagement in applying for and implementing international projects is their belief that research results would not influence the decision taken by policy makers in the relevant field (Chart 15). Almost half of the interviewees responded that research results would not affect the policy making process, while more than one quarter of interviewees said that they would have little influence in the policy making process.

Chart 15 – To what extent do project results influence the policy making process?



Source: Research survey conducted by the author

Finally, Table 4 examines the potential links between researchers' engagement in project implementation and certain indicators, such as: having published international papers, formal education in research methods, preparation of project proposals, the country where the researcher completed the highest education degree, time spent on project implementation, belief that project findings will be taken into account by policy makers, as well as their opinion on the role of techniques, skills, criteria and rigorous criteria in the application and selection process, as well as the institutional support.

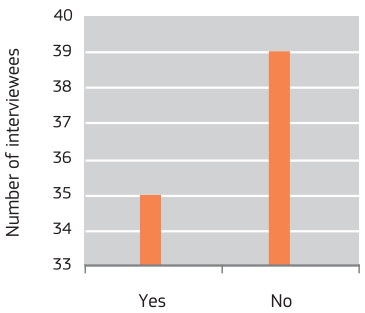
Results from the statistical analysis provide interesting findings. As was the case with international papers (Table 2), the formal education in research methods does not influence implementation of international projects, but great importance in that regard is given to having published international papers and participation in developing project proposals. This suggests that researchers' engagement in different types of scientific and research work (papers, projects, proposals) are processes that mutually support and reinforce each other, which means that engagement in one type of activities will produce results in different type of research work. Engagement of this type also implies that the interviewees spend more time on research work, which appears as significant variable, as shown in Table 2. On the other hand, the interviewees believe that if research findings influence the policy makers it would contribute to implementation of more projects. As for the three groups of potential obstacles to project implementation, the interviewees indicated that the institution where they work may have limited influence on the motivation of researchers to participate in project implementation, whereas - contrary to the expectations – the technical skills and rigorous selection criteria on calls for proposals are not important. These results suggest that although 35% and 33% of interviewees (Chart 12) identified technical skills and rigorous selection process, respectively, as significant obstacles to preparation of project proposals, the researchers can easily overcome them if the institution supports such activities, if they dedicate more time on research projects and probably if their engagement in research work is properly rewarded.

Table 4	Statistical analysis on the probability for implementing international projects
	Dependent variable
Independent variables	Number of international projects implemented††
I studied research methods, formal education (Yes=1)	0,406
Number of international papers published (None=1; More than 10=5)	0,334**
Number of engagements in preparation of international project proposals (None = 1; More than 10 = 5)	0,740***
Completion of highest education degree (Macedonia = 1)	0,306
Hours spent on implementing international projects versus hours spent on preparing lectures	0,010*
Belief that project findings would influence the policy making process (1 = little influence; 5 = high influence)	0,174*
Perception that insufficient technical skills are problem	-0,108
Perception that application and selection criteria on calls for proposals are rigorous	0,227
Perception that the institution does not provide motivating environment for project implementation and/or withholds high share of project funds	-0,500*

Source: Calculations made by the author on the basis of survey results.
Notes: *, ** and *** refer to statistical significance of variables at 10, 5 and 1%, respectively. † refers to regression calculated with ordered probit modelling technique.

2.3. PUBLIC POLICY IN SCIENCE

Chart 16 – Are you informed about the manner science activity is regulated?

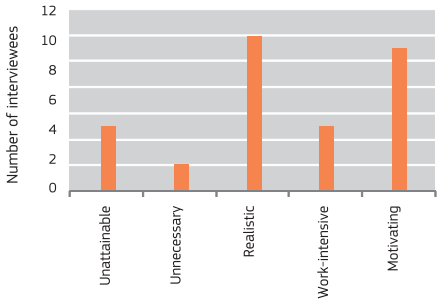


Source: Research survey

Until recently, there were no clear rules governing the field of public policy in science and research. Appointment to academic titles required the candidates to demonstrate results in scientific and research work for a period of five years, but the legal framework did not offer any definition about the manner in which results and scientific work will be valued. This situation was changed with the adoption of amendments to the Law on Higher Education in April 2011[3], which stipulate that appointment to academic title will be conditioned with at least two papers published in international journals with impact factor hosted at the *Web of Science* or at least four science papers published, which - in addition to publishing papers in journals - also include papers/articles published in inventories from conferences, research reports, international books, chapters in books and like. Thus, from the relatively minimal and non-demanding policy in this domain, the legal framework was changed and now imposes maximum criteria for appointment to academic titles. This means that if in the past the candidates were required to have published an insignificant number of papers in impact factor journals (see Section 3.1), today the candidates are required to have published at least two papers in international journals with impact factor. Surprisingly, Chart 16 shows that more than half of people affected by this law are not informed about this provision, but Charts 17 and 18 show that, in general, the interviewees have a positive opinion about the law. Namely, two-thirds of the interviewees believe that the provision from the Law on Higher Education whereby candidates for academic titles are required to have published at least two international papers in impact factor journals assessed it as realistic and motivating legal solution. Also, almost half of interviewees characterized the Law on Higher Education as an instrument that would stimulate their scientific and research work, but stressed that they are preoccupied with their teaching workload, which prevents them to engage more in scientific and research work.

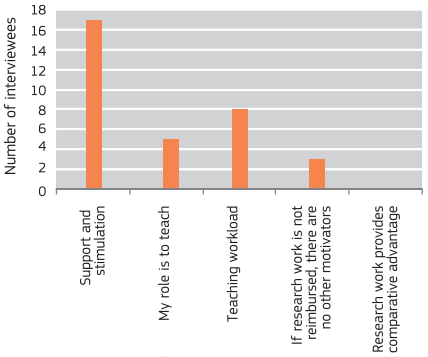
[3] See footnote 1

Chart 17 – Provision of the Law on Higher Education on minimum two papers published in international journals with impact factor



Source: Research survey

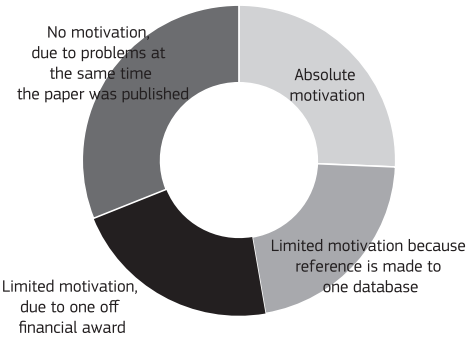
Chart 18 – Role of the Law on Higher Education in researchers' scientific and research work



Source: Research survey

In order to support the law's enforcement, in 2011 and 2012, MES announced open competitions on awarding one off funds for scientific and research paper published in international journals with impact factor hosted on the *Web of Science*. Only 7 from total of 267 papers submitted (2.6%) were pubished in the field of economy. None of the total of 151 papers rewarded was published in the field of economy. However, interviewees' opinions about this outcome are divided, as shown on Chart 19, mainly due to the fact that many researchers still face various obstacles until they submit their papers for publication in international journals. Also, a significant share of interviewees stressed the limits related to reference made to one database with journals, such as the *Web of Science*.

Chart 19 – Motivation with one off financial award for published international paper



Source: Research survey

As regards project funding, MES announced several open competitions for financing scientific and research projects. 56 from the total of 496 project applications (11%) submitted in the period 2006-2012 were in the field of social sciences and humanities (Table 5). 9 from total of 103 projects (8.7%) approved for funding were in the field of social sciences and humanities. As for the period 2010-2012, for which

Table 5		MES-funded projects	
		Projects submitted	Projects approved
2006-2009	Total	128	63
	Social sciences and humanities	10	4
	Economic sciences	-	-
2010-2012	Total	368	40
	Social sciences and humanities	46	5
	Economic sciences	11	2

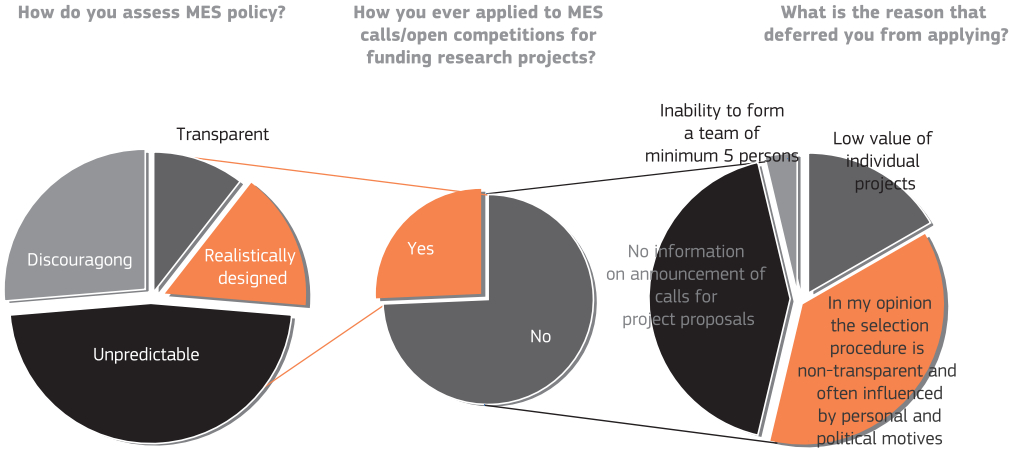
Source: MES

data are available, only 3% of project applications were in the field of the economy, while only 5% of the total number of projects approved for funding implied an economic background.[4] Accordingly, the low number of economic project applications may indicate to lack of information and disinterest on the part of economic researchers to engage in projects for which funding was approved, while the low number of economic project applications approved for funding may indicate to low quality of project proposals. In line with this finding is the fact that about three quarters of interviewees did not participate in open competitions announced by MES (Chart 20), and they indicated that reasons for their non-participation in open competitions include non-transparent selection procedure; the selection process is often influenced by personal and political motives, and low value of individual projects. It should be noted that 43% of these interviewees were not informed about the open competitions, whereas three quarters of those who had any experience with applying to open calls for funding research projects assessed MES's policy as unpredictable and discouraging, which is mainly due to irregular announcement of calls/open competitions, failure to publish notifications on projects approved for funding and failure to publish information concerning the manner in which applications will be assessed, credibility of application evaluation commission members and like.

Table 6 provides more details on the issue addressed in Chart 20. Namely, it shows the results from the statistical analysis on the probability for the researcher to submit project applications to open calls announced by MES as a variable related to his/her engagement in scientific and research activity and suggests that if the researcher participates in developing and implementing international projects and spends more working hours on international papers and international projects, the higher is the probability that he/she will submit project applications to open competitions announced by MES.

[4] The table with information on bilateral projects, which also indicates to low number of economic projects, is given in the Annex to this paper.

Chart 20 – MES Policy on project funding



Source: Research survey conducted by the author

Table 6	Statistical analysis on the probability for submitting project applications to open competitions announced by MES
	Dependent variable
Independent variables	Have you submitted project proposals to MES? †
My papers are enlisted in the Web of Science, IDEAS and/or EconLit	0,321
Number of international projects where I have participated (None = 1; More than 10 = 5)	0,215*
Number of international project proposals where I have participated (None = 1; More than 10 = 5)	0,378**
Hours spent on preparing international papers versus hours spent on preparing lectures	0,015*
Hours spent on implementing international projects versus hours spent on preparing lectures	0,021**

Source: Calculations are made by the author on the basis of survey results.
Notes:*, ** and *** refer to the statistical significance of variables at 10, 5 and 1%, respectively. † refers to regression calculated with probit modelling technique.

3. CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the discussion above, the conclusion is inferred that the scope of economic research in the Republic of Macedonia, both in terms of publishing international papers and in terms of applying for and implementing international projects, is low. Reasons behind this situation and identified by this research can be divided into three groups.

First group of reasons related to economic researchers include: insufficient personal motivation for conducting economic research work; lack of funds, be it in the form of direct funding for research work or adequate reimbursement to researches for hours spent on research work; lack of technical skills and skills on methodology framework design; researchers' workload is dominated by teaching activities; lack of institutional support; lack of information on the process for applying with and publishing international papers; high and rigorous criteria on calls for project proposals; belief that research findings would not be taken into account in the policy making process and like. In addition, significant share of interviewees believe that there are certain inherent obstacles to research work in our country, such as: risk related to teamwork, namely when one team member is expected to complete the work of another team member; risk related to conflict of interest in allocating grant funds; and risk related to non-compliance with deadlines set by the funding entity. Finally, the research survey shows that the processes on preparation and publication of international papers and on applying for and implementing international project mutually support and reinforce each other and therefore researchers engaged in one type of research work are also engaged in other types of work.

As regards the **second** group of reasons, the detailed analysis indicates that although technical skills and rigorous selection process are probably significant obstacles to preparation of projects, researchers are prepared to overcome them if the institution where they work supports research activities, if they can spend more time on research work, and if their engagement is adequately rewarded. These three conclusions are relevant for the institutional set-up in scientific and research activity at universities and other scientific centres.

Third group of reasons identified by the research survey shows that, although MES' policy in the field of science enjoys relative support on the part of economic researchers, significant number of them assess the policy as unpredictable and discouraging; they are not informed on the manner in which research activity is regulated or on the fact that MES occasionally announces open competitions for funding research projects. Another share of interviewees expressed doubts about the objec-

tivity and transparency in the project selection procedure, while a third group indicated the low value of MES-funded projects in terms of the requirement for a project to include a minimum of five researchers. However, this research survey concludes that researchers who are more engaged in scientific and research work are likely to more frequently submit project applications to MES, despite the characteristics they have identified in regard to the selection process.

4. ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION

Having in mind that conclusions from this analysis showed major differences in terms of economic researchers' interest and possibilities on one hand, and the public policy set-up, on the other hand, **the alternative solution's essence** lies in adjusting the legal regulations by recognizing broad range of scientific and research activity, instead of focusing only on publications in international journals. Table 7 provides a proposal on various aspects of scientific and research activity, which can be recognized and can be appropriately weighted. In that, a list of minimum points required for appointment to scientific and research titles can be developed on the basis of this table.

Table 7 – Alternative solution for comprehensive valuation of scientific and research work

Group	Description of scientific work/lecture/research project	Points	Period for which points are calculated (years)
Scientific books and monographs	Distinguished scientific book and monograph of international significance	10	4
	Scientific book and monograph of international significance	7	4
	Scientific book and monograph of national significance	4	3
Chapters in books and summaries of books in journals	Chapter in book of international significance; summary of books in leading journals; in topic based inventory of papers with international significance	4	3
	Chapter in book of national significance; summary of books in journals; in topic-based inventory of papers with national significance	2	1
Published papers with international significance	Paper published in international journal with impact factor hosted at Web of Science	15	5
	Paper published in international journal without impact factor	7	4
	Plenary lecture delivered at a meeting/conference of international significance, upon an invitation	6	3
	Paper presented at international meeting/conference	5	2
Published papers with national significance	Paper published in national journals	2	1
	Introductory lecture at meeting/conference of national significance	1,5	1
	Paper presented at meeting/conference of national significance	0,5	1
Work on project proposals	Work on international project proposal, as leading or co-leading researcher	8	1
	Work on international project proposal, as assistant researcher	6	1
	Work on national project proposal, as leading or co-leading researcher	5	1
	Work on national project proposal, as assistant researcher	3	1
Work on research projects	Work on international project whose final result includes report, monograph, and/or study, and where the teacher is leading or co-leading researcher	10	for the project duration
	Work on international project whose final result includes report, monograph, and/or study, and where the teacher is assistant researcher	7	for the project duration
	Work on national project whose final result includes report, monograph, and/or study, and where the teacher is leading or co-leading researcher	5	for the duration
	Work on national project whose final result includes report, monograph, and/or study, and where the teacher is assistant researcher	3	for the project duration

Table 7 – Alternative solution for comprehensive valuation of scientific and research work			
Editorial and review work	Editor in international journal with impact factor hosted at Web of Science	6	for the engagement duration
	Editor in international journal without impact factor	5	for the engagement duration
	Editor in national journal	2	for the engagement duration
	Reviewer in international journal with impact factor hosted at Web of Science	4	for the engagement duration
	Reviewer in international journal without impact factor	3	for the engagement duration
	Reviewer in national journal	0,5	for the engagement duration
	Participation in programme or other committees at scientific conferences of international character	3	for the engagement duration
	Participation in programme or other committees at scientific conference of national character	1,5	for the engagement duration
Dissertations and theses	Has his/her PhD thesis defended	6	3
	Has his/her Master thesis defended	3	2
Supervision of scientific papers	Supervises PhD thesis	4	for the engagement duration, but minimum 4 years
	Supervises Master thesis	2	1
	Has been referenced in the section Acknowledgements of scientific papers published in international journals	2	1
Fellowship visits	Fellowship visit to USA, EU Member-States, Canada, Japan, Switzerland, Norway, to work on research paper	5	for the visit duration
	Fellowship visit to other country, to work on research paper	3	for the visit duration

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The alternative solution referred to in Section 4 requires accompanying measures and efforts on the part of all three groups of actors in the process, and therefore this policy paper provides three groups of recommendations each targeting economic researches, universities/scientific centres and public policy, respectively. They are given in Table 8 and are mainly self-explanatory.

Table 8 – Recommendations

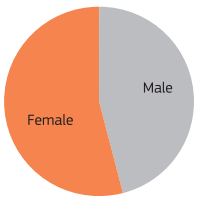
Recommendations for economic researchers	Recommendations for universities and scientific centres' policies	Recommendations for public policy
- greater personal engagement for individual or team preparation of papers and/or projects; - project managers to motivate project team members, especially the younger team members, for the purpose of ensuring their active involvement in applying for and implementing international projects, by means of clear delegation of tasks and responsibilities; - greater personal organization to reduce administrative and technical workload for the benefit of scientific and research work; - personal efforts are needed on the part of researchers to overcome certain technical obstacles in carrying out scientific and research work (to improve English language skills, learn about referencing and obtain information on the array of international journals and publication procedures, and like);	- to organize training for the teaching staff on research and quantitative skills, as well as on academic writing skills; - to establish a fund endowed by universities and research centres (for example, inter-university conference), which will be later used to organize scientific conferences and/or establish an international journal for social sciences; - to disseminate information on scientific activities, conferences, journals, and like by appointing a responsible person at the institution; - to adopt rulebooks that regulate academic workload, where scientific and research work accounts for minimum 40% of overall workload; - to condition portion of the salary with results attained in scientific and research work;	- to adjust primary and secondary legislation to the actual situation that may require legal differentiation between technical and social sciences in the Republic of Macedonia; - to design a system of incentives for publications in international journals; - to allocate more funds from the Budget of the Republic of Macedonia to support scientific and research projects; - to develop detailed and clear procedure and deadlines for applying for and decision-taking on projects, as well as to guarantee transparent assessment of project applications (by involving foreign project evaluators, if possible); - universities to be granted access to electronic databases that host journals (such as Ebsco, Econlit, and like), as well as to databases hosting indexes of journals (such as Web of Science, SCOPUS and like), for example through the National University Library; - to create a specially designated portal that would collect all information on international calls/open competitions and will initially enable networking of national institutions for submitting joint project applications, and which will be opened to international portals in an advanced stage whereby foreign institutions can find partners from Macedonia for applying for and implementing joint projects;

- personal efforts to learn from more experienced colleagues within or beyond the institution, especially for the purpose of appearing as co-authors in international papers, involvement in joint projects, and like.	- at university level, to develop a system of incentives for publications in international journals with impact factor; - in cases of international projects, to reduce fund withholding for the institution to the lowest level (for example, 5-10% of project's value).	- competent authorities to ensure dissemination of research results (thorugh MES's portal or the specially designated portal) so that research findings are made due account of by policy-makers or concerned stakeholders.

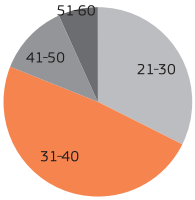
ANNEX

Representativeness of the survey research sampl

Gender

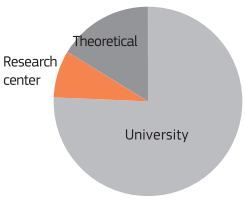


Age

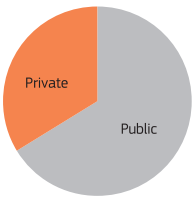


Nationality

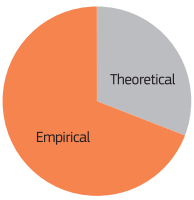
Institution



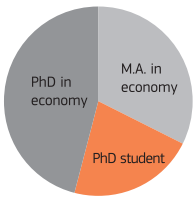
Type of institution



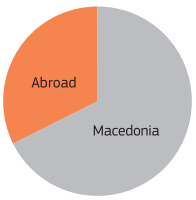
Research feld



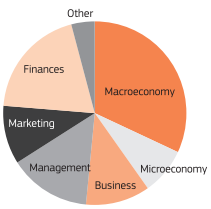
Education degree



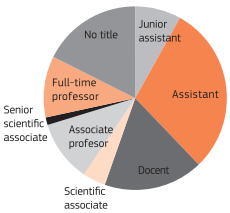
Country where the highest education degree was obtained



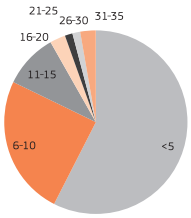
Field of economy



Academic and scientific title



Years spent at the current institution



Years spent on economic research

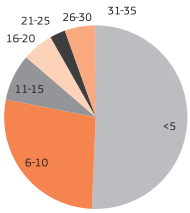


Table A-1 – Bilateral projects

Period	Partner		Submitted	Approved
2006-2011	Slovenia	total	117	53
		economy	0	0
2006-2014	Croatia	total	82	30
		economy	0	0
2005-2009	Bulgaria	total	53	19
		economy	1	1
2011-2013	Austria	total	11	10
		economy	1	1
2004-2009	France	total	17	11
		economy	0	0
2008-2011	Turkey	total	10	5
		economy	0	0
		total	**290**	**128**
		economy	**2**	**2**
			0,7%	**1,6%**

Source: MES

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- Data obtained by means of correspondence with MES.

CONTENTS

MECHANISMS USED BY THE EXECUTIVE AUTHORITIES TO ENSURE STAKEHOLDERS' PARTICIPATION IN POLICY-MAKING – EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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(December, 2012)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to present existing mechanisms used by the executive authorities in the Republic of Macedonia to ensure stakeholders' participation in policy-making at national level, as well as to provide a critical overview of their application and give recommendations for improvements.

Participation implies information, consultations, dialogue and building partnership relations with the stakeholders. Analyses show that the level of systematic participation of stakeholders in policy-making in Macedonia is very low due to:

- shortfalls in the framework on stakeholders' participation;
- inadequate application of the existing mechanisms;
- tight timeframe for policy-making; and
- insufficient capacity and interest on the part of stakeholders and state administration bodies.

Although stakeholders' participation necessitates more resources, time and efforts in the initial stages of policy-making, in the later stages it contributes to creation of quality policies and influences the democratization processes.

The alternative solutions proposed in this document would lead to promotion of existing mechanisms and at the same time would contribute to strengthened democratic aspects of this process. They include:

- changes to the framework on stakeholders' participation (legal and technical solutions);
- ensuring adherent application and implementation of existing mechanisms;
- introducing reasonable timeframe for policy-making; and
- strengthening the capacity of stakeholders and state administration bodies.

The conclusion presented in this paper provides several recommendations under each alternative solution, and assesses their impact on the basis of two criteria: feasibility and democratic approach.

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to present existing mechanisms used by executive authorities in the Republic of Macedonia to ensure stakeholders' participation in policy-making at national level, as well as to provide a critical overview of their application and give recommendations for improvements. The solutions proposed in this document would lead to promotion of communication between state administration bodies and stakeholders, and at the same time would contribute to strengthened democratic aspects of the policy-making process.

Well conceptualized, institutionally supported and adequately implemented policy-making process leads to greater support for measures, activities and regulations jointly agreed upon by the parties involved in this process.[1] Therefore, benefits from the participatory policy-making would be enjoyed by all parties involved. Although stakeholders' participation necessitates more resources, time and efforts in the initial stages of the policy-making process, it contributes to creation of quality policies, guarantees their legitimacy and broad acceptance, whereas stakeholders' exclusion from this process results in democratic deficit.[2]

For the purpose of this research, the analysis focuses on national level mechanisms for stakeholders' participation implemented by central level executive authorities. In that, stakeholders include citizens' associations and foundations, as well as natural persons and other legal entities that can be affected by the implementation of developed policies.[3]

According to the Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in Policy Making, as well as the Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in Decision-Making and depending on the participatory level, stakeholders' involvement in policy-making includes[4]:

- *Information*, as one-way dissemination of information by public authorities, which means that state administration bodies directly inform the stakeholders they have identified or the stakeholders are informed through the official websites of these bodies, by means of official publications and other public documents;

- *Consultations*, as a two-way process where public authorities ask the stakeholders to provide comments, views and opinions and feedback on specific policy or policy aspect related to a given topic or event. When initiating the consultation process, the authorities usually inform the stakeholders about current developments in a specific policy area;
- *Dialogue*, as a two-way communication, which can be initiated either by the stakeholders or the public authorities and is built on common interests related to a specific policy paper or a broader topic not related to an on-going process;
- *Partnership*, as the highest level of cooperation and mutual responsibility between representatives of the authorities and the stakeholders in all steps of the policy-making process, from agenda-setting, public policy formulation, decision-making and policy implementation and monitoring. Partnerships can include delegation of specific tasks to the stakeholders, such as service delivery, as well as participatory forums and establishment of joint decision-making bodies, including allocation of resources.

2. METHODOLOGY

For the purposes of this paper, an analysis was made of existing acts that regulate stakeholders' participation in policy-making[5], as well as the implementation of these mechanisms. The literature[6] consulted for this research shows that the perception of legitimacy is linked to participants' positions on the process's fairness. Representatives of stakeholders who perceive this process as legitimate and in compliance with the rules and regulations in place expressed stronger commitment to accept and promote the results in front of other stakeholders, even in cases when the regulations adopted as result of this process do not reflect their interests in entirety. Due to the small number of research studies conducted in the Republic of Macedonia on the methods for effective participation of stakeholders in drafting regulations and their limited scope, it can be concluded that there is a gap in scientific observations concerning this area.

Guided by six different types of semi-structured questionnaires, fourteen interviews were conducted with representatives of: citizens' associations and foundations, higher education institutions, organizations that implement international projects on this topic, executive bodies responsible for policy-making and the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia. The interviews were conducted in the period September-December 2012. Analysis of responses obtained during the interviews enabled proper identification of problems and necessary interventions in the policies that govern this matter.

The framework on assessing alternative solutions, i.e., recommendations aimed to promote current policies on stakeholders' participation relies on two criteria – feasibility and democratic approach – as given later in this document. Feasibility is defined as minimizing the risks related to implementation of alternative solutions and are related to financial obstacles, legal obstacles, resistance to change, lack of knowledge and skills.[7] Democratic approach is defined as openness, transparency and participation in policy-making, as well as provision of accurate, updated, available and user-friendly information, including other participatory mechanisms that would contribute to pro-active participation of stakeholders.[8]

Evaluation of existing practices used by executive authorities to ensure stakeholders' participation in this process is of limited scope, due to the following reasons:

- some mechanisms are relatively new and it is too early to assess their application and use;
- only limited data that are relevant and objectively verifiable are made available, while to a great extent the research relies on the perceptions of actors involved in this process.

3. PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

Low level of systematic participation of stakeholders in policy-making is a direct result of:

- shortcomings identified in the framework on stakeholders' participation;
- inadequate application of the existing mechanisms;
- tight timeframe for policy-making; and
- lack of capacity and interest on the part of stakeholders and state administration bodies.

In addition to information obtained by means of interviews, as presented later in this document, this problem was confirmed in the last two Progress Reports for the Republic of Macedonia, published by the European Commission (hereinafter: EC). These reports emphasize the need for a consistent approach to all-inclusive public participation in decision-making and establishment of adequate institutional mechanisms that would guarantee successful implementation.[9] Moreover, Progress Reports noted that despite the obligation for organizing consultations with the stakeholders as part of *Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)* process, these obligations are not applied in systematic manner.[10]

2011 and 2012 Reports prepared as part of Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in the Republic of Macedonia (SIGMA)[11] include remarks that regulations are drafted in urgent procedures. On this account, consultations with stakeholders are on low level and result in lower quality of regulations.[12]

Globally accepted recommendations for promotion of the policy-making process indicate the need for adequate participation of stakeholders. OECD[13] calls the governments of Member States and other states to:

- adhere to principles of open government, including transparency and participation in the regulatory process, to ensure that regulation serves the public interest and is informed by the legitimate needs of those interested in and affected by regulation. This includes providing meaningful opportunities (including online) for the public to contribute to the process of preparing draft regulatory proposals and to the quality of the supporting analysis;

- integrate RIA into the early stages of the policy process for the formulation of new regulatory proposals. Clearly identify policy goals, and evaluate if regulation is necessary and how it can be most effective and efficient in achieving those goals;

- regularly publish reports on the performance of regulatory policy and reform programmes and the public authorities applying the regulations. Such reports should also include information on how regulatory tools, such as RIA, public consultation practices and reviews of existing regulations are functioning in practice.

3.1. FRAMEWORK ON STAKEHOLDERS' PARTICIPATION IN POLICY-MAKING (LEGAL AND TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS)

Civil participation in policy-making is guaranteed under the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia[14] and is regulated by several laws and other legal acts.

Law on Organization and Operation of State Administration Bodies[15] regulates three methods on ensuring participatory processes.[16] Furthermore, *Law on the Government of the Republic of Macedonia*[17] provides a possibility for the President of Government to invite representatives of citizens' associations and foundations, institutions and other legal entities to participate in discussions and put forward opinions and proposals.[18] According to the *Rules of Procedure of the Government*[19], the Government should cooperate with the stakeholders[20] with a view to exercise their rights and interests, to deliberate on their proposals and initiatives at government's meetings and to adopt conclusions based on the reports submitted by government's working bodies and the opinions provided by competent line ministries.

Strategy for Cooperation of the Government with the Civil Society 2012-2017[21] incorporates the principles contained in the Treaty of Lisbon and other documents of the European Union and the Council of Europe related to participation of civil society organizations (CSOs) and individual citizens in the democratic processes.

Regulatory Impact Assessment Methodology[22] emphasizes stakeholders' participation as an indispensable mechanism in the process on drafting regulations that enables accumulation of additional input. This definition of the obligation for stakeholders' participation is valid from the process' onset, i.e., adoption of the Annual Work Programme of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. In that, the Methodology defines techniques on stakeholders' participation in the legislative

process and includes Internet-based (electronic) consultations, as well as topic debates, public debates and workshops. Especially important is the fact that pursuant to the Rules of Procedure of the Government, the RIA a mandatory process,[23] i.e., all draft laws, except for those proposed to be adopted in urgent procedure, should include a regulatory impact assessment.

Decision on establishing working groups tasked to develop the National Programme for Adoption of the EU *Acquis* and the negotiation position papers for EU membership[24], anticipates the possibility for the working group's chair to invite representatives of the business and civil society sectors, as well as other experts outside the state administration to give input and contribute in specific issues. Using this possibility, working group tasked with the Chapter on Judiciary and Fundamental Rights, supported by a CSO[25], developed the rules of procedure, which include provisions on cooperation with the stakeholders (by dissemination of information, consultations, involvement of external members and partnership).

Another document that lays down the framework on stakeholders' participation are the *Guidelines on the manner of operation at the ministries for involving stakeholders in the procedure on legislation drafting*[26] (subject to RIA). These Guidelines stipulate that public insight shall be enabled in draft laws and in RIA reports, precise deadlines for consultations with stakeholders and public hearings on draft laws and RIA reports. According to the Guidelines, line ministries are obliged to regularly publish versions of draft laws and completed RIA forms, as well as reports from organized consultations on their websites and in the Single Electronic Register of Regulations (ENER) (www.ener.gov.mk). In addition, line ministries are obliged to publish information on the timeframe for drafting laws, information on responsible civil servants, contact address and e-mail addresses for submission of comments, deadlines for consultations with stakeholders, as well as methods on stakeholders' involvement.[27]

Representative of the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA) informed that this line ministry is competent to monitor whether all necessary documents and information are timely uploaded on the Internet platforms and whether sufficient time has been devoted for consultations. If that is the case, the State Secretary at MISA or the Minister is authorized to indicate the shortfalls in this process and to recommend removal of the item in question from the agenda. MISA is also competent to issue opinions on RIA for draft laws prior to their submission to the Government for adoption. Although this is a new instrument, MISA, in the capacity of RIA coordinator,[28] has somewhat contributed to improved situation; however, in the words of the interviewed representative, (MISA's) practices on indicating shortfalls in the procedure related to compliance with the obligations stipulated in the Guidelines do not imply automatic removal of the item from the government's

agenda, especially for regulations for which measures on guaranteeing adequate stakeholders' participation in the policy-making process have not been implemented.

In order to further improve cooperation with the civil society, the *Code of Good Practices for Civil Participation in the Policy-Making Process*[29] was adopted in 2011. This document promotes the role of the Department for Cooperation with the Civil Society[30] at the General Secretariat of the Government as the key organization unit tasked with civil society cooperation.[31] In order to provide transparent information and consultations with the civil society, the General Secretariat designed a specific Internet platform (www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk). Moreover, the Secretariat is responsible for coordinating the inter-institutional network comprised of people nominated by all line ministries as contract persons responsible for cooperation with the civil society.[32] According to the Code of Good Practices, the Department for Cooperation with the Civil Society is obliged, within a deadline of 30 days from receiving a proposal by CSOs related to a published notification (on above-indicated Internet platform) to publish feedback from the line ministry and/or state administration body on the relevance and acceptance of civil society proposals. The Code of Good Practice stipulates announcement of call for civil society contribution in developing the Government's Work Programme for the next calendar year. According to information obtained from the General Secretariat, the number of civil society proposals in developing the Government's Work Programmes for 2012 and 2013 was very low. Interviewees from the civil society indicated that the main reason behind the low number of proposals is the inadequate deadline for submission of proposals (September in the current year for the next year's programme), i.e., the fact that when developing their initiatives, the civil society relies on data included in the European Commission's Progress Reports, which are published in October.

In order to enable a simpler and more streamlined procedure for citizens to comment and suggest, and at the same time influence the policy-making process, the Internet platform *e-demokratija.mk* was established.[33] This platform was announced as early as the 2005 *National Strategy for Information Society Development*[34], but it was actually established in February 2012.[35] It should be noted that MISA has consciously excluded .gov extension from this Internet platform (e-demokratija.mk) with a view to reflect state institutions' willingness to build partnership relations with the stakeholders. In addition to uploading data on final and draft strategic documents, this Internet platform also hosts forum-based debates and blog contents from advanced users (i.e., associations and foundations, chambers of commerce, trade unions, companies and other legal entities). In that, advanced users enjoy full autonomy to establish own blogs, cerate contents and facilitate on-line debates, without being subjected to administrator's approval.[36]

Contrary to e-demokratija.mk, ENER is oriented towards provision of access to draft legislation, accompanied with RIA documents, as well as the possibility to make comments and proposals and to announce unofficial consolidated versions of relevant laws. However, in the opinion of some civil society representatives, parallel existence of these two Internet platforms with similar function and purpose is rather confusing, especially for the broader public.

3.2. APPLICATION OF THE EXISTING MECHANISMS

High share of interviewees from the civil society expressed criticism for insufficient control of compliance with the mechanisms anticipated for stakeholders' participation.

Although e-tools, as described above, should contribute to greater transparency on the part of institutions and process' efficiency, during the interviews conducted with CSOs and foundations[37] it was emphasized that there are certain shortfalls in stakeholders' involvement, both in terms of *non-compliance with law-stipulated deadlines and in terms of failure to update data.* Draft Law on Amending the Law on Property Taxes, Draft Law on Amending the Law on Tax Procedure, and others[38] are just some examples where the above-indicated shortfalls were noted. CSOs identified cases where draft laws are not published in ENER and on e-demokratija.mk, or where they are not adequately categorizes as "regulation in preparation" and "adopted regulation" (i.e., "closed" and "open"), which creates certain distrust in these platforms among their users. Non-publication of all versions of draft laws additionally complicates monitoring of the legislative procedure. Also, cases were noted *where no feedback was provided,* for example in relation to the Energy Law, where a civil society representative[39] published in ENER comments and conclusions based on an analysis, but was not given any feedback. It should be stressed that *inconsistency in announcements made under the category "regulations", as well as "proposed regulations"* had been noted. Typical example is that these categories include significant number of consolidated legal texts which should be uploaded under a different category.[40] Furthermore, *announcements made by the line ministries are erroneous,* for example, they include test-announcements that do not contain the text of the regulation in question.[41] Certain *inconsistencies were noted in relation to documents published as accompanying material.* For example, certain reports on consultations organized with the stakeholders include information that consultations were made only with state administration bodies or the report in question includes only a call for consultations.[42]

Civil society interviewees identified a series of technical shortfalls of Internet platforms.[43] Having in mind that Macedonia is a candidate country for EU membership, interviewed representatives of the civil society supported the idea that mechanisms for stakeholders' participation should be structured according to the accession negotiations chapters.[44]

As regards *e-demokratija.mk*, in the opinion of MISA's representative, positive is the fact that more than 80% of registered users are actively using this platform, and as high as 50% of them are monitoring platform activities on daily basis and provide self-initiated suggestions for improvements. However, a brief overview of the platform provides the conclusion that the number of registered users is relatively low, and there is insufficient utilization of possibilities to comment and initiate forum debates, which should be the key added value of this platform.

Inconsistencies appear also in regard to compliance with the obligation on organizing consultations as part of RIA, and often the obligation for RIA is not complied with. According to data obtained from MISA, when comparing data on laws that were subject to RIA (i.e., laws for which relevant RIA reports were developed), against the total number of laws adopted in the respective reporting period, in the second semester of 2011 this share accounts for 41%, while in the first semester of 2012 this share accounts for 48%. Therefore, an increase of 7% was noted under the number of laws that were accompanied with RIA reports, which is indicative of the progress made in implementing RIA once it was transferred under the competences of MISA. However, it should be noted that line ministries do not fully comply with RIA obligations and do not use the possibility to remove incomplete items from the government's agenda after MISA has indicated inconsistencies in the RIA process. This is particularly important having in mind that the regulation on RIA anticipates participation of stakeholders in the early stages of the policy-making process, i.e., as early as the needs-assessment stage, instead of after draft laws are already developed.

As regards *nvosorabotka.gov.mk*, previous experiences and data obtained from the General Secretariat related to the open call for civil society contribution in development of the Government's Work Programmes for 2012 and 2013 show also that there is inadequate utilization of these possibilities. Namely, only 4 civil society proposals were received on the call for contribution related to the 2012 work programme, and their number is 5 in regard to the 2013 work programme. In the opinion of our collocutor, in 2011, the problem with low civil society response was the call's invisibility.[45] However, CSOs indicated that the reason behind the small number of proposals is the institution's non-transparency, in particular related to feedback on whether stakeholders' proposals have been accepted by the line ministry or not.

Six of the total of eleven interviewees from the civil society stated that stakeholders' participation is unsatisfactory and usually implies a one-way communication, which, in turn, makes the process less effective. In addition, even when there is two-way communication, it is usually reduced to "disclosing a final document for comments", and CSOs are rarely directly involved in development of documents – as early as needs-assessment and legislation drafting stages. Even the establishment of mixed working groups that include representatives of different stakeholders is non-transparent, and often, once these working groups are established, no information is provided as to their work and composition.[46] In the opinion of one interviewee from the civil society, "stakeholders' participation depends on the good will of certain individuals at the state administration body competent for the given policy area, his/her awareness about the need to ensure participation, as well as personal relations with certain actors from the civil society". Hence, it does not come as surprise that five of eleven civil society interviewees stated that direct communication with competent authorities is a better solution compared to use of above-indicated centralized platforms, such as ENER, e-demokratija.mk and nvosorabotka.gov.mk.

3.3. TIMEFRAME FOR POLICY-MAKING

In order to illustrate the tight timeframe for policy-making, it should be indicated that in April 2011 the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia has adopted more than 100 laws within a period of less than two weeks, 93 of which were enacted on one plenary session at the Parliament.[47]

This reality does not correspond with the principle on rule of law and is in direct collision with the declared commitments for consultations with all stakeholders in the policy-making process. Faced with the pressure to propose legal solutions within extremely short deadline, it is impossible for state administration bodies to organize and implement quality consultations with stakeholders. In the opinion of CSOs, they do not have the analytic capacity to process the great scope of legislative activities, consult the groups whose interests they are representing and formulate credible opinions and recommendations that would protect these interests. All these might prevent the person responsible for certain matters to engage in participatory policy-making.

In addition, a trend was noted on frequent adoption of laws in urgent (fast-track) procedures. In the opinion of one interviewee from the civil society, adoption of majority laws does not require fast-track procedure, but the label of urgency is used as an alibi for disrespecting most obligations related to consultations and public hearings/debates.

As a result of fast-track legislation adoption, EC's 2011 Progress Report for the Republic of Macedonia noted the increased number of annulments of new legislation from 5% to nearly 30% of disputed legislative acts.

Hence, one of the key recommendations in SIGMA's Report indicates that it is better to focus on developing small number of well-conceptualized laws[48] and policies that would be in the interests of citizens, rather than to continue the hyper-production of laws and their fast adoption.

3.4. CAPACITY AND INTEREST OF STATE ADMINISTRATION BODIES AND STAKEHOLDERS

When initiating participatory processes, one must give due consideration to the capacity of parties involved. For the mechanism on stakeholders' participation to produce relevant results, the state administration bodies must understand the concept of participation, the need for participatory policy-making and benefits thereof. Interviewees from the civil society raised serious questions about the existence of such understanding.

Lack of administrative, institutional and financial capacity of state administration bodies to organize qualitative participatory processes could lead to serious problems in identifying the actual stakeholders and guaranteeing their participation in the process. As for the administrative capacity, attention should be focused on the importance of continuous promotion of relevant knowledge and skills of civil servants, especially the heads of working bodies tasked to draft various types of regulations. For example, one CSO indicated the issue of low culture at state administration bodies in terms of using the Internet and contemporary technologies, while most interviewees from the civil society expressed an opinion that state administration bodies lack systematic approach and do not invest sufficient efforts in identifying key and legitimate actors in the relevant policy area, which should be involved in these processes. This could be a result of the insufficient "institutional memory" that is an important factor for successful cooperation of state administrative bodies and stakeholders in the relevant field. In that, failure to regularly update/ publish the register of CSOs additionally complicates the situation.[49] Having this in mind, certain form of grouping of stakeholders based on topic or geographical area would be of great importance and would assist state institutions to adequately lead and direct participatory policy-making processes.[50] The Government's Strategy for Cooperation with the Civil Society[51] takes due notice of this fact and indicates it as a major challenge. As regards the financial capacity, it had been noted that state

administration bodies do not allocate the minimum financial resources needed to organize solid and comprehensive consultations.[52]

Low response on the part of CSOs to calls for contribution in developing the Government's Work Programme for 2012 and 2013 could be a result of lack of capacity noted among stakeholders. In the opinion provided by the General Secretariat, the reason behind the low participation rate is identified in the lack of interest among stakeholders.[53]

MISA representative stressed the need for increased awareness among state administration bodies on the importance of consultations, as well as the need for public campaign and training for citizens concerning the use of participatory mechanisms. On the other hand, the civil society criticized the disinterest demonstrated by state administration bodies in publishing reports from consultations organized as part of the policy-making process. Nevertheless, one interviewee from the civil society admitted that CSOs are not interested in pressuring the institutions to publish a report on comments provided by stakeholders, which results in their inability to significantly affect institution's effectiveness. Interviewees from the civil society stressed the need for increasing public awareness on this issue, by means of public campaigns, training and joint meetings. Moreover, they indicated the need for their contribution in building partnership relations with the institutions, to inform them about their work and to involve them in planning and implementation of their respective project and program activities.

4. ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

Having in mind the reasons behind the low participation of stakeholders in policy-making processes, primarily shortfalls identified in regard to the framework, inadequate application of the existing mechanisms, accompanied with numerous and complex (Internet-based) participation mechanisms, the tight timeframe for policy-making, as well as the insufficient capacity and interest of stakeholders, the following alternative solutions are relevant with a view to improve the situation:

- changes to the framework on stakeholders' participation;
- adherent application and implementation of the existing mechanisms;

- introducing a reasonable timetable for policy-making processes; and
- strengthening the capacity of stakeholders and state administration bodies.

Each of these alternative solutions is followed up with relevant recommendations given in Tables 1 to 4. When assessing the alternative solution, the following two criteria were applied:

- *Democratic approach*. In this case, the democratic approach can be assessed against the indicators on **openness** (annual number of documents published on e-demokratija.mk; annual number of draft laws published in ENER; annual number regulations published in ENER); **transparency** (annual number of previous versions of draft laws published in ENER); and **participation** (number of civil society proposals in developing the government's work programme; annual number of comments and ideas posted on e-demokratija.mk; annual number of newly registered users with comments and ideas on e-demokratija.mk; annual number of visits to forums hosted on e-demokratija.mk).[54] All indicators are assigned relevant values for the current situation together with an assessment of the possible impact the alternative solutions can have. Descriptive assessments include: positive impact (1 point), negative impact (-1 point) and neutral impact (0 points), and are given in Tables 1 to 4. The higher the number of points assigned to an alternative solution, the greater its impact in terms of improved democratic approach. All alternative solutions can be assigned a maximum of 8 and a minimum of -8 points.
- *Feasibility*. In Table 5, each recommendation made under the alternative solutions is assessed against the relevant category of risk and its probability. Assessments are given in descriptive manner (small, great and medium impact; small, great and medium probability) and are assigned relevant points: small-small = 2; small-medium and medium-great = 1; small-great and great-small = 0; medium-medium = 0; medium-great and great-medium = -1; great-great = -2.[55] The higher the number of points, the greater the recommendation's feasibility. Last row in Table 5 provides the average values for each alternative solution. Each recommendation and each alternative solution can be assigned a maximum of 8 and a minimum of -8 points.

Table 1	Impact on indicators for democratic approach of alternative solution 1	
Reason 1	**Shortfalls in the framework on stakeholders' participation (legal and technical solutions)**	
Alternative solution 1	**Changes to the framework on stakeholders' participation**	
Recommendations	1. To stipulate an obligation for the General Secretariat or the President of Government to remove the item in question from the agenda after MISA has established non-compliance with the Guidelines on the method of operation at line ministries to involve stakeholders in the procedure on legislation drafting.	
	2. To introduce mandatory RIA for secondary legislation; to establish objective criteria on urgency of draft regulation and to implement limited consultations for draft laws whose adoption is labelled as urgent;	
	3. To extend the deadline for submission of civil society proposals on the call for contribution in developing the governments' work programme until 15 November;	
	4. To centralize the Internet platforms (integrate ENER and e-demokratija.mk)	
Indicators on democratic approach	**Current situation**	**Impact**
Openness	- annual number of documents published on e-demokratija.mk: 83 - annual number of draft laws published in ENER: 271 in 2012 - annual number of regulations published in ENER: 169 in 2012	- annual number of documents published on e-demokratija.mk: positive impact (1) - annual number of draft laws published in ENER: positive impact (1) - annual number of regulations published in ENER: neutral impact (0)
Transparency	- annual number of previous versions of draft laws published in ENER: 0 in 2012	- annual number of previous versions of draft laws published in ENER: positive impact (1)
Participation	- number of civil society proposals in developing the government's work programme: 5 in 2012 - annual number of comments and ideas posted on e-demokratija.mk: 131 - annual number of newly registered users with comments and ideas on e-demokratija.mk: 50 - number of visits to forums hosted at e-demokratija.mk: 305535	- number of civil society proposals in developing the government's work programme: positive (1) - annual number of comments and ideas posted on e-demokratija.mk: positive (1) - annual number of newly registered users with comments and ideas on e-demokratija.mk: positive (1) - number of visits to forums hosted at e-demokratija.mk: positive (1)
Total for the alternative solution		7

Table 2	Impact on indicators for democratic approach of alternative solution 2	
Reason 2	**Inadequate application of the existing mechanisms**	
Alternative solution 2	**Ensuring adherent application and implementation of the existing mechanism**	
Recommendations	1. Officials and high-level civil servants to be apply a pro-active approach to encourage mandatory publication of all draft laws and RIA reports in ENER and on the ministries' websites; to ensure compliance with deadlines on stakeholders' participation and the obligation on providing feedback to stakeholders, as well as to introduce state monitoring on compliance with these obligations; 2. To utilize the possibility for removing items from the government's agenda related to draft laws for which RIA was not performed or is incomplete. 3. To involve representatives of stakeholders in the early stage of policy-making and drafting of regulations, as well as to publish the lists of ministry employees appointed for cooperation with the civil society; 4. State administration bodies to apply a pro-active approach in identifying and communicating with stakeholders, as well as to introduce registers of organizations working in a given area. 5. To make technical improvements to the Internet platforms (to structure e-demokratija.mk and ENER according EU accession negotiations chapters; to appoint staff responsible for updating documents published on the Internet platforms; to introduce the possibility for automatic notifications for newly-uploaded documents, as well as to include a possibility for stakeholders to post more comprehensive and detailed comments in ENER; to introduce links to on-going hearings at the Parliament on documents published on the Internet platforms).	
Indicators on democratic approach	**Current situation**	**Impact**
Openness	- annual number of documents published on e-demokratija.mk: 83 - annual number of draft laws published in ENER: 271 in 2012 - annual number of regulations published in ENER: 169 in 2012	- annual number of documents published on e-demokratija.mk: neutral impact (0) - annual number of draft laws published in ENER: positive impact (1) - annual number of regulations published in ENER: neutral impact (0)
Transparency	- annual number of previous versions of draft laws published in ENER: 0 in 2012	- annual number of previous versions of draft laws published in ENER: positive impact (1)
Participation	- number of civil society proposals in developing the government's work programme: 5 in 2012 - annual number of comments and ideas posted on e-demokratija.mk: 131 - annual number of newly registered users with comments and ideas on e-demokratija.mk: 50 - annual number of visits to forums hosted at e-demokratija.mk: 305535	- number of civil society proposals in developing the government's work programme: positive impact (1) - annual number of comments and ideas posted on e-demokratija.mk: positive impact (1) - annual number of newly registered users with comments and ideas on e-demokratija.mk: positive impact (1) - annual number of visits to forums hosted at e-demokratija.mk: positive impact (1)
Total for the alternative solution		6

Table 3	Impact on indicators for democratic approach of alternative solution 3	
Reason 3	**Tight timeframe for policy-making**	
Alternative solution 3	**Introduce a reasonable timeframe for policy-making**	
Recommendations	1. To adjust the timeframe on developing the Government's Work Programme and NPAA to the capacity of state administration bodies for participatory policy-making.	
Indicators on democratic approach	**Current situation**	**Impact**
Openness	- annual number of documents published on e-demokratija.mk: 83 - annual number of draft laws published in ENER: 271 in 2012 - annual number of regulations published in ENER: 169 in 2012	- annual number of documents published on e-demokratija.mk neutral impact (0) - annual number of draft laws published in ENER: neutral impact (0) - annual number of regulations published in ENER: neutral impact (0)
Transparency	- annual number of previous versions of draft laws published in ENER: 0 in 2012	- annual number of previous versions of draft laws published in ENER: positive (1)
Participation	- annual number of civil society proposals in developing the government's work programme: 5 in 2012 - annual number of comments and ideas posted on e-demokratija.mk: 131 - annual number of newly registered users with comments and ideas on e-demokratija.mk: 50 - annual number of visits to forums hosted at e-demokratija.mk: 305535	- annual number of civil society proposals in developing the government's work programme: positive (1) - annual number of comments and ideas posted on e-demokratija.mk: neutral (0) - annual number of newly registered users with comments and ideas on e-demokratija.mk: neutral (0) - annual number of visits to forums hosted at e-demokratija.mk: neutral (0)
Total for the alternative solution		2

Table 4	Impact on indicators for democratic approach of alternative solutions 4	
Reason 4	**Insufficient capacity and interest of stakeholders and state administration bodies**	
Alternative solution 4	**Strengthen the capacity and interest of stakeholders and state administration bodies**	
Recommendations	1. To build the capacity by means of continuous training, public campaigns and information activities to familiarize different categories of stakeholders and state administration bodies on the mechanisms for participatory policy-making, their possibilities and the importance of stakeholders' involvement	
	2. To develop networks of stakeholders around topics of interests or around negotiation chapters with EU, as well as registers of stakeholders interested in particular areas.	
	3. To establish an advisory body tasked to improve cooperation, dialogue and encourage partnership relations between civil society and state administration bodies	
	4. State administration bodies to allocate the minimum financial resources needed for implementation of participatory mechanisms.	
Indicators on the democratic approach	**Current situation**	**Impact**
Openness	- annual number of documents published on e-demokratija.mk: 83 - annual number of draft laws published in ENER: 271 in 2012 - annual number of regulations published in ENER: 169 in 2012	- annual number of documents published on e-demokratija.mk: positive impact (1) - annual number of draft laws published in ENER: positive impact (1) - annual number of regulations published in ENER: neutral impact (0)
Transparency	- annual number of previous versions of draft laws published in ENER: 0 in 2012	- annual number of previous versions of draft laws published in ENER: positive impact (1)
Participation	- number of civil society proposals in developing the government's work programme: 5 in 2012 - annual number of comments and ideas posted on e-demokratija.mk: 131 - annual number of newly registered users with comments and ideas on e-demokratija.mk: 50 - annual number of visits to forums hosted at e-demokratija.mk: 305535	- number of civil society proposals in developing the government's work programme: positive (1) - annual number of comments and ideas posted on e-demokratija.mk: positive (1) - annual number of newly registered users with comments and ideas on e-demokratija.mk: positive (1) - annual number of visits to forums hosted at e-demokratija.mk: positive (1)
Total for the alternative solution		7

Table 5		Feasibility of alternative solutions (more points indicate to greater feasibility)													
Alternative solution		Changes to the framework on stakeholders' participation				Ensuring adherent application and implementation					Introduction of reasonable timeframe for policy-making	Strengthening the capacity and interest of stakeholders and state administration bodies			
Impact on the recommendation / risk probability (summary assessment)															
Recommendations		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Feasibility-related risks	financial obstacles	small/ small (2)	great/ medium (-1)	small/ small (2)	great/ medium (-1)	medium/ medium (0)	small/ small (2)	medium/ small (1)	small/ medium (1)	great/ medium (-1)	small/small (2)	големо/ голема (-2)	medium/ great (-1)	medium/ great (-1)	great/ great (-2)
	legal obstacles	great/ medium (-1)	great/ medium (-1)	small/ small (2)	small/ small (2)	small/ small (2)	small/ small (2)	small/ small (2)	small/ small (2)	small/ small (2)	small/small (2)	small/ small (2)	small/ small (2)	small/ small (2)	small/ small (2)
	resistance to change	great/ great (-2)	great/ great (-2)	small/ small (2)	medium/ medium (0)	great/ great (-2)	great/ great (-2)	great/ great (-2)	great/ great (-2)	medium/ medium (0)	great/great (-2)	medium/ great (-1)	medium/ great (-1)	great/ great (-2)	great/ great (-2)
	insufficient knowledge and skills	small/ small (2)	great/ medium (-1)	small/ small (2)	small/ small (2)	medium/ medium (0)	small/ small (2)	great/ great (-2)	great/ great (-2)	small/ small (2)	medium/great (-1)	medium/ great (-1)	medium/ medium (-1)	medium/ great (-1)	medium/ small (1)
Average per recommendation		1	-5	8	3	0	4	-1	-1	3	1	-2	-1	-2	-1
Average per alternative solution		1,75				1					1	-1,5			

5. CONCLUSION

On the basis of data shown in Tables 1 to 5, Table 6 provides the summary assessments per alternative solution and relevant recommendations, where the higher the number, the greater the desirability of the alternative solution (both in terms of state administration bodies and the stakeholders). In that, one solution can be assigned a maximum of 16 and a minimum of -16 points. As shown in the table, most desirable are alternative solutions 1 and 2.

Table 6	Summary assessment of alternative solutions		
Criteria / Alternative solution	Democratic approach	Feasibility	Total
Amendments to the framework on stakeholders' participation (legal and technical solutions)	7	1,75	8,75
Ensuring adherent application and implementation	6	1	7
Introduction of reasonable timeframe for policy-making	2	1	3
Building capacity and interest of stakeholders and state administration bodies	6	-1,5	4,5

ENDNOTES

1 Focus on Citizens: Public Engagement for better Policy and Services, OECD, 2009.

2 2012 Report of the Programme on Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in the Republic of Macedonia, pg. 3 and 4, English version.

3 Definition on stakeholders in compliance with Article 2, paragraph 1 of the Guidance for the manner of acting in the work of the ministries for involvement of stakeholders in the process of preparation of laws, "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", no. 150/2011. Taking into consideration the research purpose, despite the fact that the business community is defined as a stakeholder in the Guidance, it is not covered in this research.

4 Article 5 of the Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in Policy Creation Process "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" no. 99/2011, and Chapter 4, item 1 from the Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process, adopted at the Council of Europe's Conference of INGOs, 2009.

5 Documents of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, existing analyses, different types of research, projects findings.

6 Focus on Citizens: Public Engagement for better Policy and Services, OECD, 2009.

7 Authors' definition.

8 Adapted from E-Participation and E-Government: Understanding the Present and Creating the Future, Report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting in July 2006, United Nations, 2007, pg. 36, and e-Government Economics Project (eGEP): Measurement Framework Final Version, European Commission, 2006, pg. 3, 10, 13-15, 18.

9 EC's 2011 Progress Reports for the Republic of Macedonia, pg. 17, English version.

10 EC's 2011 Progress Reports for the Republic of Macedonia, pg. 11, English version and EC's 2012 Progress Reports for the Republic of Macedonia, pg. 9, English version.

11 A joint initiative of the OECD and the EU, principally financed by the EU.

12 2012 Report of the Programme on Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in the Republic of Macedonia, pg. 3 and 4, English version.

13 Recommendation of the Council of the OECD on Regulatory Policy and Governance, OECD, 2012.

14 Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, Article 2 and 20.

15 "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", no. 58/2000, 44/2002, 82/2008, 167/2010 and 51/2011.

16 Article 10 reads as follows: In the course of preparation of laws and other regulations within their competency, state administration bodies consult the citizens through: 1) publication of the type, content and the timetable for adoption of the laws and other regulations; 2) organization of public debates, and 3) inviting interested citizen's associations and other legal entities, etc. to give their opinions.

17 "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", no. 59/2000, 12/2003, 55/2005, 37/2006, 115/2007, 19/2008, 82/2008, 10/2010 and 51/2011.

18 Law on Government of the Republic of Macedonia, Article 22

19 Rules of Procedure of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, Articles 136 and 137.

20 Public enterprises, public institutions, public services, political parties, companies, citizens' associations and foundations.

21 Strategy for Cooperation of the Government with the Civil Society 2012-2017, http://www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk/dmdocuments/Strategija_za_sorabotka_na_Vladata_so_graganskiot_sektor2012-2017.pdf (last visited on 21.12.2012). Notably, the Strategy was developed with participation of civil society organizations.

22 "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", no. 66/2009.

23 Article 65, Rules of Procedure of the Government, consolidated text, "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", no. 36/2008.

24 "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", no. 137/2009; Article 10.

25 Association for Development Initiatives – Zenith.

26 "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", no. 150/2011.

27 ENER represents technical solution to achieve transparency of the policy development process through publication of draft-laws in the preparation stage.

28 MISA assumed this role by the end of 2011.

29 "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" no. 99/2011.

30 Article 10 of the Code of Good Practice refers to the department for cooperation with the civil society at the General Secretariat.

31 According to the General Secretariat representative, development of the Code of Good Practice followed the examples of good practices for civil participation in decision-making of the Council of Europe from 2009 and the experiences from Croatia, In 2013, the General Secretariat, in cooperation with civil society organizations, will assess the implementation of the Code of Good Practice and will develop recommendations for improvements.

32 Despite the existence of this network, its composition and contact information were not published in the period when the present analysis was made.

33 According to the Work Programme of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia for the period 2011–2015 and the National Strategy for e-Government 2010-2012, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration is the holder of this project.

34 Available at: http://www.mio.gov.mk/files/pdf/dokumenti/Strategija_i_Akcionen_Plan.pdf (last visited on 17.12.2012)

35 According to MISA representative, when designing the Internet platform due consideration was given to the Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on electronic democracy (e-democracy).

36 A special team (working group) comprised of 6 members regularly informs the Government through the Minister of Information Society and Administration on monitoring, continuity and quality of stakeholders' participation through this platform. In the beginning, reporting was made on fortnight basis, and today quarterly reports are prepared.

37 Interview with representatives of the Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation (MCIC) and the Foundation Open Society – Macedonia (FOSM).

38 Draft Law on Attorney Tax Payment for Minimum Fees; Draft Law on Administration; Draft Law on Amending the Law on Interception of Communications;

39 Interview with Think-Thank Analytica.

40 For example, Law on Memorials and Monuments – unofficial consolidated text published on 20.9.2012; Law on Protection of the Population from Infectious Diseases – consolidated text published on 17.7.2012; Law on Sanitary and Health Inspection – consolidated text published on 16.7.2012.

41 For example, on 21.9.2010 under "drafts" a regulation was published by the Ministry of Culture, and in that the competent sector indicated was "environment", while the relevant policy area indicated was "traffic, storage and communications"; or on 21.9.2010 a regulation titled "SSSSS" was published by the Ministry of Health, and in that the competent sector indicated was "environment".

42 For example, the report on the consultations organized with stakeholders on the Draft Law on Amending the Law on Market Surveillance published on 10.10.2012 and the report on the consultations organized with the stakeholders on the Draft Law on Amending the Law on Nature Protection published on 22.10.2012.

43 Lack of automatic notifications on newly posted documents, limited length of comments in ENER and inability to post comments by means of attaching documents, no links to on-going parliament debates on documents published on the Internet platforms.

44 At the moment, e-demokratija.mk and ENER are not categorized according to negotiation chapters for EU membership.

45 In 2012, the call, in addition to nvosorabotka.gov.mk, was also published on the website of the project for Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organizations (TACSO) and was forwarded to all e-mail addresses from their database (total of 1,600 CSOs) and to 300 stakeholders that applied for projects through the Government of the Republic of Macedonia.

46 Natasa Gaber Damjanovska, Ph.D, Participation of Stakeholders in Decision-Making and Legislation Drafting Process in the Republic of Macedonia, European Centre for Non-Profit Law, 2008, pg. 60.

47 2011 Report prepared as part of Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in the Republic of Macedonia, pg. 11, English version.

48 2012 Report prepared as part of Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in the Republic of Macedonia, English version.

49 Civicus – Index of the Civil Society, Analytical Report for Macedonia "Long Way to Civil Engagement", MCIC, 2011, pg. 29.

50 Visible is the lack of permanent or ad hoc structures (for example advisory bodies or unions) that would join resources of stakeholders for the purpose of capacity building and would work on developing joint positions that would be presented to state administration bodies.

51 Strategy for Cooperation of the Government with the Civil Society (2012-2017), pg. 46.

52 Civicus – Index of the Civil Society, "Long Way to Civil Engagement" – Summary and Recommendations for Future Civil Society Policies, MCIC, 2011, pg. 15.

53 In communication with other state administration bodies beyond this research, the authors were informed on the insufficient capacity for performing analyses, formulating and articulation of positions among civil society organizations and the business sector.

54 Adapted from E-Participation and E-Government: Understanding the Present and Creating the Future, Report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting in July 2006, United Nations, 2007, pg. 36 and e-Government Economics Project (eGEP): Measurement Framework Final Version, European Commission, 2006, pg. 3, 10, 13-15, 18.

55 Starting from the assumption that democratic approach and feasibility are equally important, i.e., they can bring the same maximum number of points or the minimum number of points. Therefore, each of the four categories of risks can be assigned a maximum of 2 or a minimum of -2 points.

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  - representative of the Ministry of Information Society and Administration and consultant to the project "Strengthened Regulatory Process in Macedonia";
- **Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia**
  - representative of the sector supporting the National Council for European Integration1;
- **Higher Education Institutions**
  - professor at the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus" at "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" University in Skopje;
  - professor at the Faculty of Economy at "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" University in Skopje;
  - assistant teacher at the Faculty of Public Administration and Political Science at the South East European University in Tetovo;
- **CSOs and foundations (including projects they have implemented):**
  - representatives of the Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation;
  - representative of the Centre for Regional Research and Cooperation "Studiorum";
  - representative of the Foundation Open Society – Macedonia;
  - representative of the Centre for Policy Research and Making;
  - representative of the Institute of Democracy "Societas Civilis";
  - representative of the project "Support for Public Administration Reform";
  - representative of the Think-Thank "Analytica";
  - representative of the project "Technical Assistance for CSOs" (TACSO).

[1] Initially, this research aimed to address the mechanisms used by legislative authorities to guarantee stakeholders' participation in policy-making, in order to secure sufficient level of details without exceeding the average length of a policy paper, but later a decision was taken for the research to focus on the mechanisms designed and implemented by the executive authorities.

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CONTENTS

PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the current status of young researchers in social sciences and humanities in Macedonia. For that purpose, it analyses the status of young researchers in this field, the possibilities for carrying out scientific research (individually or as teams), the challenges they face when participating in scientific and research projects and the possibilites for promotion of research results, especially at international level. The paper addresses the legal framework in effect, as well as the existing research policies in social sciences and humanities, with special emphasis on young researchers.

The survey carried out on a selected group of young researchers paid special attention to several segments that are of key importance for the current status of young researchers, those being: (1) access to latest literature, databases and inter-

national journals; (2) involvement in scientific and research projects and participation in lectures/exercises; and (3) possibilities for in-service training and presentation of research results.

The paper provides several recommendations for key policy makers, primarily the Ministry of Education and Science and the universities, and other institutions and organizations engaged in scientific and research work.

1. INTRODUCTION

For a long time now, research in social sciences and humanities in Macedonia is facing serious challenges. Common is the public perception that research in this field does not contribute to development processes in the country. As a result, funds allocated to support social sciences and humanities have been continuously reduced in the past years, primarily by the Ministry of Education and Science (MES), which plays a central role in distribution of funds to support scientific research in the country.

European practices show that national institutions are the key financing entities of research in social sciences and humanities. According to the latest survey conducted by the European University in Florence in 2011, at the European Union (EU) level, dominant share of funding for research in social sciences and humanities comes from national funds, while only 11% of funds come from EU programs.[1]

Limited funds for social sciences in Macedonia negatively affect implementation of research projects, development and academic carrier advancement of young researchers, as well as promotion of research results.

In this regard, the authors of this paper attempt to offer solutions that will improve the status of young researchers in social sciences, primarily in terms of possibilities to carry out and/or participate in fundamental and applied research, whose results imply authenticity/originality and are aimed at expanding and promoting research activity and overall knowledge, as well as their promotion at national and international level.

This paper analyses the current status of young researchers in social sciences and humanities, the possibilities for carrying out scientific research (individually or as team), the challenges they face in conducting/participating in scientific research, and the promotion of research results, especially at international level. The paper's purpose is to provide comprehensive and plausible arguments that justify the recommendations presented and thereby improve the decision-making process and raise public awareness on this issue, especially among stakeholders.

As regards the research methodology, the authors were guided by the premise that in order to determine the effectiveness of existing policies important is to analyse the attitudes upheld by different groups of stakeholders affected by these poli-

cies. Therefore, the methodology framework was designed to include *primary* and *secondary* sources of information.

Primary sources of information included results of the survey conducted among young researchers employed or contracted by the Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences (MANU), state and private universities, public and private scientific institutes, as well as young researchers from citizens' associations and foundations profiled in scientific research in social sciences and humanities.

The survey was conducted in electronic and written form by using a standardized questionnaire. Special attention was made for the survey to target young researchers from the capital city, but also from other towns throughout the country, as well as to ensure gender balance. The survey was conducted in the period from 1st to 20th September 2012 and targeted 147 young researchers, 34.7% of which provided answers to all questions from the survey.

The survey included young researchers conducting research in the field of law, economics, political science, public administration, sociology, philosophy, defence and security. In addition to MANU, the survey also targeted the four highest-ranked universities in Macedonia according to the Shanghai Jiao Tong University's Academic Ranking. They include the University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" - Skopje (UKIM), the South-East European University (SEEU), the University "Goce Delcev" - Stip (UGD) and the University "St. Clement of Ohrid" - Bitola (UKLO).[2] This selection allowed representation of universities from different regions in the country and includes both, state and private universities. According to Shanghai University's Academic Ranking, a major difference was noted between the four highest-ranked universities and the remaining accredited universities in the state according to their results and performance under the criterion "scientific research". Finally, the selection of universities was adjusted to the project's format and timeframe.

As for the citizens' associations profiled in scientific research in social sciences and humanities, the selection of relevant associations was made on the basis of previously conducted methodology, with due consideration of the report titled "*Assessment of Research Capacities in Social Sciences in Macedonia"* developed as part of RRPP by the Centre for Research and Policy Making.[3] Therefore, the survey targeted the following associations: Analitika, Centre for Economic Analysis, Centre for Research and Policy Making, Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis", Forum – Centre for Strategic Research and Documentation, Institute for Economic Strategies and International Relations – Ohrid, and Centre for Regional Studies and Cooperation "Studiorum". It also targeted the Institute for Strategic Research and Education – ISIE.[4] This category of researchers accounted for 10% of the total number of researchers surveyed.

Secondary sources of information are based on results from the analysis of the legal framework (the Law on Higher Education, the Law on Scientific and Research Activity, the Rulebook on the Procedure and Criteria for Funding and Supervision of Annual Programs of Entities Performing Research and Scientific Work), the governmental practices in this area, in particular the practice of the MES, existing domestic and international reports on development of social sciences and humanities in the country, etc.

One paper cannot resolve all aspects of an issue, but it can identify the main challenges and, consequently, it can provide alternatives. As is often the case, in the course of carrying out the research, the team faced certain limitations. Most of these limitations concern access to information related to the operation of public institutions. They resulted in caution on the part of the authors when drafting the recommendations given below.

2. PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

This section of the paper is divided into two parts. The first part provides an overview of the current state-of-affairs, the legal framework and the valid policies governing the status of young researchers in social sciences and humanities. The second part presents the results of the empirical research.

2.1. CURRENT STATE-OF-AFFAIRS, LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND VALID POLICIES

In the Republic of Macedonia, the number of institutions and organizations that perform research and scientific work in social sciences and humanities is rather high. Structure of institutions and organizations performing research work is diverse and complex and covers various categories.

Significant share of research work in the country is performed by the higher education sector, which is comprised of five state universities and ten private universities, with more than 120 faculties, more than 60 of which are profiled in social sciences and humanities. In addition, research in this field is also performed by the MANU, public and private scientific institutes, and citizens' associations and foundations profiled in research and scientific activity. In that, people engaged in research work include young researchers as well, employed under full-term and part-term contracts.[5]

Despite the fact that there is significant number of trained and educated researchers, the number of research projects implemented in the country remains low.[6] In this regard, the number of fundamental and applied research in social sciences and humanities with authentic or original results is low compared to relevant figures for the countries in the region.[7] According to Scimago Journal and Country Ranking (rank list of countries according to their performance in social sciences and humanities, which is based on the *Scopus* database) Macedonia is ranked 19th from a total of 23 countries from Eastern Europe.[8]

The fact that for a long time now investments in scientific and research activity in the country are marked by continuous decrease further supports the statement on the poor performance in this field. First, funds from the state budget allocated for this purpose account for only 0.18% of country's GDP. Moreover, the distribution of these funds is centralized and entrusted to the MES. Hence, in 2007 as much as 84% of these funds were allocated through this line ministry. According to data presented by

the European Commission, in the year 2008 foundations and non-profit organizations in the country benefited from only 0.06% of funds spent to support research in social sciences and humanities. On the other hand, 9.6% of funds spent to support research in social sciences and humanities came from foreign sources.[9]

According to the specific statistical data on financing science, the 2011 state budget allocated 346 million MKD for this purpose, but only 68 million MKD of these funds were allocated to support research work and as high as 191 million MKD were allocated for the project on translation of books.[10] The budget account on science work under the 2012 state budget was cumulatively increased to 796 million MKD, but this budget increase mainly concerned procurement of laboratory equipment (460 million MKD), while the funds intended for the project on translation of books maintained the same level with the previous budget year allocations (190 million MKD). Funds intended to support scientific and research activity were again reduced and amounted to 64 million MKD. In comparison, funds allocated to support research work under the 2008 state budget amounted to 180 million MKD.[11] In that, it should be stressed that these data provide information on the amount of funds anticipated under the budget for the respective year and that the relevant amounts are continuously subjected to budget cuts as part of regular budget adjustments.

The trend on decreased funding for scientific and research activity was duly noted in the European Commission's Progress Reports for Macedonia. Hence, the EC regularly notes decreased funds allocated for scientific and research work. For example, the 2008 Progress Report noted that funds for scientific work have been reduced from 2.45 million EUR to 1.8 million EUR. The 2011 Progress Report stressed the low level of investments in science – 0.2% of GDP, and the 2012 Progress Report noted that programs on scientific and research activity are adopted, but the budget for these programs has continued to decrease since 2010.[12]. In the context of EU, the issue on funding science is very important having in mind the commitment to increase investments in science to 3 % of country's GDP by 2020.

The general legal framework that governs performance of scientific and research work in the Republic of Macedonia is provided under the Law on Scientific and Research Activity.[13] Article 2 of the Law stipulates that scientific and research activity shall include "fundamental and applied research with authentic/original results aimed to expand and promote this activity and the overall knowledge".[14] [15]

As regards the needs of young researchers in social sciences and humanities, a key document that governs state funding for their research work is the Rulebook on the Procedure and Criteria for Funding and Supervision of Annual Programs of Entities Performing Research and Scientific Work[16], which entered into effect in July 2009.

This is a complex and comprehensive document that regulates funding of various activities from the annual programs adopted by state higher education institutions and public scientific institutions, ranging from scientific and research projects to study visits and publishing.[17]

Analysis of this Rulebook shows that it includes provisions on a number of various scientific and research activities to accommodate various researching needs in different disciplines. Moreover, it is important to emphasize that most of these scientific and research activities anticipate active involvement of young researchers. Therefore, Article 23 of the Rulebook stipulates the terms and conditions to be fulfilled by young researchers: to have completed the first cycle of studies, to be proficient in one foreign language, to present evidence that the project has been approved by the ministry, to present evidence that the researcher is unemployed, and to present documents indicating that the candidate from second cycle of studies is not older than 27 and the candidate from third cycle of studies is not older than 35 years on the day when the application is submitted.

These terms and conditions were changed by means of amendments to the Rulebook adopted in February 2011.[18] They included increase of the age threshold for young researchers to 40 years and deleted the requirement for the researcher-applicant to be unemployed, but introduced another condition whereby young researchers' designated mentors should have published at least two papers in international journals with an impact factor of 2.

It can be concluded that changes made to the age threshold for young researchers do not comply with EU trends where researchers' age is defined in terms of number of years from the completion of the candidate's doctoral studies, rather than in terms of researchers' actual age, as is the case in Macedonia. Experiences related to funding scientific and research projects in EU show that, depending on the type of program, young researcher's age is determined within the margin of 2 to 8 years from completion of doctoral studies.[19]

It appears that the additional criterion for the candidate's designated mentor to have published two papers in international journals with an impact factor of 2 is indirectly geared towards discrete elimination of candidates working in the field social sciences and humanities from funding possibility, because it is extremely difficult for researchers in this field to attain the above specified impact factor.[20] In Macedonia, the number of papers published in social science journals is insignificant, which is also evident from statistics obtained as part of this research. As a result, researchers in social sciences and humanities in Macedonia face challenges in securing mentors who fulfil the terms and conditions stipulated by the MES so as to qualify for research project funding. In that, the term "impact factor" is not defined in the said Rulebook or

in other relevant laws (the Law on Scientific and Research Activity, the Law on Higher Education, etc.).

Although it seems that these acts provide a solid framework for development of scientific and research activity in the country, several indicators lead to the conclusion that there is a major discrepancy between laws on paper and their enforcement in practice. In this regard, devastating is the fact that the Ministry of Education and Science has not announced open competitions for financing scientific and research projects in 2009 and 2011, while at the same time it faces major challenges related to completion of projects initiated in 2010, especially in terms of disbursing the approved funds. According to available information, relevant budgets for these projects have been decreased by 50 % by means of signing annexes to finding contracts, whereby the total sum per project has been reduced from 1.2 million MKD to 600,000 MKD. Moreover, in the first calendar year from the project cycle, the beneficiary institutions have been disbursed only 75,000 MKD per project.[21]

The state-of-affairs concerning research in social sciences and humanities is further complicated due to the clearly demonstrated approach whereby for longer period of time primacy is given to scientific research in technical and natural sciences and in medicine. Best example thereof is the open competition for funding research projects in 2011 announced by the MES, where funds were allocated to only five projects in the field of social sciences and humanities, in the amount of 300,000 MKD per project annually (!).[22] In that, the funding criteria required the research team to be comprised of one senior researcher and at least two young researchers, which – having in mind the projected budget – dramatically reduces possibilities for actual completion of the research. Similar problems were identified in regard to the 2011 open competition for funding scientific and research projects of young researchers, which anticipated funding for 20 projects in the amount of 150,000 MKD annually. In addition, all projects were required to include a mentor who fulfils the above-indicated criteria. As was the case with the previous example, obvious is that the financial conditions affect the research's scope and quality.

Commandment is due to the adoption of the Rulebook on the Procedure and Criteria for Funding and Supervision of Annual Programs on Scientific and Research Activity, but there is urgent need to review the funding priorities and the general conditions for involvement of young researchers in scientific research projects. Evident is that the Rulebook emphasizes involvement of young researchers, which significantly improves the possibilities for their professional development by means of their participation in scientific research projects.

The main precondition for publication of scientific papers in national or foreign journals is paper's authenticity and originality, but that can be achieved only by means

of thorough, long-term research whose implementation necessitates a specific and sustainable financial framework. Consequently, absence of actual funding sources, which is a result of established criteria, threatens implementation of research in social sciences and humanities and publication of scientific papers. It seems that existing criteria and conditions, particularly those related to researchers' experience, and the past practices that render the open competitions for funding research projects, including those for young researchers, unattractive for application.

2.2. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Given the need to analyse experiences and practices related to performance of scientific and research activity, especially in terms of the status of young researchers in social sciences and humanities, this paper is based on primary sources of information. As indicated above, the authors started from the premise that in order to determine the effectiveness of existing policies, it is especially important to analyse attitudes of stakeholders to which these policies apply.

As a result, this section of the document presents data obtained as part of the empirical research conducted among a pre-defined group of interviewees, as described in the introduction. The central focus is on determining the status, key challenges and perspectives of this category of researchers. It should be noted that majority of questions from the survey questionnaire allowed for multiple answers.

Results obtained from the survey conducted among young researchers offered great number of parameters related to their status. Having in mind the survey's format and scope, and for the purpose of obtaining a comprehensive image on the situation of young researchers and challenges they face in their everyday work, survey questions were divided into 3 groups, as follows: **(1) access to literature, databases and international journals; (2) involvement in scientific and research projects and participation in lectures/exercises;** and **(3) possibilities for in-service training and presentation of research results.**

Having in mind that the starting point for any research, including those in social sciences and humanities, is access to most recent and relevant secondary sources of information, the **first group of questions** attempts to analyse access to literature, databases and international journals for young researchers in the Republic of Macedonia.

The first questions inquired into matters related to young researchers' access to the latest scientific literature available in their relevant field of work (books, monographs, textbooks, publications, etc.). In this respect, results presented on Chart 1 show that only 16% of interviewed young researchers have access to the latest scientific literature. As high as 70% of researchers responded that they have partial access to literature, which leads to the conclusion that large share of young researchers have limited access to the latest literature in their respective fields of work. Limited access to the latest literature can affect the quality of research carried out by young researchers, in particular because it deprives researchers of the possibility to apply current trends and information from abroad in their own research work, which can indirectly affect the quality of their research.

Chart 1 - Do you have access to the latest scientific literature in your field of work?

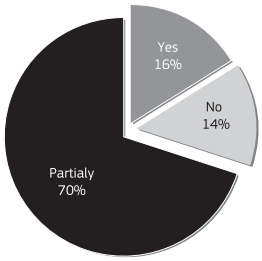
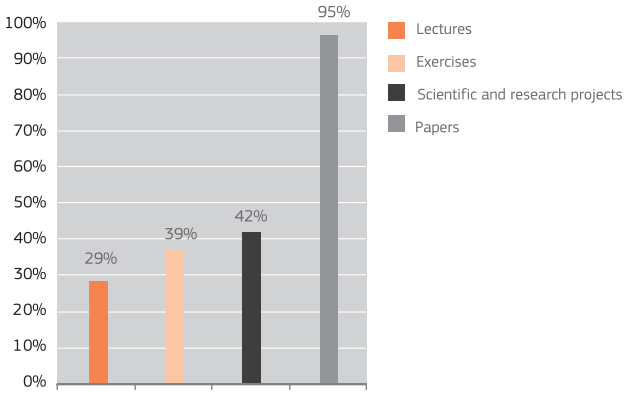
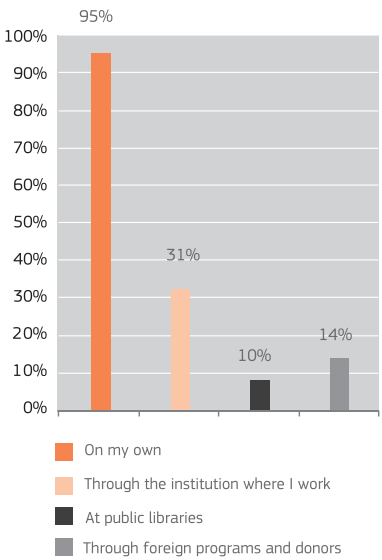


Chart 2 - For what purpose do you use the scientific literature?



In this context, it was important to identify the purposes for which researchers need the latest literature. Results presented on Chart 2 suggest that high share of young researchers use these sources of information for writing papers (95%), while use thereof for the purpose of research projects, lectures and exercises is less represented. This result suggests that young researchers would like to have access to the latest scientific literature when they are preparing for research and consequently when they are writing papers. This approach corresponds to the contemporary methodology trends in social sciences and humanities. On the other hand, surprising is the fact that, in average, only one-third of interviewees responded that they need the latest literature for the purpose of preparing lectures or exercises, which leads to the conclusion that many young researchers do not use the latest literature to prepare lectures and exercises. This could be due to the fact that researchers at in-country universities primarily use domestic literature for this purpose, as well as the fact that young researchers do not enjoy great freedom when designing lectures or exercises.

Chart 3 - How do you secure the literature needed for your work?



Rather indicative is the information obtained in regard to the manner in which young researchers secure literature required for their work, as presented on Chart 3. Results obtained suggest that in the process on securing literature, major-

ity of young researchers are left to manage on their own, i.e., more than 95% of interviewees responded that they secure the literature on their own, while more than two-thirds of them do not secure literature through the respective institution where they work. In other words, the public institutions in the country that are responsible for this (libraries, universities, institutes, etc.), do not secure sufficient access to the latest literature for young researchers in social sciences and humanities.

During the survey, questions inquiring about access to databases and international scientific/professional journals were separated from questions about access to literature. This was done due to the fact that access to databases, including to international journals, is mainly secured in electronic form by means of subscription for institutions/individuals, contrary to access to scientific literature, which is secured in hard copy by means of purchasing or lending books. Survey results provided evidence that justify such division of questions.

Chart 4 - Do you need access to database and international/profesional journals for your work?

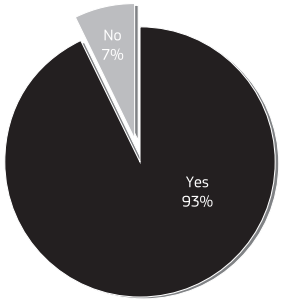
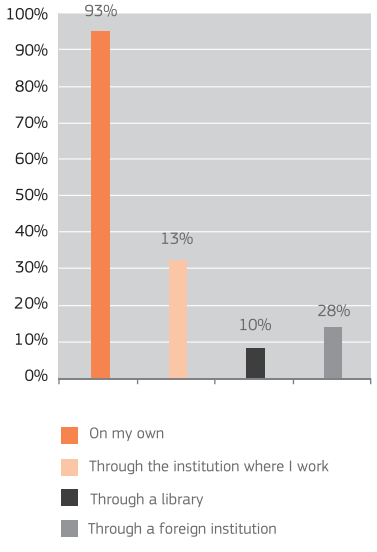
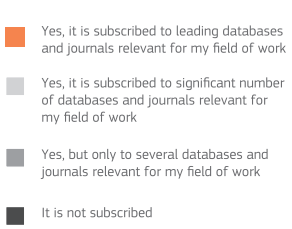


Chart 5 - How do you secure access to databases/journals?



In this respect, Chart 4 clearly shows that large share of interviewees (93%) emphasized the need to have access to databases and international scientific/professional journals.[23] In other words, it can be concluded that access to databases and international journals is an important instrument in the work of young researchers. In addition, the question on the manner in which young researchers secure access to databases/international journals was raised again. Results presented on Chart 5 provide a different image compared to the image gained from responses to the question on access to scientific literature. Namely, survey results show a dramatic decrease of the share of researchers who secure access to databases/international journals through the institution where they work (from 31% to 13%). On the other hand, the share of interviewees who have gained access through foreign institutions is almost doubled. Contrary to survey results obtained in regard to access in hard copy form, it seems that twice as many researchers benefit from electronic access to literature, which is dominantly present in regard to databases and international journals secured through foreign institutions.[24]

Chart 6 - Is your institution subscribed to databases and international scientific and research journals?



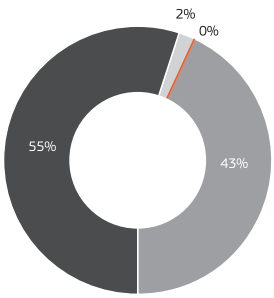
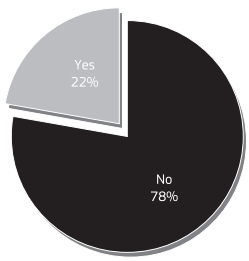


Chart 7 - Are you satisfied with the scope and relevance of databases and journals made available to you?



Having in mind that access *per se* has no importance, unless the databases or journals to which access has been secured are relevant to young researchers, the interviewees were asked several questions inquirying about their attitutes. Results presented on Charts 6 and 7 provide the conclusion that for almost 80% of interviewees the scope and relevance of databases are insufficient. The fact that more than half of institutions where the surveyed interviewees work are not subscribed to any databases provides explicit evidence on the possibilities of young researchers in the country.[25] It should be noted that on the survey's open-ended questions, the young researchers indicated numerous databases, as well as international scientific/professional journals for which they believe they should be granted access to. Moreover, the interviewees pointed out that in several cases where institutions have secured access to certain databases it is a matter of limited access, i.e., access to the basic package, which significantly narrows the possibilities for research.

These survey results further support the predefined conclusion that the extremely limited access to databases and international scientific/professional journals deprives young researchers of a very important element in their work. Without access to research results, presented as papers and published in relevant journals, one cannot expect in-country research in social sciences and humanities to be characterized by quality and be up-to-date.

The second group of questions inquired about the possibilities for involvement in scientific and research projects. In this respect, Chart 8 shows that relatively high share of interviews (54%) responded they have applied (individually or as team) for scientific and research projects funded by national institutions and organizations, including the MES. This clearly indicates the fact that young researchers in the field of social sciences and humanities from Macedonia have significant and, more importantly, demonstrated interest to participate in research projects.

Given the fact that scientific and research projects are the main instrument for carrying out fundamental and applied research, whose results imply authenticity and originality and are aimed at expanding and improving the research in general and the overall knowledge, this survey research identified the need to determine reasons why young researchers do not apply for funding of research projects as a special priority. In this regard, almost two-thirds of young researchers indicated that the main reason preventing them to apply for funding is the decision-making process on approving funding for project proposals. Moreover, results shown on Chart 9 indicate that a relatively high share of interviewees responded that insufficient funds for implementation of research projects are the main reason discouraging them to apply for funding.

Chart 8 - Have you ever applied (individually or as team) for scientific and research projects funded by national institutions, including MES?

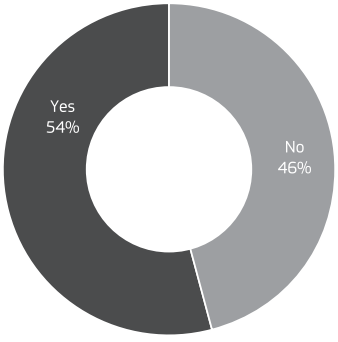
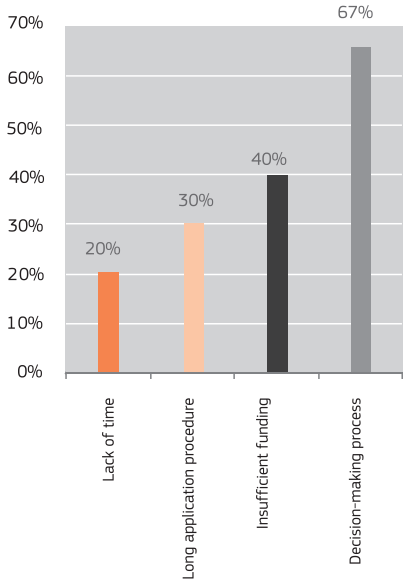


Chart 9 - What prevents you from applying?



The analysis of young researchers' participation in scientific and research projects also inquired about their involvement in projects implemented by their institution (Chart 10). In this respect, 37% of young researchers responded that they are not included in scientific and research projects implemented by their institution, which significantly limits their possibilities for in-service training. This result should not be taken for granted, having in mind the fact that on the next open-ended question where the interviewees were asked to indicate a specific project they were involved in, only 14% of them directly or indirectly indicated the projects in which they were involved.

In addition, survey results obtained in regard to factors that affect involvement of young researchers in projects, as presented on Chart 11, show that high share (56%) of interviewees responded that interpersonal relations at the institution affect their involvement in projects, while as many as 18% of them believe that political party affiliation plays a major role in that regard.

Chart 10 - Are young researchers from your institution (researchers aged up to 35 years) involved in development of scientific and research projects?

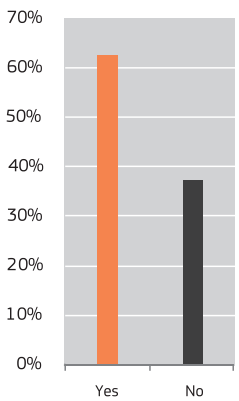
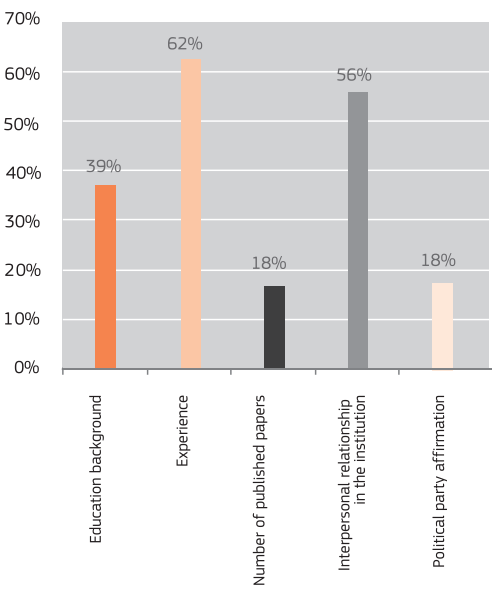
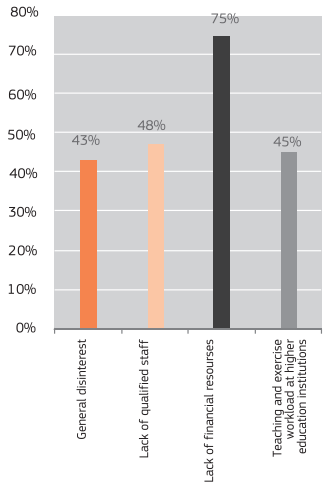


Chart 11 - What are the determining factors that affect young researchers' involvement in scientific and research projects?



As regards the general status of young researchers in social sciences and humanities, the survey inquired about their attititdes on the main challenges to implementing scientific and research projects. Results presented on Chart 12 show that majority of interviewees (75%) identified the lack of financial resources as key challenge.

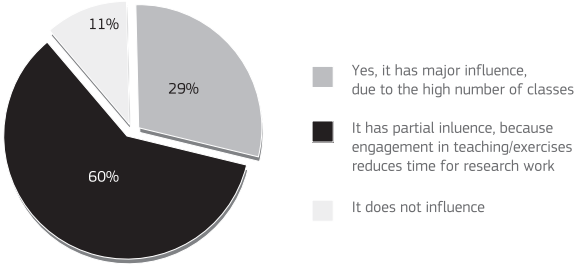
Chart 12 - In your opinion, what are the main obstacles and challenges for implementing scientific and research projects in social sciences and humanities?



Taking into consideration the fact that high number of interviewed researchers (90%) are involved in teaching at higher education institutions, but also their increased teaching workload, which is a result of new curricula adjusted to the requirements of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), the need to analyse the impact of young researchers' engagement in education on their scientific and research activity was logically imposed. Consequently, the survey included a question on whether interviewees' engagement in teaching/exercises affects their scientific and research work. Chart 13 shows that 29% of interviewees responded that their teaching engagement has major influence due to the high number of classes they teach, while 60% of them responded that it has partial influence because engagement in teaching/exercises decreases time available for conducting research. This provides the unambiguous conclusion that teaching and exercise workload affects the scientific and research work of young researchers in our country.

The third group of questions from the survey targeted the possibilities for in-service training and presentation of results from interviewees' scientific and research work in social sciences and humanities.

Chart 13- If you answered "yes" on the previous question, does your engagement in teaching/execises affect your scientific and research work?



Responses obtained to the third group of questions are given on Charts 14 to 18. In order to illustrate the current status of researchers, it is important to emphasize that survey results showed that more than one third of interviewees have not benefited from programs or other possibilities for in-service training

abroad. Majority of young researchers who had an opportunity for in-service training have pursued that on their own. Only 3 % of interviewees responded that the information on in-service training was provided by the MES.

Chart 14 - Have you benefited from programs/possibilities on in-service training in the country and abroad?

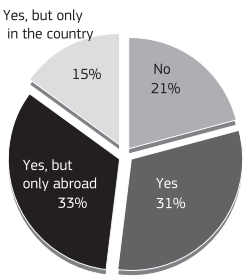
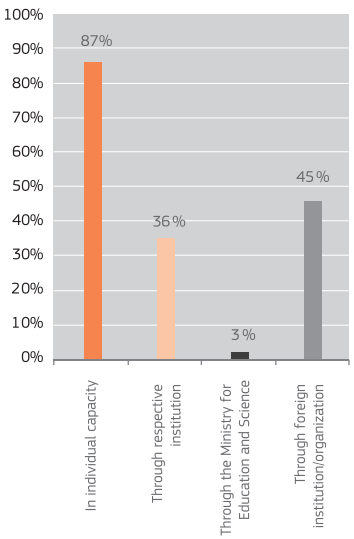


Chart 15 - How did you participate in these programs/events?



Participation in conferences and professional meetings abroad is relatively high. According to results presented on Chart 16, young researchers take part in international conferences 1 to 3 times a year. Almost two thirds of young researchers interviewed indicated this answer. Moreover, it should be noted that only 47% of interviewees received financial support for participation in international conferences and, without major variations, the support amounted from 100 to 500 EUR on annual level. Having in mind the common level of costs for participation in international conferences (registration fee, accommodation, transportation, etc.), question is raised on whether these funds are sufficient to cover the costs. However, a conclusion is inferred that despite the constraints and the limited possibilities, as discussed above, significant share of young researchers are oriented towards participation in international conferences.

Charts 19 and 20 show survey results concerning presentation of research findings as papers published in international journals and impact factor journals. Conclusion is that the situation is not completely discouraging.

Chart 16 - How many times per year do you participate in international scientific and/or professional conferences?

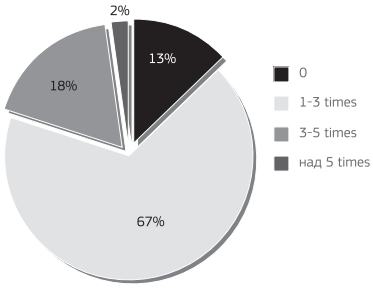


Chart 17 - Do you recive financial support from your institution to parcipate in international conferences?

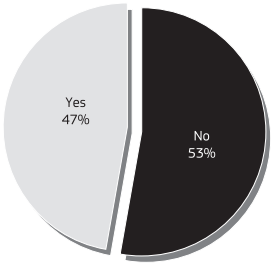


Chart 18 - If you answered "yes"on the previous question, what is the amount of financial support you receive on annual level?

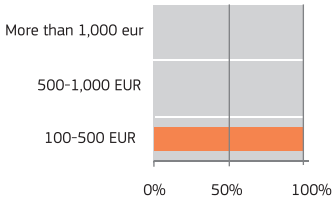
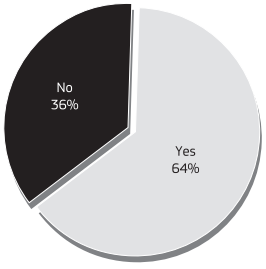
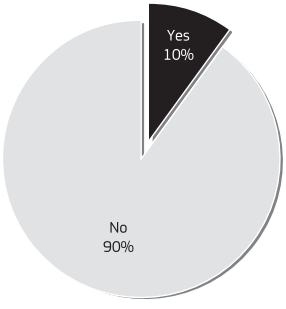


Chart 19 – Have you published papers in international journals?



Survey results show that almost two thirds of interviewees (64%) responded that they have published papers in international journals. This may imply the conclusion that young researchers are interested in presenting the results of their work in foreign journals. On the other hand, as expected, only 10% of young researchers have published papers in impact factor journals.

Chart 20 - Have you published papers in impact factor journals?



For the purpose of obtaining a comprehensive image on the material status of young researchers, they were asked whether they are satisfied with the financial reimbursement for their work. As high as 75% of interviewees negatively responded to this question.

3. APPLIED POLICY OPTIONS

Taking into consideration the survey results and the analysis of the legal framework and the access to funding sources for scientific and research activity, this paper focuses on developing an analytical framework that would provide a baseline for drafting an alternative to the current policy.

What are the alternatives to the current approach to scientific and research work? At times when the scientific and research activity is funded with a budget that is almost 15 times lower than the level the country should attain by 2020, there are no other alternatives but to increase the annual amount of funds allocated by the state to support science. It is a matter of large funds needed and at this moment there is no alternative to state funding for science. Although the universities dispose with own income sources, these funds are insufficient to be an alternative to state funding. This is also demonstrated with the comparison of experiences in the region and at EU level. All countries allocate state budget funds to finance scientific and research activity and therefore increasing the budget account for science is not only the most effective, but also the only alternative to the current policy. At the same time, there is a need for the universities to increase funds for scientific research from own financing sources.

In addition to that, it seems that researchers in social sciences and humanities are faced with a major challenge related to financing their scientific and research work, primarily due to the criteria in place that were discussed above. Defining impact factor as requirement for funding scientific and research work raises problems due to the fact that this factor refers to citations to a specific paper or journal. In this regard, it is logical to expect that in the Republic of Macedonia papers in natural and technical sciences would be more frequently cited compared to papers in social sciences and humanities, notably because knowledge and results in these disciplines are more easily applicable in other countries. Therefore, the existing criteria need to be reviewed and to establish new criteria that would enable adequate valuation of projects in different fields/disciplines. In no case can the impact factor be considered the single criterion on assessing the quality of an individual's scientific and research work.

Finally, the authors reconsider the inevitable option on maintaining the status quo in this field. It seems that this potential option would result in further stagnation of development in the field of social sciences and humanities and would result in possible increase of brain drain, i.e., emigration of persons who cannot fulfil their maximum potential in their own country, as well as further dependence from foreign donors to implement research projects.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysed legal framework that governs scientific and research activity, its implementation, as well as on the basis of primary sources of information, the main conclusion reached is that there is a general dissatisfaction with the manner in which social sciences and humanities are pursued in the country. This assessment is shared by both, young researchers and representatives of relevant institutions targeted by the survey research.

The survey noted many challenges faced by young researchers and the entities involved in performing scientific and research activity. Moreover, inevitable is the impression that public institutions in the state, especially the MES, lack sense about the need for research in social sciences and humanities, particularly as part of the policy making cycle. Therefore, it seems that the window of possibility for young researchers in social sciences and humanities from the country is still closed. Defeating is also the fact that international possibilities for researchers from the country are gradually decreasing. For illustration purposes, for several years now Macedonia is the only country in South-East Europe that does not participate in the European Commission's Tempus Programme, which provides substantial funds to finance regional projects in higher education.

In a democratic society, stakeholders will make the best efforts to lobby for public policy options they prefer.[26] On this account, the final section of this paper provides recommendations aimed at improving the public policy and promoting the status of young researchers in social sciences and humanities in the Republic of Macedonia. Following are the recommendations drafted on the basis of the survey and the empirical research for which the authors hope will contribute to overcoming the current situation.

A. Ministry of Education and Science should:

- immediately **initiate a continuous increase of funds from the state budget allocated for science** from the current level of 0.18% of GDP, by making due consideration of its commitment to EU goals on increasing investments in science to 3 % of country's GDP by 2020;[27]
- immediately **ensure implementation of all activities anticipated in the Rulebook on Financing and Supervision of Annual Programs on Scientific and Research Activity** adopted as early as 2009. Notwithstanding the open competitions announced for financing scientific and research projects, other activities anticipated in this Rulebook that are relevant for young re-

searchers remain unrealized. This is particularly true for measures and activities related to academic career advancement of young researchers on national level, as well as measures aimed to encourage promotion of young researchers' research results abroad;

- **review the criteria on allocation of funds** for scientific and research projects stipulated in the Law on Scientific and Research Activity and the Rulebook on Funding and Supervision of Annual Programs on Scientific and Research Activity. The existing criteria, especially the provisions on papers published in impact factor journals, are not conductive to development of research in social sciences and humanities because they limit researchers' access to state financing for their work. The impact factor cannot be considered the single criterion for assessing the quality of scientific and research work;
- **increase the number of projects funded** in social sciences and humanities, as well as the funds allocated to support their implementation;
- **re-evaluate procedures and deadlines for decision taking** on allocation of funds to support scientific and research projects;
- **provide precise definition of "young researcher"** in the Law on Scientific and Research Activity, and align it with EU standards and experiences. Consequently, age of young researchers should be determined according to the number of years from their completion of doctoral studies, rather than according to researcher's actual age, as is the current practice in Macedonia;
- take more energetic measures to **improve access to the latest scientific literature, databases and international scientific journals**. On the basis of the competences of the MES to perform activities related to organization, financing, development and promotion of science[28], it needs to increase the number of resources available to researchers, in cooperation with public libraries or universities. In that, the resources available must make due account of equal representation of all social sciences;
- **improve the system on dissemination of information** related to the possibilities for in-service training of young researchers.

B. Universities and other institutions and organizations engaged in research in social sciences and humanities should:

- take urgent measures to **enable access to numerous relevant databases and international journals**, as well as to extend the scope of available scientific literature that young researchers need;
- **encourage involvement of young researchers in scientific and research projects**, as well as publication of their papers in international journals and impact factor journals by providing adequate **incentives** for them;
- **analyse young researcher's the teaching/exercises workload** in terms of establishing balance between daily teaching duties and scientific and research work;
- **increase funds allocated to cover costs** for young researchers' participation in international conferences;
- **develop transparent system on allocation of funds** for participation in international conferences;
- **promote the material status** of young researchers;
- **promote interpersonal relationships** within the institutions;
- **improve exchange and dissemination of information** within the institutions/organizations.

ENDNOTES

1 European University Institute. (2011). *Survey on Research Funding for the Social Sciences in Europe.* Available at: http://www.eui.eu/ProgrammesAndFellowships/AcademicCareersObservatory/2011MWPACOReportSurvey.aspx. [Last accessed on 1 September 2012].

2 Academic Ranking of World Universities. (2012). *Macedonian Higher Education Institutions Ranking.* Available at http://www.shanghairanking.com/Macedonian_HEIs_Ranking/index.html. [last accessed on 15 September 2012].

3 Centre for Research and Policy Making. (2008). Assessment of Research Capacities in Social Sciences in Macedonia. Available at: http://www.crpm.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Report_Social_Research_Assessment_MK.pdf. [Accessed on 1 June 2012].

4 90% of interviewees from the survey sample are employed or contracted at higher education institution, while the remaining share of them are engaged in citizens' associations profiled in research in the field of social sciences and humanities.

5 In addition, it should be emphasized that the current Law on Higher Education encourages scientific and research work on the part of candidates enrolled in the third cycle of studies (doctoral studies), notably by including a provision on the obligation of candidates to publish as authors two peer-reviewed scientific and research papers in international scientific journals or international scientific publications, or to publish one paper in an international journal with impact factor in the course of their studies. In this regard, it should be noted that in the last several years the number of research conducted was increased due to the increased number of students enrolled in postgraduate and doctoral studies. See: Article 96 of the Law on Higher Education ("*Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia"* no. 35/2008, 103/2008, 26/2009, 83/2009, 99/2009, 115/2010, 17/2011, 51/2011 and 123/2012).

6 European Commission. DG – Research. (2011). 2011 Report on the Social Sciences and Humanities in the FYR Macedonia, pg. 31. Available at http://www.metrisnet.eu/metris/fileUpload/countryReports/FYRMacedonia_2011.pdf. [Accessed on 1 March 2012].

7 This, *inter alia,* is reflected in the fact that in Macedonia there is small number of academic journals in social sciences and humanities compared to other countries from the region. Centre for Research and Policy Making. (2008). The Assessment of Research Capacities in Social Sciences in Macedonia. Available at: http://www.crpm.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Report_Social_Research_Assessment_MK.pdf. [Accessed on 1 June 2012], pg. 6-7.

8 SJR Scimago Journal and Country Rank. Social Sciences. Eastern Europe. Available at: http://www.scimagojr.com/countryrank.php?area=3300&category=0&region=Eastern+Europe&year=all&order=it&min=0&min_type=it. [Accessed on 1 November 2012].

9 Republic of Macedonia. State Statistical Office. Scientific and Research and Developmental Activities, 2008. Available at: http://www.stat.gov.mk/Publikacii/2.4.11.08.pdf [Accessed on 1 September 2012].

10 Budget of the Republic of Macedonia, ("*Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia"* no. 161/2010), pg. 217.

11 Centre for Research and Policy Making. (2008). *Assessment of Research Capacities in Social Sciences in Macedonia*. Available at: http://www.crpm.org.mk/wpcontent/ uploads/2012/03/Report_Social_Research_Assessment_MK.pdf, pg.11. [Accessed on 12 October 2012].

12 For illustration purposes: according to Eurostat's data for 2010, in average, Member States, allocated 2% of their respective GDPs for science. For example, Germany allocated 2.82% of GDP, Slovenia – 2.11%; Estonia – 1.62%, and Bulgaria – 0.6%. Source: European Commission. Eurostat. Research and Development Expenditure. Available at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/R_%26_D_expenditure. [Accessed on 15 December 2012].

13 Law on Scientific and Research Activity ("*Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia"* no. 46/2008, 24/2011, 103/2008, 24/2011, 80/2012).

14 The National Programme for Scientific and Research Activity in the Republic of Macedonia is the main instrument for performing scientific and research work. It stipulates the baselines, objectives, contents and scope of tasks in the field of science; programme's coordination and implementation; necessary research infrastructure; manner for funding scientific and research activities; projections on needed scientific staff and indicators on monitoring efficiency of scientific and research work; international dimension; programme's links to the business and institutional networks (Article 6).

15 As regards the wording used in the Law on Scientific and Research Activity, it should be stressed that it is a legal text of relatively high quality and upholds European trends in this area. Consequently, the European Commission's 2008 Progress Report for the Republic of Macedonia highlighted the progress achieved with the adoption of the new Law on Scientific and Research Activity. This position is also shared by domestic experts, who characterize it as European law.

16 Rulebook on the Procedure and Criteria for Funding and Supervision of Annual Programs of Entities Performing Research and Scientific Work ("*Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia"* no. 88/2009).

17 This document anticipates funding for the following activities: scientific and research projects; small projects for promotion of curricula in first and second cycle of studies; projects as part of curricula in the third cycle of studies; promotion of scientific and research infrastructure; training, development and scientific and research staffing, support to international scientific cooperation and transfer of knowledge and skills; promotion of scientific and research activities; support to publishing; participation of domestic scientific researchers at international scientific meetings; conferences and study visits abroad, and visits of foreign scientific researchers to the Republic of Macedonia.

18 Rulebook on Amending the Rulebook on the Procedure and Criteria for Funding and Super-

vision of Annual Programs of Entities Performing Research and Scientific Work ("*Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia"* no. 25/2011).

19 Max Planck EU Regional Office Baden Wurttemberg. *"Introducing 'Active Career Development'. Available at:* http://eu.tuebingen.mpg.de/young-scientists.html. [Accessed on 10 November 2012].

20 A similar solution is present in the Law on Scientific and Research Activity, whereby priority in funding of research projects is given to persons who in the last three years have published a paper in an impact factor journal pursuant to Article 51 and are therefore indirectly favoured compared to other applicants. Indirectly, this criterion favours projects in natural sciences and medicine that have higher citation rate compared to social sciences and humanities.

21 Debate on the topic "Support to Research in Social Sciences in Macedonia: Challenges and Perspectives" – Skopje, 22 November 2012.

22 For comparison purposes, this open competition anticipated financial support for a total of 40 projects in natural sciences and mathematics, technical, biotechnical sciences and medicine in the amount of 400,000 MKD each.

23 Researchers in the country have access only to EBSCO's database, as well as journal database in management – ML. Relevant fees on database access through the National Library are covered by the Ministry of Education and Science.

24 Based on survey responses, it was concluded that for the most part it is a matter of researchers who study or have studied abroad.

25 In that, it should be noted that more than 85% of survey interviewees are employed at or have signed task contracts with the four highest-ranked universities in the country.

26 Young, O., Quinn L., (2009). *Writing Effective Policy Papers: Writing Effective Public Policy Papers: A Guide to Policy Advisers in Central and Eastern Europe.* Skopje: Foundation Open Society Institute – Macedonia, pg. 7.

27 UNESCO. Institute of Statistics. Available at: http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=136&IF. [Accessed on 15 December 2012].

28 Law on Organization and Operation of State Administrative Bodies (*"Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia"* no 58/2000, 44/2002, 82/2008, 167/2010 and 51/2011), Article 23.

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- European Commission. Eurostat. Research and Development Expenditure. Available at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/R_%26_D_expenditure.
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- Max Planck EU Regional Office Baden Wurttemberg. *"Introducing 'Active Career Development'. Available at:* http://eu.tuebingen.mpg.de/young-scientists.html.
- SJR Scimago Journal and Country Rank. Social Sciences. Eastern Europe. Available at: http://www.scimagojr.com/countryrank.php?area=3300&category=0&region=Eastern+Europe&year=all&order=it&min=0&min_type=it.
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- Rulebook on Amending the Rulebook on the Procedure and Criteria for Funding and Supervision of Annual Programs of Entities Performing Research and Scientific Work (*"Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia",* no. 25/2011).
- Rulebook on the Procedure and Criteria for Funding and Supervision of Annual Programs of Entities Performing Research and Scientific Work. (*"Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia"* no. 88/2009).
- Republic of Macedonia: State Statistical Office. Scientific and Research and Development Activity, 2008. Available at: http://www.stat.gov.mk/Publikacii/2.4.11.08.pdf

CONTENTS

PROMOTING RESEARCH COMPETENCES FOR STUDENTS OF LAW AND POLITICAL SCIENCES

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(December, 2012)

ABSTRACT

This policy paper identified:

- Declarative commitments on the part of "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" University in Skopje (hereinafter: UKIM) and partial or incomplete offer of curricula at the South East European University (hereinafter: SEEU) under undergraduate law and political study programs that would equip the students to understand and produce scientific contents;
- Absence of adequate modules/courses to equip undergraduate students of law and political sciences to understand and produce scientific contents.

The purpose of this policy paper is to indicate the need for promoting research competences of undergraduate students of law and political sciences. The analysis is based on data obtained by using the mechanism stipulated in the Law on Free Access to Public Information (FOI), analysis of the existing study programs and curricula and a survey carried out among students and teaching staff at: Faculty of Law "Iustinianius Primus" (law and political studies) at UKIM, and Faculty of Law and Faculty of Political Sciences and Public Administration at SEEU.

Based on the research results, this policy paper proposes introduction of two mandatory courses/modules in the third semester of study programs in law and political sciences, those being: scientific research methodology and academic writing. To a large extent, the success of these modules would dependent on students' access to necessary resources (relevant literature) and their involvement in scientific and research projects implemented at their higher education institutions in order to apply these competences in other study courses/modules.

Results and recommendations presented in this document are applicable in the context of existing study programs in law and political sciences delivered at other higher education institutions in Macedonia.

1. INTRODUCTION

From 2000 to present, higher education policies in the Republic of Macedonia emphasize the importance of research in natural and technical sciences. On this account, research in social sciences and humanities has been marginalized, except in the context of promoting folklore, history, culture and language.[1]

Internationalization of vocations and labour market demands more qualified staff in social sciences and humanities equipped to apply high-quality methodology and research competences. For young lawyers and political scientists in the country to be actively involved in the process on institutional capacity building, to offer practical solutions for societal and political problems, to provide critical reflection on the social reality and thus contribute to building of an open and democratic society, in the course of their undergraduate studies in law and political sciences, the students need to be given opportunities to acquire these competences. In turn, this implies the need for policies that would be geared towards promotion of relevant study programs and scientific and research activity during the first cycle of studies.

The research identified declarative commitments on the part of "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" University in Skopje (UKIM) and partial and inadequate offer of curricula at the South East European University in Tetovo (SEEU) that would equip the students to understand and produce scientific contents in the field of law and political sciences.

The research was focused on the law and political sciences departments that operate as part of the two highest-ranked universities in Macedonia, according to the Shangai National Academic Ranking of Universities.[2] Analysis of relevant documents[3] and survey of students and teaching staff was conducted at three higher education institutions: Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus" (law and political sciences) at UKIM, and Faculty of Law and Faculty of Political Sciences and Public Administration at SEEU.

Based on the research results, a proposal is put forward to introduce two mandatory courses/modules on scientific research methodology and academic writing as part of third semester curricula for undergraduate studies in law and political sciences. This policy needs to be additionally supported by providing students access to necessary resources (libraries, international journals, electronic databases, information on

scientific and research work) and their active involvement in scientific and research projects in order to apply acquired scientific and research skills in other study courses/ modules (writing academic papers: essays, critical reviews of scientific work, etc.).

Although the primary stakeholders in this analysis are students and teaching staff at law and political sciences programs at UKIM and SEEU, research results and recommendations presented in this document are also applicable in the context of existing study programs in law and political sciences delivered at other higher education institutions in Macedonia.

For the purpose of implementing the policies put forward in this document, recommendations are primarily directed at the Higher Education Accreditation and Evaluation Board, Dean Administration and Teaching and Scientific Council of the Faculty of Law at UKIM, as well as relevant management bodies at the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Political Sciences and Public Administration at SEEU.

One of the main restrictions of this policy paper is the inability to carry out a cause-effect analysis that would determine which factor directly affects other factors. This is directly related to the absence of empiric data that would be conductive to defining these cause and effect conclusions. Hence, this document primarily focuses on identifying the problem issue and providing general recommendations to overcome it, but refrains from presenting detailed solutions. Additional detailing of solutions to the identified problem issue should be a subject of a future research.

The next section of this document presents the problem issue and its context. The third section provides a description of research methodology and scope. Research results are presented in the fourth section, and the fifth section puts forward possible solutions. The final, sixth, section provides conclusion and recommendations aimed to improve state-of-affairs addressed in this policy paper.

2. PROBLEM CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION

Many renowned authors claim that basic knowledge on scientific research methodology is of great importance and represents the core of vocations "political scientist" and "lawyer". According to Immergut, trend on political science development from Old Institutionalism through Behavioural Revolution and Functionalism, and all the way to New Institutionalism, is focused on the question: *How to study the political phenomena?,* which by its virtue is a fundamental methodology issue.[4]

Cameron and Hogan also advocate for scientific methods to be taught as part of undergraduate studies in political sciences, in order for students to understand the basics of theoretical and empirical knowledge, evolution of scientific study of politics, creative aspects of the research process and how political science can be applied in the real world.[5] Module/course on scientific research methodology in law sciences (and in social sciences and humanities) is deemed necessary due to the increasing need for interdisciplinary approach in studying socio-legal and political phenomena**.** Thus, according to Khushal/Filipos: "contemporary law universities and schools dedicated to creating future generations of legal professionals, lawyers (judges and prosecutors) are required not only to act as law education centres, but also as law research centres".[6] Students in law and political sciences should master the basics in academic writing and possess generic skills on clear and structured written expression. Schmied claims that academic writing should not be only students' responsibility, but it should be incorporated in the teaching process.[7] The American Academy has long acknowledged the importance of studying academic writing as part of undergraduate studies. The need to introduce academic writing as mandatory course/module in undergraduate studies is being recognized throughout Europe as well.[8]

Investment in scientific and research activity is one of the key areas that should be improved in the context of Macedonia's accession in the European Union (EU). Notably, the EU defined a priority on continuous increase of investments in research and development as share of GDP, i.e., this share should be 3% of EU Member States GDP by 2020.[9] In this context, there is greater need for creating more competitive staff in the European Research Area able to use new EU funds allocated to support research (Horizon 2020).

Scientific and research competences, *inter alia*, would help students to realize their right to horizontal and vertical mobility within the European Education Area. This is also a fundamental commitment assumed under the Bologna Declaration, to which the Republic of Macedonia is a signatory country.[10] However, in the period 2000 – 2006, investments in research and development in Macedonia were reduced from 0.44% to 0.21 % of GDP.[11] Insufficient funds allocated to support researchers and research projects and lack of adequate infrastructure, primarily access to relevant literature and high quality training programs for researchers in social sciences and humanities, affect scientific and research production in the country. For example, it is known that Macedonia has a low rank according to publication of scientific papers in impact-factor international journals in the field of social sciences and humanities (19th position from a total of 24) compared to other Eastern European countries.[12]

The National Framework of Higher Education Qualifications emphasizes that one of the results of the education process should include knowledge of the methodology

in the relevant scientific field. Following the completion of the first cycle of studies (180/240 ECTS),[13] qualifications are awarded to the person who fulfils several criteria: "knowledge in the domain of theoretical, practical, conceptual, comparative and critical perspectives of the scientific field, pursuant to the adequate methodology". Furthermore, the student is expected to engage in interdisciplinary discussions with the expert and non-expert public and, in that, maintain a professional approach.

Finally, study programs that do not offer modules/courses on scientific research methodology and academic writing do not enable students to develop competences in critical thinking, which are considered precondition for their transition from passive consumption to active production of knowledge.

The analysis of public documents that regulate both, scientific and research activity and higher education activity in Macedonia established the need for development of scientific and research work by strengthening scientific and research competences[14] in the higher education process. According to the Law on Scientific and Research Activity[15], higher education institutions should provide conditions for students to acquire competences and skills on scientific and research work. In continuity, these institutions should provide opportunities for complementing scientific disciplines with contemporary scientific and practical knowledge.

In this regard, formal acts that regulate the operation of higher education institutions define development and promotion of scientific and research work as their primary goal and objective. According to the Statute of UKIM, study departments are obliged to introduce students to scientific and research work, i.e., to integrate information on scientific and research achievements and new knowledge in teaching and education processes implemented as part of the three cycles of studies.[16] SEEU has developed a special program to encourage scientific and research work. The Rulebook on Scientific and Research Work[17] anticipates establishment of Department for Scientific Research and Research Committee as the management bodies chaired by the Deputy Rector for Scientific Research.[18] Moreover, the Rulebook anticipates establishment of separate budget account intended to support scientific and research work. Hence, according to the Rulebook and in compliance with the Law on Higher Education of the Republic of Macedonia, best researchers could be incentivized by means of salary supplements in the amount of 20% of their annual net salary.[19] Although there is a separate document that regulates scientific and research work at this university, it does not address the need for development of scientific and research competences of students by involving them in scientific and research projects or allowing them to independently apply for funds disbursed by the university intended to support research work of students.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE

Scientific disciplines addressed in this policy paper have an important place in social sciences and humanities and their selection was determined by the broader context of this project whose goal is to improve the state-of-affairs related to research in social sciences and humanities. This is further supported by the fact that 80% of higher education institutions in social sciences and humanities in Macedonia are focused on business, law and political sciences and relevant study programs are still in development.[20]

The first part of the research compares modules/courses on scientific research methodology and academic writing that are part of study programs in law and political sciences delivered at UKIM and SEEU. In addition, by exercising the right to free access to public information[21] data were collected on scientific and research projects where the higher education institutions targeted by the research participate in; activities they take to promote scientific and research work; involvement of students in research projects and manner in which students are informed about scientific and research work carried out at their higher education institution; produced publications and opportunities for participation in international conferences. The main goal of the field research was:

- to identify students' attitudes about their ability to understand and produce scientific contents;
- to identify students and teaching staff's attitudes about the need for introducing modules/courses that will equip students to understand and produce scientific contents (scientific research methodology and academic writing);
- to determine undergraduate students' involvement in scientific and research projects at their respective higher education institutions and accessibility of scientific literature (international scientific journals and electronic databases).

Field survey activities were implemented in the period May - June 2012 and included 221 interviewees and 131 on-line respondents. Table 1 provides an overview of the sample comprised of students, according to their year of studies, study program (law or political sciences) and higher education institution. Table 2 provides an overview of the sample comprised of teaching staff, according to their academic title and higher education institution.

Table 1	Survey sample comprised of students			
Year of studies	**I**	**II**	**III**	**Total**
UKIM students of law	65	69	67	201
UKIM students of political sciences	21	26	33	80
SEEU students of law	10	10	23	43
SEEU students of political sciences	1	0	2	3
Total				**327**

Table 2		Survey sample comprised of teaching staff			
Academic title	**Full-time professor**	**Associate professor**	**Docent**	**Teaching assistant**	**Total**
UKIM	1	1	2	8	12
SEEU	1	1	6	5	13
Total					25

Data processing was made by using R Deducer software, Excel and descriptive statistical analysis. The number of survey respondents allows a descriptive, but not inferential statistical analysis due to the different number of respondents from both universities, insufficient number of respondents – students of political sciences at SEEU, combined method of data collection: field survey and online-survey. Due to the different number of respondents from both universities, the results from the analysis are presented separately per university and per field of studies.

4. RESULTS

4. 1. ANALYSIS OF STUDY PROGRAMS

Table 3 provides an overview on the existence of relevant modules/courses in the targeted study programs:

Table 3	Overview on existence of relevant modules/courses	
Higher education institution	**Academic writing**	**Scientific research methodology**
UKIM (law and political sciences)[22]	N/A	N/A
SEEU (law[23] and political sciences[24])	elective (in Macedonian, Albanian and English language)	N/A in law studies, mandatory course in political sciences

Academic writing in Macedonian language, as elective course at SEEU, does not aim to equip students with knowledge on the rules governing academic expression, but rather focuses on written and oral expression in Macedonian language, i.e., students are taught to become "more autonomous in their language studies".[25]

Academic writing in Albanian language has a different objective, i.e., to equip students with essay-writing skills (which is only one form of academic writing) and scientific and research work. This module's purpose is disputable in terms of equipping students to collect materials and to perform scientific and research work. Description of the module/course on academic writing includes objectives that are more relevant to standard contents of this type of modules/courses, such as studying function and form of paragraphs, selecting research topics and rules governing documentation of information/data sources. Illogical is the fact that two modules/courses with same title, but delivered in different language, have different objectives.

The module/course on research methods in political sciences enables students to obtain knowledge on scientific and research methods, as well as to understand the importance and function of scientific and research projects. However, unclear remains why components such as "monitoring, questionnaire, classification, interpretation of compiled photograph materials"[26] are stressed as particularly important contents offered under this module/course.

4.2. FOI RESPONSES FROM UKIM AND SEEU

Table 4 provides an overview of manners in which higher education institutions inform their undergraduate students about scientific and research work implemented at the respective institution.

Table 4	Manners of informing about scientific and research work
Higher education institution	**FOI response**
UKIM (law and political sciences)	Website, coordinators of research groups
SEEU (law and political sciences)	All scientific and research activities at the university are coordinated through the Research Office. Students are informed via e-mails, website and monthly newsletter.

FOI responses obtained on the question inquiring about *undergraduate students' involvement in scientific and research projects implemented by the higher education institution in the period 2008 - 2012,* indicate that students are excluded or are insufficiently involved in scientific and research projects. In the above given period, UKIM's law and political studies did not include undergraduate students in (the total of nine) scientific and research projects carried out by the teaching staff, whereas SEEU's students of law and political studies were involved in one project in 2008 and two projects in 2010 (from the total of seven projects).[27]

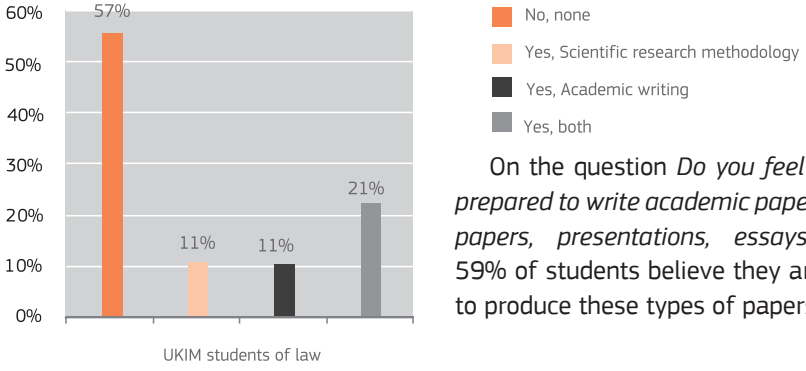
As regards *accessibility of international academic journals and databases needed to develop staff capable of understanding and producing scientific papers,* SEEU indicated that it is subscribed to three international databases – *EBSCO* (database), *Oxford Journals* and *Cambridge Journals*, which are made available to students at the university's e-library. Faculty of Law at UKIM is not subscribed to any international academic journal and database.[28]

4. 3. SURVEY RESULTS

4.3.1. UKIM STUDENTS OF LAW

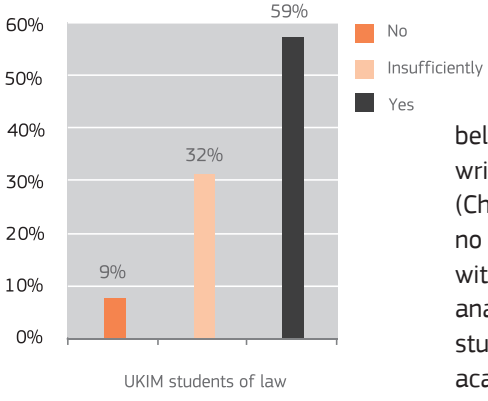
On the question *Do you have knowledge on the scientific research methodology in your field of studies and academic writing?,* around 57% of students responded that they do not know the essence of these two modules/courses. Although these modules/courses are not included in the relevant study programs, 22% of students responded they have certain knowledge about the essence of one or the other module (Chart 1).

Chart 1 - Knowledge on Scientific research methodology and Academic writing



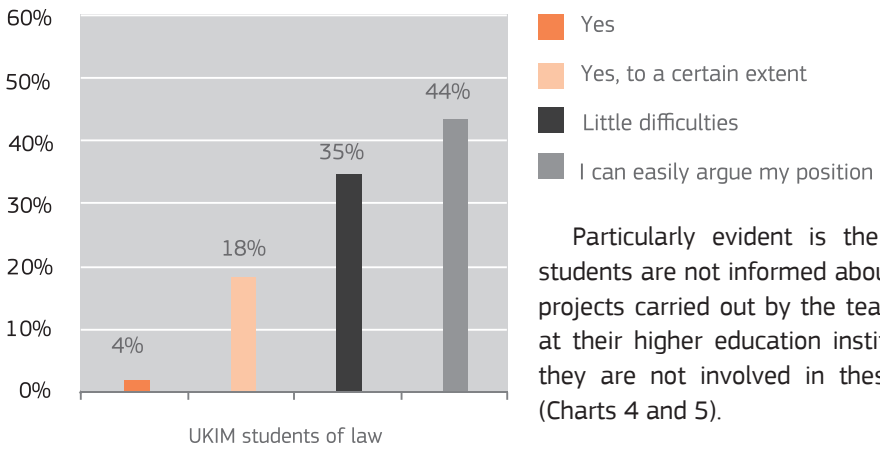
On the question *Do you feel sufficiently prepared to write academic papers (seminar papers, presentations, essays)?,* around 59% of students believe they are prepared to produce these types of papers (Chart 2).

Chart 2 - Do you feel sufficiently prepared to write academic papers (seminar papers, presentations, essays)?



Also, approximately 78% of students believe they can argue their positions in written with ease or with little difficulty (Chart 3). Despite the fact that there are no modules/courses that can provide them with systematic knowledge and skills, analysis of survey answers shows that students believe they are prepared to write academic papers.

Chart 3 - Do you have difficulties in arguing your positions in written?



Particularly evident is the fact that students are not informed about research projects carried out by the teaching staff at their higher education institution, and they are not involved in these projects (Charts 4 and 5).

Chart 4 - Are you informed about research projects carried out by the teaching staff at your higher education instruction?

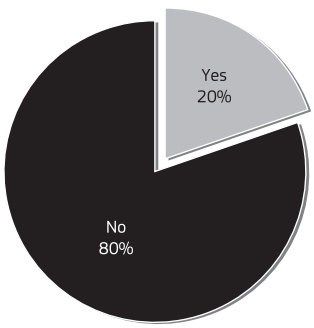
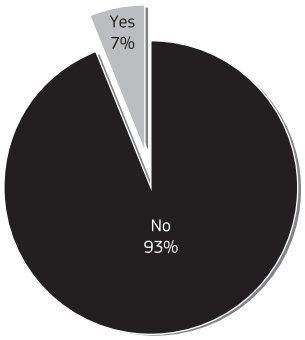


Chart 5 - Have you ever been involved in scientific and research projects carried out at your higher education institution?



When cross-referencing answers obtained to questions inquiring about students' ability to write academic papers and their interest to have modules/courses on scientific research methodology and academic writing introduced as mandatory, the conclusion is inferred that 52 of the total of 120 students who considered themselves able to write academic papers, also believe these courses/modules should be mandatory, while 50 students answered "maybe". If one interprets the "maybe" answer as closer to an affirmative answer,[29] the conclusion is reached that more than 102 from the total of 120 students who considered themselves prepared to write academic papers, are also interested to have these courses/modules introduced as mandatory (Table 5).

Table 5

Ability to write academic papers	Interest to have courses/modules on SRM and AW introduced as mandatory			
	No	Don't know	Maybe	Yes
No	1	0	7	10
Insufficiently	4	1	17	42
Yes	18	0	50	52

SRM– Scientific research methodology

AW - Academic writing

When cross-referencing answers obtained to questions inquiring about *students' knowledge on scientific research methodology and academic writing* and their opinion *whether these courses/modules should be introduced as mandatory*, the conclusion is reached that 63 from the total of 125 students who are not familiarized with these two modules would also prefer to have these courses/modules introduced as mandatory, while 40 students answered "maybe" (Table 6).

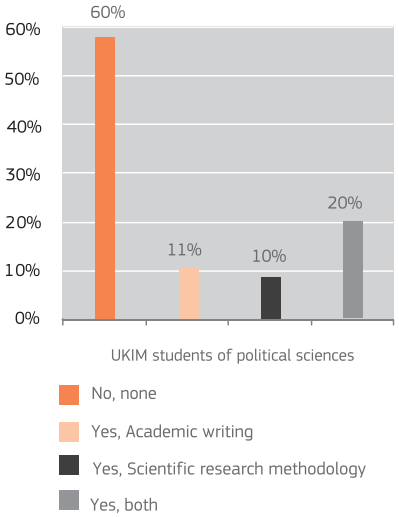
Table 6

Knowledge on SRM and AW	Interest to have courses/modules on SRM and AW introduced as mandatory			
	No	Don't know	Maybe	Yes
No, none	12	0	40	63
Yes, SRM	4	0	10	8
Yes, AW	4	0	8	10
Yes, both	3	1	16	23

4.3.2. UKIM STUDENTS OF POLITICAL SCIENCES

On the question *Do you have knowledge on the scientific research methodology in your field of studies and academic writing?*, almost 60% of students responded they have no knowledge on the essence of these two modules/courses (Chart 6).

Chart 6 - Knowledges on Scientific research methodology and Academic writing



Furthermore, approximately 69% of students believe that courses/modules on scientific research methodology and academic writing should be introduced as mandatory and 28% of them indicated "maybe" in their answers. On the question inquiring whether they are *informed about the research projects carried out by the teaching staff at their higher education institution*, 90% of students responded they are not informed thereof and 88% of students responded they have never been involved in research projects. 47% of surveyed students of political sciences indicated they are not sufficiently prepared to write academic papers, while 42% of them answered they have little difficulties when arguing their positions in written.

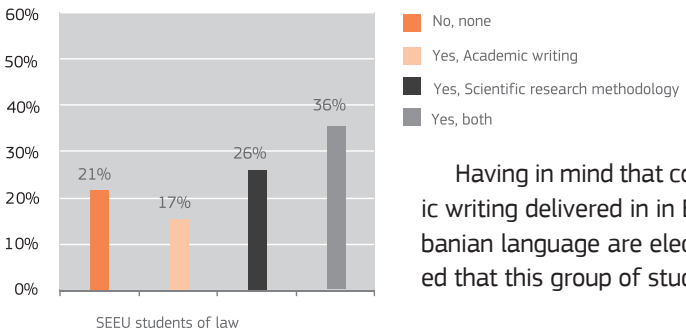
4.3.3. SEEU STUDENTS OF LAW

Total number of surveyed SEEU students of law is 43. This group of respondents filled in on-line questionnaires.

Due to lack of relevant number of answers from SEEU students of political sciences, data obtained from this group of respondents were not analysed.

According to answers obtained from the questionnaire, 21% of respondents do not have knowledge on the essence of targeted modules/courses (Chart 7).

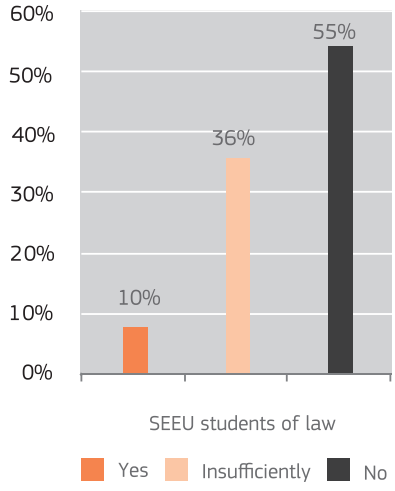
Chart 7 - Knowledge on Scientific research methodology and Academic writing



Having in mind that courses/modules on Academic writing delivered in in English, Macedonian and Albanian language are elective courses, it was expected that this group of students would express greater

confidence in their skills to argue their positions in written. However, around 54% of students responded they are not confident in their skills or face difficulties when writing academic papers. These results raise additional concerns about the quality of courses/modules on academic writing offered by this higher education institution (Chart 8).

Chart 8 - Do you feel sufficiently prepared to write academic papers (seminar papers, presentations, essays)?



When cross-referencing answers obtained to questions inquiring about *students' ability to write academic papers* and their *interest to have courses/modules on scientific research methodology and academic writing introduced as mandatory*, the conclusion is inferred that 13 from the total of 23 students who responded they are able to write academic papers also believe that these courses/modules should be mandatory (Table 7).

Table 7

Ability to write academic papers	Interest to have courses/modules on SRM and AW introduced as mandatory			
	No	Don't know	Maybe	Yes
No	0	1	0	3
Insufficiently	0	2	3	10
Yes	2	0	8	13

When cross-referencing answers obtained to questions inquiring about students' knowledge on and *interest to have courses/modules on scientific research methodology and academic writing introduced as mandatory*, SEEU students who are not familiarized with these two modules/courses would like to have them introduced as mandatory courses/modules (Table 8). As was the case among UKIM students of law and political sciences, the interest of this group of respondents to study scientific research methodology and academic writing is also evident.

Table 8				
Knowledge on SRM and AW	Interest to have courses/modules on SRM and AW introduced as mandatory			
	No	Don't know	Maybe	Yes
No, none	0	1	1	7
Yes, SRM	0	0	2	5
Yes, AW	0	1	5	5
Yes, both	2	1	3	9

On the question inquiring *whether students are informed about the research project carried out by the teaching staff*, 80% of students responded they were not informed thereof, while as high as 93% of them responded they have never been involved in scientific and research projects carried out at their higher education institution.

Based on the survey answers, the conclusion is inferred that there are no significant differences between UKIM and SEEU students in regard to their involvement in scientific and research projects, however, it should be noted that answers provided by SEEU students of political sciences were not included in this analysis (Table 9).

Table 9	Comparative overview of students' involvement in research projects	
Study program/University	Yes	No
UKIM students of law	14	188
UKIM students of political sciences	9	71
SEEU students of law	3	43

4.3.4. UKIM AND SEEU TEACHING STAFF

This survey sample is comprised of 12 respondents from UKIM and 13 respondents from SEEU. According to their answers, introduction of courses/modules on methodology and academic writing would improve the quality of students' academic papers; however, they expressed different opinions about having courses/modules introduced as mandatory. Be that as it may, dominant is the position that courses/modules on scientific research methodology and academic writing should be mandatory as part of the curricula for the third semester of undergraduate studies.

Table 10 provides an overview of survey results.

Table 10	Comparative overview of responses delivered by UKIM and SEEU teaching staff	
Question	**UKIM's response**	**SEEU's response**
Are students informed about your scientific and research work?	Yes - 4 Don't know - 6 No - 2	Yes - 7 Don't know - 4 No - 2
Are your undergraduate students involved in scientific and research projects implemented at the higher education institution?	Regularly - 1 Sometimes - 9 Never - 2	Regularly – 2 Sometimes - 9 Never - 2
Do you believe that having courses/ modules on research methodology and academic writing introduced as mandatory would improve the quality of students' academic papers?	No - 0 Maybe - 1 Depends on the students - 2 Yes, certainly - 9	No - 0 Maybe - 0 Depends on the students - 4 Yes, certainly - 9
Are students sufficiently familiarized with scientific research methodology and academic writing?	Yes - 2 Don't know - 1 No - 9	Yes - 4 Don't' know - 1 No - 8
Is your higher education institution/ department subscribed to international scientific journals?	Yes - 5 Don't know - 6 No - 1	Yes - 5 Don't know - 4 No - 4

Answers obtained to the last question where certain members of UKIM's teaching staff responded that their higher-education institution is subscribed to international journals is contrary to the FOI response obtained from the university which reads: "Faculty of Law at UKIM is not subscribed to any international academic journals and databases, and has access only to free-of-charge databases".[30] FOI response obtained from SEEU on the same question reads: "SEEU is subscribed to EBSCO (database), Oxford Journals, Cambridge Journals, Sage Publications, BioOne Journals, Akademika, World Bank (free access), Ekonbiz (free access), Athens (through the Ministry of Education and Science).[31]

5. ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

Based on the research results, the general recommendation for improving the current state-of-affairs is to introduce mandatory courses/modules on research methodology and academic writing. These courses/modules should be introduced in the third semester of studies (second year of undergraduate studies), once the students have mastered the theoretical and conceptual paradigms in the field of their studies. Unlike the alternatives given below, this approach would enable a more comprehensive and systematic study of these contents.

One of the alternative solutions that could be taken into consideration is to allow students to attend courses/modules on scientific research methodology and academic writing offered as part of curricula for different study programs at the university ("cross faculty"), for example, courses/modules offered as part of relevant curricula at the departments for psychology or sociology. These modules/courses could be offered as elective courses.

However, knowledge on scientific research methodology and academic writing is intended to unify academic communication and equip students to understand and produce scientific contents. Hence, if studying these modules/courses is left at students' choice, it would create a significant disparity in educational outputs (ability for academic communication and scientific and research work), which in turn would make communication between students in the course of teaching process more difficult.

Another alternative solution is to integrate one or two lectures on scientific research methodology and presentation of current research projects at the higher education institution in the existing courses.

Furthermore, separate training on topics related to scientific research methodology and academic writing could be organized for the students. However, these solutions would only partially address the need for systematic knowledge on the targeted subjects.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. CONCLUSION

1) Undergraduate studies in law and political sciences at the Faculty of Law (UKIM) do not offer modules/courses on academic writing and scientific research methodology. This prevents the students enrolled in these study programs to acquire scientific and research competences.

2) Study programs at the Faculty of Law (SEEU) offer elective courses/modules in academic writing delivered in English, Macedonian and Albanian language. Study programs in political sciences at the same university, in addition to academic writing courses in English, Macedonian and Albanian language, also include mandatory courses on research methods in political sciences. Nevertheless, the research identified differences in the understanding of the importance and objectives of courses/modules on academic writing, depending on the language in which the course is delivered. Description of the course on research methods in political sciences does not provide a clear image on the knowledge that students should acquire from studying this course.

3) Undergraduate students are either excluded or insufficiently involved in scientific and research projects carried out at their higher education institutions. No students were involved in the nine (9) scientific and research projects implemented by the Faculty of Law at UKIM in the period 2008 - 2012. Total of 7 scientific and research projects were implemented by SEEU in the period 2008 - 2012, while students were involved in 3 of them. Despite the declarative commitments indicated in the Statute of UKIM and the Statute of UKIM's Faculty of Law to introduce students to scientific and research work, the research results show that students were not given opportunities to realize this right. On the other hand, although small number of students at SEEU was involved in research projects, the university policies do not emphasize the importance of having students involved in scientific and research work.

4) More than 80% of students are not familiarized with scientific and research work carried out by their respective teaching staff.

5) Majority of surveyed students feel prepared to write academic papers, despite the fact that relevant study programs do not offer such courses/modules (UKIM), or in cases where these courses/modules exist, for example at SEEU, the contents thereof is not adequate. Differences noted in positions expressed by students concerning their skills and specific course/module contents that are not offered should be the subject of a future research

6.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- To introduce mandatory courses/modules on research methodology and academic writing at UKIM's law and political sciences study programs. The Higher Education Accreditation and Evaluation Board that "gives recommendations for improving the norms and standards on higher education performance",[32] must issue a recommendation on introducing these courses/modules as mandatory, while the Ministry of Education and Science must secure the financial resources for their implementation.
- To review courses/modules on academic writing and research methods in political sciences delivered at SEEU.
- To involve undergraduate students in scientific and research projects carried out at the higher education institution or the study program.
- To promote scientific and research work and results at study programs in law and political sciences. This would improve dissemination of information on scientific and research work at the higher education institution, timely information on on-going projects, open calls for participation, public presentations of research project results and like.
- To encourage and valuate scientific and research engagement of students in their respective grades (writing scientific paper with application of adequate research design, use of relevant scientific literature, overview of scientific research, and like).
- To introduce advanced training for the teaching staff on implementing and promoting scientific and research work as part of their scientific disciplines.

This policy paper identified absence of adequate modules/courses in undergraduate studies in law and political sciences that would equip students to understand and produce scientific contents, as well as lack of infrastructure (libraries, access to information, international databases) needed for developing students' research competences. Research results, as well as recommendations developed indicate the need for active engagement on the part of higher education institutions (Teaching and Scientific Councils and Dean Administration) to improve the state-of-affairs in regard to scientific and research work in social sciences and humanities, notably by designing study programs that would enable students to understand and produce scientific papers in the field of law and political sciences. The main recommendation

put forward in this paper is to introduce mandatory courses/modules on scientific research methodology and academic writing for undergraduate students.

In addition, this policy should be supported by providing students with greater access to resources (libraries, international journals and databases, information on scientific and research work at the higher education institution), involving students in scientific research projects and requiring students to apply scientific and research competences in other study courses (by writing academic papers). This should be followed up with active engagement on the part of the academic staff to promote scientific and research work as an additional value of study programs in law and political sciences.

ENDNOTES

1 European Commission, 2011 Country Report on Social Sciences and Humanities in Republic of Macedonia, pg. 16.

2 Academic Ranking of Macedonian Higher Education Institutions, published on 16th February 2012. Available at: http://www.shanghairanking.com/Macedonian_HEIs_Ranking/index.html (last accessed on 3.12.2012)

3 Relevant documents include: Law on Higher Education (*"Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia"* no. 35/2008; 103/2008; 26/2009; 99/2009; 115/2010; 17/2011; 51/2011 and 123/2012), Law on Amending the Law on Higher Education (*"Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia"* no. 115 from 31.8.2010), Law on Amending the Law on Higher Education (*"Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia"* no. 17 from 11.2.2011), Law on Scientific and Research Activity (*"Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia"* no. 46/08; 103/2008; 24/2011 and 80/2012), Statutes/Rules of Procedure adopted by relevant higher education institutions, description of study programs, information obtained by means of FOI applications.

4 Immergut M, Ellen, "The Theoretical Core of the New Institutionalism". Politics Society, 1998, 26: 5

5 Thies G. Cameron and Robert E. Hogan, "The State of Undergraduate Research Methods Training in Political Science" Political Science and Politics, 2005, 38:2, pg. 293.

6 Vibhute, Khushal and Aynalem, Filipos, "Legal Research Methods, Teaching Material", Justice and Legal System Research Institute, 2009, pg. 43.

7 Schmied Josef, "Academic Writing in Europe: A Survey of Approaches and Problems", 2011

8 Times Higher Education, "Mandatory academic writing classes: they'll thank you for it later", 2010. Available at: http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/412893.article (last accessed on 3.12.2012).

9 UNESCO Science Report 2010, pg. 194.

10 Bologna Declaration, 1999, signed by the Republic of Macedonia in 2003.

11 UNESCO Science Report 2010, pg. 194.

12 SCImago SJR – SCImago Journal & Country Rank, 2007. Available at: http://www.scimagojr.com, (last accessed on 17.12. 2012).

13 Article 11 of the Decree on the National Framework of Higher Education Qualifications, *"Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia"* no. 154/2010. 11.

14 The concept of scientific and research competences covers three dimensions: skills, knowledge and attitudes on implementation of scientific and research work. Due to the multidimensionality of this definition, the narrow term *skills* is considered more appropriate.

15 *"Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia",* no. 46/2008; 103/2008; 24/2011 and 80/2012

16 Statute of UKIM, 2008, Article 82, item 5; Article 264

17 Adopted by SEEU's Senate at the meeting held on 12.4.2011, based on Article 25 of the Law on Scientific and Research Activity (*"Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia",* no. 46/08, 103/11) and Article 61 of the Statute of the South East Europe University

18 Rulebook on Scientific and Research Activity, 2011, Article 7

19 Law on Higher Education, *"Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia",* no. 35/2008; 103/2008; 26/2009; 99/2009; 115/2010; 17/2011; 51/2011 and 123/2012, Article 146-a

20 European Commission, 2011 Country Report on Social Sciences and Humanities in Republic of Macedonia, pg. 27.

21 Based on the Law on Free Access to Public Information, *"Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia"* no. 13 from 1.2.2006.

22 Official website of the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus" – Skopje: http://www.pf.ukim.edu.mk

23 Study program in law. Available at: http://www.seeu.edu.mk/mk/faculties/Law/law-study-programmes?id=6 (last accessed on 13.5.2012).

24 Study program in political sciences. Available at: http://www.seeu.edu.mk/mk/faculties/pa/paps-study-programmes?id=17 13.5.2012.

25 *Ibid.*

26 *Ibid.*

27 FOI responses obtained via electronic communication with Mr. Demus Bajrami, (contact e-mail: d.bajrami@seeu.edu.mk) on 18.6.2012, Skopje.

28 FOI response, Document no. 03-182, 04-06-2012, Skopje. The Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus" – Skopje disposes with significant fund of literature in the field of law, political sciences and journalism, as well as access to the UN Library, International Court of Justice in Hague, etc. However, information on electronic access to international journals and databases are not made publicly available. Available at: http://www.pf.ukim.edu.mk/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabindex=0&tabid=223 (last accessed on 16.12.2012).

29 Respondents' answer "maybe" is interpreted as closer to the affirmative response for two reasons: the scale of possible answers includes "don't know", which is closer to the negative response, and therefore "maybe" is closer to the affirmative response. This variable is continuous. Also, given that students had no opportunity for systematic studies with these contents, it is realistically expected that when they respond "maybe", there is greater probability that they would prefer to be taught these courses rather than rejecting them prematurely.

30 FOI response, Document no. 03-182, 04-06-2012, Skopje.

31 FOI responses obtained via electronic communication with Mr. Demus Bajrami, (contact e-mail: d.bajrami@seeu.edu.mk) on 18.6.2012, Skopje.

32 Law on Amending the Law on Higher Education. *"Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia",* no. 17, 2011, Article 71.

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Data Processing Programme:

- R Deducer R version 2.13.2 Patched (2011-09-30 r58552) Copyright (C) 2011, The R Foundation for Statistical Computing ISBN 3-900051-07-0
- SPSS Inc. 2011. SPSS Base 19.0 for Windows User's Guide. SPSS Inc., Chicago IL.
- Microsoft Office: Excel 2011

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- Survey Monkey :http://www.surveymonkey.com/MySurveys.aspx


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развој и соработка. Во Македонија програмата ја спроведува Фондацијата Отворено општество – Македонија.
Петар
Атанасов

VIEWS

WHAT TYPE OF RESEARCH AND TEACHING DOES THE LAW ON HIGHER EDUCATION PROMOTE?

Prof. Maja Bojadzievska, PhD
University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius", Skopje
(April, 2012)

The first discussion from the series of activities implemented as part of the Regional Research Promotion Programme in the Western Balkans aimed to strengthen research capacity and promote policies in the field of scientific research in social sciences was organized around the topic "What type of research and teaching does the Law on Higher Education promote?".

In this regard, the discussion must first focus on examining the existing legislation in the Republic of Macedonia, i.e., analyse the extent to which it reflects and corresponds with the fundamental European principles related to vocation of the universities as autonomous institutions that produce and transfer knowledge and culture by means of research and teaching; the principles of inseparability of teaching and research; as well as the principles of freedom in research and training.

Provided that the principle of the university as upholder of the European humanist tradition is truly respected, it is also necessary to examine to what extent (if at all) the existing legislation in this area provides a framework for cherishing freedom in research and teaching.

To be able to discuss these topics, primarily the topic of scientific and research work, which is directly and necessarily related to higher education, as well as to discuss the possibility for improving the state-of-affairs in this field, one should first address the issue that essentially – directly or indirectly – determines and influences the framework and the context of these societal realities, i.e., research on teaching practices.

One important contextual framework that shows the state's intention and interest in this field, and ultimately the concern for the values it should cherish and reflect, is the legal framework that regulates these issues, which are of crucial importance for the development of a society.

Thus, it was only right to start the reconsideration process with an analysis of the Law on Higher Education (LHE), i.e., its enforcement under the current conditions in the country. This analysis should consider the initiatives to assess the Law's constitutionality, which were raised as a result of dramatic confrontation of the academic public with the "spirit" of the Law and which reflect the almost undivided expert opinions that the LHE threatens the constitutionally-guaranteed autonomy of the university. In that, the Law implicitly promotes a restrictive, regressive, and even destructive policy in education and science.

Analysis of the existing legislation should start from the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, Article 46 of which defines the university's autonomy as part of a long-standing tradition of respect for human rights

and the status enjoyed by higher education. In that, the Constitution guarantees the university's autonomy, because only by enjoying full autonomy a university can perform its scientific, research, social and pedagogic function with a view to promote progress, prosperity and freedom in society. This historical benefit, incorporated in the centuries-old tradition of European free universities is also seen in the strongest legal status as recognized and guaranteed to the university in the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia.

According to European University Association's Lisbon Declaration (2007), the institutional (university) autonomy implies:

- academic autonomy;
- financial autonomy;
- organisational autonomy;
- staffing autonomy.

Therefore, the rights defined in this Declaration are incorporated in the statutes of universities and in the respective national legislation of European countries. These legislations, as well as the above-referred Declaration are based on the values defined in a range of European documents, such as the Magna Charta Universitatum, i.e., the Declaration of Rectors at European Universities signed on the occasion of the 900th anniversary of the founding of the University of Bologna. Today, there is no society that does not rely on the fundamental principles in education and science laid down in the Magna Charta Universitatum. Following are some of the principles enshrined therein:

1. *The university is an autonomous institution at the heart of societies differently organized because of geography and historical heritage; it produces, examines, appraises and hands down culture by research and teaching.*
2. *To meet the needs of the world around it, its research and teaching must be morally and intellectually independent of all political authority and intellectually independent of all political authority and economic power.*
3. *Teaching and research in universities must be inseparable if their tuition is not to lag behind changing needs, the demands of society, and advances in scientific knowledge.*
4. *Freedom in research and training is the fundamental principle of university life, and governments and universities, each as far as in them lies, must ensure respect for this fundamental requirement.*
5. *Rejecting intolerance and always open to dialogue, the university is an ideal meeting-ground for teachers capable of imparting their knowledge and well equipped to develop it by research and innovation and students entitled, able and willing to enrich their minds with that knowledge.*
6. *A university is the trustee of the European humanist tradition; its constant care is to attain universal knowledge; to fulfil its vocation it transcends geographical and political frontiers, and affirms the vital need for different cultures to know and influence each other.*
7. *To attain these goals by following such principles calls for effective means to preserve freedom in research and teaching, the instruments appropriate to realize that freedom must be made available to all members of the university community.*

The above excerpts are not merely words that uphold some romantic ideals. The fundamental principles set out above have been translated into a constitutional guarantee, which provides strong and clear implications about the position of the university in our society. Thus, these fundamental principles and the constitutional implications have to be incorporated in our legislation and, accordingly, in the LHE.

But is this the case in our country? Is the existing LHE, which one can freely asses as controversially drafted and adopted, in compliance with the Constitution and the rights defined in the above-referred European declarations? This is the first major problem one faces when discussing education and scientific research.

Virtually the entire expert public agrees that the latest amendments to the LHE have resulted in disturbed and even completely eliminated autonomy of the university. A significant part of the academic public assessed the Law as contrary to the generally accepted international standard on determining the autonomy, but also contrary to the constitutional and legislative tradition in our country. Initiatives to assess the constitutionality of the LHE, raised by a group of professors and members of the Senate at the University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius", argue that the Law disrupts the core determinants of the university's autonomy, as follows:

- academic autonomy;
- financial autonomy;
- organisational autonomy;
- staffing autonomy.

Starting from the public panel discussion organized a year ago, and also by using other forms of expression such as professional articles and debates, the experts from the Faculty of Law in Skopje and numerous university professors continuously pointed to the fact that the university enjoys a normative autonomy, that it has its own subject of regulation that is autonomous from the legal subject of regulation. They openly and vociferously raised the question on the legal grounds, constitutional basis and mandate relied on by the legislator to regulate this matter? They all arrived to an unambiguous conclusion that the legislator does not have the mandate and therefore cannot regulate this matter by law. Hence, experts and representatives of the broad academic public who expressed their opinion on this issue were almost unanimous in the position that the legislator has made several consecutive intrusions in a number of freedoms enjoyed by the university: first, the freedom to determine students' knowledge; second, the right to determine the terms and conditions for the first, second and third cycle of studies; and third, the freedom to determine the terms and conditions for appointment to academic and scientific title. In that regard, it was emphasized that the legislator does not have the mandate or the competence to regulate this matter by law. Experts believe that this is a "forbidden zone" and that the legislator needs to refrain from interfering in the domain of academic freedom. The broad academic public assessed that the Law is characterized by complete inconsistency and internal contradiction.

This can be better demonstrated with the analysis of several provisions from the Law that are directly or indirectly related to teaching and scientific work, i.e., the teaching and scientific reality in our country. Although the Law declaratively "legitimizes" the autonomy as guaranteed by the Constitution, the initial provisions from the Law, in particular those contained in Article 1, and in Articles 11, 12, and 13, which describe the content of autonomy, academic freedom and autonomy in university management (...), decisively abandon these "inherent" principles or, in more general terms, the "philosophy" upheld by the Law. Most indicative of the negative, restrictive, limiting, and, finally, unconstitutional tendency that is typical for this law, are 19 articles (contested with the initiatives raised in front of the Constitutional Court). Analysis

of these articles identifies several points and negative implications in terms of free acquisition of knowledge and scientific research, which have direct or indirect effect on the legal framework and the context for scientific research and teaching.

Following are some of the articles contested:

- Article 69, paragraph 6 of the Law, which stipulates that external evaluation shall be performed pursuant to the criteria defined in the Guidelines for Quality Assurance and Assessment of Higher Education Institutions and Academic Staff in the Republic of Macedonia adopted by the Minister of Education and Science. Authorizing the Minister to regulate quality assurance and assessment of higher education means transferring competences for regulation of essential matters related to autonomy of the university to the executive branch of government. Article 69, paragraph 6, which stipulates that "external evaluation shall be performed pursuant to the criteria defined in the Guidelines on Quality Assurance and Assessment of Higher Education Institutions and Academic Staff in the Republic of Macedonia, adopted by the minister competent for matters in higher education" follows the explanation that external evaluation shall be conducted in compliance with the procedures, standards and guidelines applied by ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education). This is an excellent example of the contradictions that characterize this law, sometimes present within a single article. This shows that the Minister is put above the guidelines and the criteria suggested by domestic experts, but also above the internationally accepted criteria.
- Concerns are raised in regard to Article 70 that refers to the Higher Education Accreditation and Evaluation Board and its composition, especially the unfavourable balance between board members according to their professional and academic background. Furthermore, concerns are raised in regard to Article 72, which stipulates in detail the organization, work, decision-making process, as well as the accreditation and evaluation methods used. Namely, Article 72 stipulates that from the line of its members, the Board shall establish expert committees tasked to perform accreditation and evaluation. However, considering that this body's composition is not fully professional and academic in order to establish the committees that will decide on strictly professional matters, the question is raised on how can incompetent persons who are members of the Board (for example, governmental representatives, employers and students) decide on academic problems of crucial importance?
- Article 77 is also disputable, in particular paragraphs 6 and 7 thereof, according to which the Ministry of Education and Science is again entrusted with competences that do not fall under its jurisdiction on any basis. Namely, the Ministry introduces a State Electronic Self-Evaluation System and is entrusted with decision-making competences on the contents, form and manner in which the self-evaluation system will be used. Knowing that self-evaluation is clearly an autonomous matter of universities and their members, obvious is that this provision intrudes in the autonomy of the university.
- Particularly vulgar and inept intrusion in matters directly associated with teaching and academic/scientific work is noted in regard to Section 9 of the LHE, titled "Academic and Vocational Studies", as well as Section 10 that governs appointment to teaching and scientific titles and appointment to associate titles. Here, the legislator interferes in the privileged sphere of university's academic and staffing autonomy. Article 96 stipulates

the criteria for mentors of PhD dissertations that are further elaborated in all 20 paragraphs of the same article and include various "specifications" that go as far as defining the terms "international scientific journal" and "international scientific publications". According to this provision, if a university professor publishes his/her scientific research in an international journal or publication that does not fulfil the definition given by the legislator, he/she is deprived of the possibility to mentor the candidate in performing scientific work.

- Article 99 is disputable in terms of academic autonomy related to essential aspects of teaching and scientific research work. Namely, it stipulates that the Government, by means of an act, shall regulate the profile, objectives and baseline for establishing new study programs, determine the ratio between mandatory and elective courses, define the term clinic-based courses, determine the requirements for practical work instructors and stipulate the manner and the conditions for organization of practical instruction. Of course, this is contrary to Article 46 of the Constitution, because by doing so, the executive authorities annul the constitutionally-guaranteed right of the university – by means of acts and decrees and on the basis of its expertise and competence - to regulate the ratio between mandatory and elective courses.

- Article 113 of the Law refers to the external assessment. According to the provisions contained therein, the Ministry and the State Inspectorate assume competences (to organize and to conduct assessment of students' performance) that do not fall under their jurisdiction. Instruction delivery and student performance assessment are competences that can be carried out only by education institutions and bodies. In that regard, the Constitutional Court has already determined that a body of the executive branch of government cannot organize an external assessment of students' knowledge in secondary and primary education.

- Serious violation of the constitutionally-guaranteed autonomy of the university is identified in Section 10 of the LHE that regulates appointment to academic and scientific titles. Here the legislator stipulates the CRITERIA for appointment to academic and scientific titles and in that flagrantly violates university's staffing autonomy. Examples in support of this statement include Article 125 which stipulates that a person shall not be appointed to an academic or scientific title at the same department of the higher education institution in cases when he/she has defended his/her PhD thesis at the Faculty where his/her direct blood relative of any removal or his/her indirect relative four times removed is employed, as well as provisions contained in Article 134, Article 136 and Article 140. In the past the state also stipulated the requirements that candidates need to fulfil in order to be appointed to the title of full-time professors, whereby the candidates had to hold a PhD degree and, of course, had to have made certain contribution to science. However, in the past candidates' competency was assessed by review commissions, which implied peer-assessment among scholars, and showed that internal criteria were of crucial importance. New legal solutions integrated in the LHE directly interfere in this freedom, i.e., they regulate matters that should not have been regulated by law.

- In this regard, one must refer to Article 140 which provides that the Minister shall stipulate the manner, timeframe and terms and conditions governing the stay of visiting professors. Notwithstanding the unselfishness on the part of ruling authorities, it seems that the executive branch of government is assuming too much work, obligations and competences in a field where it lacks capac-

ity, knowledge, and, even, constitutionally-guaranteed possibilities.

When all these aspects are coupled with the insignificant funds from the budget allocated to education and science for years back (confirmed with official data available), the only thing left is to urgently, vociferously and dramatically raise the question on what kind of higher education and science are actually possible under the existing restrictive and regressive legal "philosophy"; what kind of free flow of ideas, knowledge transfer and exchange of experiences are possible in this agonizing atmosphere created with the adoption of unconstitutional legal provisions that are failing to uphold the fundamental principles of the European academic tradition?

HOW TO IMPROVE POLICY AND PRACTICE ON EMPLOYMENT OF SCHOLAR STAFF IN HIGHER EDUCATION?

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(June, 2012)

Higher education cannot be improved without having scientific research strengthened.

This approach to higher education development is needed in the Republic of Macedonia, as it is part and parcel of European values and priorities. The need and benefits associated with the trinity science-education-development are recognized all across Europe. Namely, education cannot be improved without investments in science, and overall development in society is impossible without quality science and education. Actually, the main goal of the Bologna Process is society development by improving the education process. Europe's is based on the humanistic values, while education development should contribute to sustainable growth required to sustain the entire system. Europe's objective by 2010 was to have all EU Member States invest 3% of their respective GDP in science and education. However, at the moment and at EU level, average level of investments in education and science is 1.78% of GDP. The Europe 2020 Strategy refers to innovation and investments as indispensable preconditions to exit the crisis.

If the Republic of Macedonia wishes to grow, i.e., if it wishes to improve societal and living conditions, as well as to continue its accession in the EU, then immediate efforts should be made to catch the pace with European trends. In this regard, greater investments are needed in scientific research and higher education, because the current level of investments is way lower than the EU average. Portion of these investments should be geared towards attracting and employing junior scholars in the higher education. The legal framework in place is relatively good, but certain inconsistencies have been identified. Major problems arise in enforcement of existing rules. In order to improve matters, the employment process should be more transparent and more competitive, while employment criteria for higher education must focus on the quality of scientific achievements.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE-OF-AFFAIRS IN REGARD TO EMPLOYMENT OF SCIENTIFIC STAFF IN HIGHER EDUCATION?

The most recent legislative amendments from 2009 introduced a clear framework on scientific achievements' measurability, which should serve as benchmark for scientific research and higher education development. The Law on Higher Education and the Law on Scientific and Research Activity provide

relatively solid provisions on employment of junior scholars, at least on paper. In addition to general laws, i.e., the Law on Higher Education and the Law on Scientific and Research Activity, the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) adopted elaborate rulebooks. These rulebooks provide clear measurable criteria on employment of junior researchers in the higher education. In other words, they determine the assessment criteria on candidates' personal development needed for employment at the universities. In principle, the employment process should be autonomous and managed by the scientific and educational institution in question.

Article 125 of the Law on Higher Education stipulates the criteria for appointment to academic title of docent, which include: PhD degree, average GPA of at least 8.00 in undergraduate and graduate studies, minimum four papers published in international journals or publications, or at least two papers published in impact factor journals. This is the first step in the employment process, i.e., the first entry category for recruitment in scientific and educational activity. Furthermore, criteria for appointment to academic title of associate professor include: PhD degree, five papers published in international journals or publications or three papers published in impact factor journals, and significant scientific achievements. Obvious is that promotion to higher academic titles requires the candidate to have achieved measurable progress in his/her scientific career. Criteria for appointment to academic title of full-time professor include: six papers published in international journals or publications, or four papers published in scientific impact factor journals in the last five years, significant scientific achievements, experience with international project management and contribution to development of junior staff. After a period of five years has elapsed from a candidate's appointment to the title of full-time professor, a re-appointment procedure is scheduled and if the candidate is re-appointed he is awarded university tenure, which is also a practice applied by many universities abroad. Moreover, the MES developed and published in the *Official Gazette* from June 2009 a table with specific number of points allocated to candidate' activities such as publications, participation in conferences, presentations, reports, project experience, etc.

Concerns raised with this approach are related to the fact that bureaucratic institutions' ability to evaluate the candidate's scientific development is utterly disputable. According to the current set-up, the review commission that takes decisions on staff employment or promotion to higher academic title is only allowed to make a mathematical sum of points and is not in position to weigh and value the candidates. It is difficult to believe that bureaucratic structures can properly assess the value of scientific knowledge.

With the fact that it is MES that specifies activities and points required for employment of junior scholars, as well as for scientific development, the entire process gains in quantity, but underperforms in terms of quality. Namely, the mathematical sum of presentations delivered at various conferences cannot be more important than the type of conference at which the presentation was delivered. For example, not all conferences organized in the field of political sciences are equal in terms of the quality. It should matter whether the candidate has delivered a presentation at the American Political Science Association's (APSA) annual conference or at a gathering of political scientists in Podujevo. Moreover, all presentations are not the same. The pres-

entation's content is also important: individual paper, essay, analysis and method used, research duration, etc. Due consideration is not made of the quality dimension from the existing assessment framework.

Moreover, scholars' success is measured according to the number of papers published in one commercial database (*Tompson Reuters*), which also keeps an impact factor index. However, this database is profiled only in the field of technical and natural sciences, and is therefore broadly irrelevant for social sciences and humanities. For example, the above-referred database does not include professional journals in the field of social sciences and humanities published by distinguished publishing houses as *Sage* or *Routledge*. Moreover, the legislative framework broadly undermines publication of books or chapters and contributions in books as an important achievement in the field of social sciences and humanities. According to the existing framework in Macedonia, chapters in books published by, for example, *Routledge, Edinburg University Press, Cambridge University Press,* etc., are not valued.

The existing framework on valuation of scientific achievement and development for employment in higher education institutions marginalizes the quality for the benefit of quantity. However, positive is the fact that the legislative framework is in place, as well as the fact that it defines precise criteria. Major concerns are raised in regard to implementation of these criteria. In practice, development and employment of junior scholars do not depend on the specific criteria laid down in laws and rulebooks.

Development and employment of junior scholars is state-governed and highly politicized process. This process is state-governed because MES is entrusted with broad competences and is therefore controlling the entire process. For example, Article 46 of the Law on Scientific and Research Activity stipulates that MES shall implement a program on junior scholar development and training. This is a defeating fact. Without any disrespect for politicians and administration employees at MES, how can junior scholar staff be created by a bureaucratic institution? It is absurd. Competences on developing junior scholar staff should be given to the universities. On the other hand, Article 46 stipulates that MES shall plan, manage and fund activities aimed to promote scientific and research activity and knowledge transfer. The question is raised on why should MES assume these obligations, and not the university? Furthermore, the law stipulates that MES shall encourage and support international cooperation and international knowledge transfer. In a democracy of the 21st century, how can an institution such as MES be responsible for managing these processes? State-governance, as a legacy of the previous system, is still largely present in formal norms, and in practice.

In practice, employment in the higher education is a highly politicized process. Any employment in higher education necessitates an approval on the part of MES. Moreover, it also necessitates an approval by the Ministry of Finance (MF) in regard to securing salary funds. Involvement of political institutions opens possibilities for politicization and discrimination. Positive opinion on employment is given only in cases of personal or political party liaisons. Political factors are not the single group of wrongdoers behind this detrimental practice. The university staff and professors should also be held accountable for the current situation, because not only did they fail to object, but take active part in this unethical process. Frequent are situations where lobby-

ing, personal connections and contacts play a far more important role than clear and measurable criteria stipulated by law. For example, in the past cases were noted when MF or MES, and even the Cabinet of the Prime Minister, issued letters of approval for employment of particular individuals, i.e., indicated by name the candidates for which higher education vacancy calls were announced.

Damages caused by these practices are immense. First, they devalue scientific work instead of motivating new and better scientific achievements. The problem is not seen only in the fact that poor quality staff is being employed, but also in the fact that new employees would not deliver on the general tasks and duties associated with the job position. They would not be able to provide good education for future academic citizens and would not engage in scientific work and research. Further implementation of poor practices weakens the science work in Macedonia, reduces the quality of higher education and fails to create young potentials for science and higher education development.

HOW CAN MATTERS BE IMPROVED?

First, there must be a closer link between scientific research and higher education. Unclear is why categories of academic titles pursuant to the Law on Scientific and Research Activity, such as scholar associate, senior scholar associate and scholar advisor, co-exist in parallel with categories of academic titles pursuant to the Law on Higher Education, such as docent, associate professor and full-time professor, in particular knowing that the criteria for appointment to academic titles are the same? Criteria for appointment to academic titles are identical for both groups of titles, where the only difference is that the first group of titles implies work at scientific institutions, while the second group of titles implies work at universities and deals with teaching at higher education institutions. There is an unnecessary division into teachers, who should teach, and scientists, who should research. Such pragmatic set-up is erroneous and unnecessary. There is no quality higher education without quality scientific research. If there is no quality contribution to science, how can one deliver quality knowledge to the students?

Moreover, the law does not recognize scientific research created beyond the higher education institutions. Beyond the institutions, the law acknowledges only individual researchers pursuant to the Law on Scientific and Research Activity. However, it does not indicate whether and how these individual researchers are integrated in the higher education system. There are research centres that created new knowledge, but are not incorporated in the higher education system. There are think thank organizations, NGOs and private companies that carry out research for their own needs. By means of informal practices, they might be somehow involved in higher education, but there are no institutionalized instruments in place that would imply their formal involvement and knowledge transfer to the higher education system.

Universities must be given greater competences related to development of junior scholar staff, as well as their employment in the higher education. Salaries and employment funds for new staff must not depend on the will of bureaucrats and politicians. The recruitment process must be more transparent and more competitive. According to current practices and in compliance with the Law

on Higher Education, once the candidates apply on the open call, a review commission is formed and tasked to prepare a report that should be published in an official bulletin and the website. Be that as it may, the report is most often not uploaded on the website, while the official bulletin is not publicly available, i.e., it is not broadly distributed. Often, review reports are withheld from the public until the deadline for appeals expires. The question is raised on why the report is not presented to all candidates who applied on the open call?

There is another practice in place that must be discontinued. Most open calls for employment in the higher education in the field of social sciences and humanities are announced for already known staff. Majority of junior staff involved in the teaching process do not have time for research and scientific work and development, for writing scientific papers, for attending international conferences and presenting their papers, but spend most of their time teaching. In the past they were called demonstrators, but nowadays they are called associates. They themselves, and the community where they work, consider the teaching engagement as investment and obligation that in the future an open call will be announced for their post and they will be employed at the university department where they are engaged. Most often, when the open call for new job position is announced at the University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" and the faculties in the field of social sciences and humanities, by definition and almost always, the selected candidate for the position is known in advance. There is no great competitiveness in the process. This is probably a legacy from the previous system, when scholar staff was developed by means of so-called mentoring system. Teaching assistants would inherit the professor post after long years of cooperation on the same subject, i.e., in the same teaching area. However, the paradigm has changed with the acceptance of the Bologna Declaration and the standards upheld by the European scientific community. The process needs to be more open. Young people who finished their studies abroad are put in a disadvantaged position compared to those who remained and completed their studies in the country.

According to current standards, the review commission decides only on the basis of documents submitted. Unclear is why there are no public presentations of candidates who applied on the open call. This is a practice established at many leading universities abroad. There, the commission selects the shortlisted candidates who then deliver presentations on their scientific achievements. Thus, greater transparency and level field is provided for the candidates, while the focus is on scholar qualities and recent scientific achievements and contributions made. Hence, unclear is why the first entry category for university post (docent) in Macedonia requires average GPA of at least 8.00 in undergraduate and graduate studies? What is the point of assessing the candidate's average GPA in the first and second cycle of studies? Is the highest assessment awarded to the student for performance in a given undergraduate subject a guarantee that the candidate is good scholar in that field? If the goal is to improve the higher education, then the employment criteria must focus on scientific research and achievements.

Funds for scientific and research activity must be increased and implementation of existing instruments needs to be enhanced. For example, according to the legal provisions in effect, 40% of tuition paid by the student body

should be allocated for scientific research. However, these provisions are not enforced in practice. More funds are needed to support mobility of professors, students and scientific workers. Mobility brings numerous benefits for development, as it represent a means for promoting Macedonian scientists and projects on the global scene. However, mobility also implies a risk of brain drain, and therefore efforts are needed to establish practices on attracting and keeping junior scholars and achieve the effect of brain gain. Croatian experience from the „One Way Ticket" project is useful, as it aims to stimulate return of junior scholars from international universities and projects. In Croatia, the Government secures funds for salary and support for scientific research, invests in the infrastructure necessary for scientific research. At the moment, in Macedonia there is a major discrepancy, i.e., the Government invests the most in the University in Stip, which is still shy of any solid scientific research, and makes modest investments in the University in Skopje, while other higher education and scientific institutions are widely neglected. Public investments in higher education must be dispersed. More universities should be given the chance, even the private universities, on competitive basis nonetheless.

In addition to development of scientific skills, investments are needed also in regard to developing pedagogical qualities. Of course, scientific achievements should be a precondition for employment in the higher education, but being a good scientist and being a good professor are two different things. Interesting is the example of Jurgen Habermas, who as a scientist has changed the course of social sciences and humanities, especially of political philosophy. His students and PhD students claim that he was one of the worst professors they had during their studies. He never had enough time for his students, was too critical in assessing their tests and papers. He had a speech impediment, stuttered, and kept his hands in pockets during lectures, did not look at students and spoke in low key, so the students in the back rows were unable to hear him. He is an example of excellent scientist, who is a poor professor. At the moment, legislation and practices in the Republic of Macedonia do not recognize anomalies of this type. Therefore, programs are needed with a view to improve pedagogical skills of junior scholar staff. Additional training should be introduced on what being good professor means, what is the paradigm of higher education, as well the desired structure of a higher education subject course not only in regard to knowledge transfer, but also to help students acquire knowledge of better quality and how to assess that.

INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC STANDARDS IN THE LAWS ON SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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Section on academic principles from the Law on Scientific and Research Activity ("*Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" no. 46/08 from 7.4.2008*) includes commitment to "freedom and autonomy in research activity and application of international quality standards in science", as well as "competitiveness and equal opportunities" (Article 3). Consistent adherence to these values on the part of the research community in Macedonia is undermined by legal provisions contained in Article 43, paragraph 2 and Article 51, paragraph 2, as they refer to "publication of papers in impact factor journals" as a criterion for appointment to academic title or for allocation of funds to research projects. The Law on Higher Education provides a narrow definition of "impact factor" by enlisting several commercial rating lists and databases of academic journals that rely on citation rate of the journal and the articles published therein (these databases are developed and kept separately). Most recent amendments to the Law on Higher Education ("*Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" no. 15/2013*) provide a list of databases whose impact factor should be valued in cases of appointment and re-appointment to academic title and accreditation of mentors.

These databases are intermediary-operated, i.e., they are neither created nor owned by the academic publishing houses. There are no international scientific bodies, relevant national and international associations or an academic community behind them that would give scientific legitimacy to the ranking lists. Quantity/frequency of citation is the measure used to assess the paper's scholar value. It is a matter of commercial databases (companies) that have been incorporated in the law and include: *Emerald, Scopus* and *Thomson Reuters*. Favouring certain business entities by means of a law is contrary to the definition of "law", which should set forth the principles of action in a more generic and universal manner, rather than determine them on the basis of mere existence and operation of specific and contingent business entities. In this paper the entities as referred to as "contingent" because their existence and possible relevance in the future are matters of historical contingency.

It should be noted that no globally-relevant publishing houses, such as *Sage* or *Palgrave MacMillan*, participate in the intermediary-operated databases, but rather own their individual databases and do not have citation indices. For the purpose of this research,

the team performed a cross-reference check for presence in rating lists and citation indices of journals in the field of social sciences and humanities published by above-referred publishing houses, as well as others, such as *Routledge, Oxford University Press,* and *Edinburgh University Press*. Results of this activity showed that none of the important journals published by these houses in the academic disciplines covered by this analysis can be found in the rating lists of databases enlisted in the law. Thus, the research shows that favouring certain business entities by means of a law raises major concerns, especially when the three commercial databases in the field of social sciences and humanities enlisted in the last amendments to the Law on Higher Education are not considered relevant reference points.

On the other hand, concerns are also raised with these databases' citation indices in regard to the accurate image they provide on the relevance of a given study or journal. They only measure the number of citations to a paper within the database, while emergence of different combinations of mutual citation between the publishing houses and the authors seriously undermines any claim for relevance made by these databases and their indices.

On this account, as well as due to the fact that - by the virtue of their nature and the role they have in global market economy, and not on the "market" of scholar innovation - certain disciplines imply more frequent citations of the relevant journal, this problem is exacerbated when the paper is evaluated only in terms of its publication in an impact factor journal. Therefore, in November 2007, the European Association of Science Editors (EASE) issued an official statement recommending "that journal impact factors are used only – and *cautiously* [use of italics by author] – for measuring and comparing the influence of entire journals, but not for the assessment of single papers, and certainly not for the assessment of researchers or research programmes".[1] The Higher Education Funding Council for England reminded the Research Assessment Exercise panels, as well as individual researches, that they are obliged to assess the quality of the content of individual articles *independently from the reputation of the journal in which they are published.*[2] In 2010, the German Foundation for Science (Deutsche Forshungsgemeinschaft) issued similar and even stricter guidelines, just as the US National Science Foundation.

Comparison of "impact factor" policies in Macedonia against those in developed academic environments provides the conclusion that the latter - by means of recommendations and bylaws - are committed to instituting protection against academic arbitrariness of databases, whereas in Macedonia arbitrariness of academic databases is being favoured as incontestable criterion.

Finally, favouring publishing articles instead of books is in direct collision with the generally accepted scales on determining the category of paper in social sciences and humanities. Namely, contrary to practices in natural and technical sciences, in these academic fields the most important achievement is publication of a monograph and not an article that often has the form of research summary or report.

1 "Not-so-deep impact", Nature 435 (7045): 1003–1004.

2 George A. Lozano, Vincent Larivière and Yves Gingras (2012). "The weakening relationship between the impact factor and papers' citations in the digital age." Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology 63 (11): 2140.

Obvious is the caution taken on the part of the state in regard to criteria, and even in regard to academic community's integrity, whose members should make peer reviews. If this assumption is correct, the conclusion is inferred that the legislator attempts to introduce the criteria applied in developed academic environments by means of law and, in that, sacrifices a certain degree of academic freedom and autonomy in the name of promoting research excellence.

Such action is naïve and lacks comprehensiveness in terms of effective policy making and represents an attempt for bureaucratic and technical promotion of academic production in Macedonia. This is primarily seen in the assumption that universal parameters do exist and they function on unbiased basis, i.e., they rely on automated "academic value detectors", which in our case would be databases kept by *Emerald, Scopus* and *Thomson Reuters*. Irrespective of the fact whether we like it or not, arbitrariness is an inevitable component of any assessment exercise. Academic assessment focuses on creation of knowledge, which by virtue is always unpredictable in terms of its final output and significance, i.e., the knowledge is a product of experiment and risk. Specificity of the assessment that needs to be performed requires the criteria to be established and the judgments to be made by a community of connoisseurs. In other words, reviews and specific criteria that are established by a commission or an institution must be the key assessment tools used.

If the overall aim is to solve the issue of parochialism, local self-sufficiency and alliance in mutual promotion of mediocrity for the benefit of career conformism, instead of *introducing contingent categories in the law* (such as names of citation databases), the legislator should implement the following recommendations:

- to raise the academic excellence criteria by means of training for academic staff that participates in reviewing processes, delivered by academics from highly-developed scientific, research and higher education environments;
- to restore the academic community's autonomy for setting assessment criteria, followed by adoption of legal solutions that anticipate establishment of bodies tasked to define rulebooks on appointment and re-appointment to academic title, where at least one third of members will come from highly-developed academic communities in Europe;
- to revoke articles from the Laws on Science and Higher Education that introduce citation in index databases and number of articles as criteria for appointment to academic title and for valuation of scientists;
- to introduce more general, generic criteria, such as "publication of papers in international journals published in one of the following global languages [...]" and/or "publication of papers in international journals published beyond the region of Southeast Europe";
- to ensure that general criteria stipulated by the law encourage application of high standards that will be translated into specific rulebooks adopted by the institutions and that will be necessarily complied with;
- to recognize and acknowledge the specificity of social sciences and humanities, in particular by allocating greater value to publication of monographs compared to publication of articles in journals;

- to facilitate introduction of good academic practices and standards on academic excellence pursued by other distinguished academic communities throughout Europe, such as the French and German academic communities, rather than to favour the Anglo-Saxon academic tradition.

MACEDONIAN SCIENTIFIC REALITY: CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

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Research and innovation help in job creation, prosperity and quality of life. This is the reason why research and innovation are in the focus of the Europe 2020 Strategy adopted by the European Union. Republic of Macedonia as candidate-country for EU membership, but also as country whose efforts are strongly geared towards development of economy, education and quality of life, still faces the challenge of strengthening its scientific and research activity as the key to ensuring overall development in the society. In Macedonia, university and academic staff are exposed to strong criticism in the media and in the public sphere, especially in regard to their contribution to scientific and research activity development. However, these debates often ignore or forget the role of another key actor at national level, responsible for development of scientific and research activity. Namely, the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) is the most important factor at institutional level, responsible for science policies in Macedonia. The Sector on Science and Technological and Technical Development at MES is comprised of two departments as follows: Department on Science and Technological and Technical Development and Projects in Science and Technological and Technical Development and the Department on International Cooperation in Science. This paper focuses on the operation of the first department, i.e., on issues related to MES support for implementation of national scientific and research projects. There are several reasons thereof. Namely, the institutional support to national research capacity is extremely important and is also a prerequisite for international cooperation in science. At the same time, this support is of crucial importance for the sustenance and development of scientific institutes. In other words, MES support to scientific and research activity at national level, by means of funding national scientific and research projects and sustenance of scientific institutes, provides the basis for development of scientific and research activity and promotion of science in the world.

MES's role, activities, responsibilities and guidelines for development of scientific and research activity are laid out in several key documents. The most important of which is the Law on Scientific and Research Activity where it is stipulated that this activity shall be based on the following principles: freedom and autonomy in research, links to the educational system, code of ethics, transparency, dissemination of results, etc. In addition to funding scientific and research activity, this law's purpose is to ensure: continuous promotion of scientific and research activity, promotion of better use of research results, transparency in research and use of research results, increased labour productivity and national competitiveness on global level, equal regional development in the Republic of Mac-

edonia, affirmation of the national identity and sustainable development and environmental protection. Nevertheless, different monitoring of national legislation and policy making, enforcement and effects thereof have identified problems related to enforcement of legal provisions, even in cases of precisely defined public policies and laws, which is also applicable in the case of the Law on Scientific and Research Activity and other related policies. It should be noted that assessing the implementation of this law and of relevant policies that lead towards development of scientific and research activity is an extremely difficult task, primarily due to low transparency on the part of the line ministry and related to effects and results achieved by supporting scientific and research activity and science in general. Expectations that MES's official website, including the website dedicated to science, would offer comprehensive information on open competitions aimed to support national research projects, data on research projects granted financial support, results from implemented research activities, data on projects' funding sources and like, have not been fulfilled. On this account, as part of the information collection process, access to public information from MES was requested and concerned topics of interest for this paper. All data and information related to MES operation are actually information obtained by the ministry in the form of responses to Freedom of Information (FOI) applications. However, prior to presenting this information that raises questions on serious and full enforcement of provisions contained in the Law on Scientific and Research Activity and the accompanying documents and policies, allow us to make a brief overview of key segments from the law that should provide and guarantee development of scientific and research activity in our country.

The Law on Scientific and Research Activity stipulates guarantees on the quality of this activity, provision of funds to support scientific and research work, and keeping records on entities carrying out such work and results thereof. Analysis of these three segments allows us to make a simple and brief overview of the ministry's role in supporting science by supporting national scientific and research projects. In simple terms, this role can be presented in three steps: selection of quality research projects, allocation of funding and sharing research results in order to cause effects and changes in the society as a whole. The problem with enforcement, as indicated above, is characteristic for all three steps. According to the law, in order to guarantee quality of scientific and research work, MES takes the following actions: monitors the quality of implementation of annual programs on scientific and research work adopted by all scientific institutions, plans, gears and finances activities on promoting scientific and research activity and knowledge transfer, purchases and modernizes research equipment, cares for provision of additional funds to implement the National Program, in cooperation with other line ministries and donors, ensures transparency, ensures access to scientific information, informs the public on achievements made by scientific and research work, etc. MES is also responsible for financing scientific and research work with funds secured from the Budget of the Republic of Macedonia. Article 50 of the law stipulates that the ministry, by means of open competition, finances the annual programs on scientific and research work adopted by the entities performing scientific and research work, those being: scientific and research programs and projects, scientific and research infrastructure, training, development and creation of scientific and research staff, pro-

motion of scientific and research activity, etc. For the purpose of financing annual programs on scientific and research work, the ministry signs contracts with the entities performing this activity, which govern their mutual rights and obligations. Public scientific institutions and science departments at state universities that have applied to the open competition for financing annual programs cannot apply to open competitions for financing projects in the same calendar year.

In response to FOI applications addressed to MES, information requested and disclosed indicates that in the course of 2009 and 2010 funding was secured for annual programs of public scientific institutions, but the financial support was discontinued in 2011 and 2012. Serious concerns are also raised in regard to non-announcement of open competitions for financing of scientific and research projects to which scientific institutions can apply. FOI responses obtained from MES and related to open competitions for financing and supporting scientific and research projects in the last four years (2009–2012) indicate that such open competitions were not announced in the years 2009 and 2012, while the open competition announced in 2011 is still in progress, although this paper was prepared at the end of 2012. This opens a vacuum space of two years during which the institutions are not receiving financial support by MES in order to perform their primary activity: scientific and research work. Hence, the situation at some public scientific institutions does not come as surprise. Six months ago, the Institute for Old Slavic Culture from Prilep made a public announcement whereby it defined its current situation as clinical death. According to the employees, the Institute is facing serious problems, both finance- and staff-related. At times when it is of outmost importance for the state to promote its cultural identity, language and tradition, this institute has no financial means to carry out research on these issues and present them in the world, although these aspects have been given priority in development of scientific and research activity in the Republic of Macedonia. Another serious problem announced by this institute is lack of quality staff. In this period, the Institute employs 11 scholars from the minimum of 30, three of which are one year shy of retirement. In 7–8 years, if the situation remains the same, this institute will only have 3 scholars. This case is indicated here because MES has already detected the problem with lack of quality staff as threat to future development of scientific and research activity. By means of documents whose adoption is pending, such as the National Program on Scientific and Research Activity and Development in the Republic of Macedonia (2012–2016), the ministry committed itself to provide not only simple reproduction of scientific and research staff, but to also expand the scientific and research base by means of new recruitments at scientific and research institutions, greater investments in scientific and research projects that will involve junior researches, etc. These forecasts are rather unrealistic and difficult to be achieved within a period of 4 years, especially knowing the situation at certain institutes that struggle to ensure at least simple reproduction of scientific and research staff and whose employees, for most part, are soon to be retired.

The situation is similar in regard to open competitions for financing scientific and research projects. As indicated above, for the entire period of past four years, open competitions were not announced in 2009 and 2012, while the open competition announced in 2011 is still being implemented although two years

have passed from its announcement. Only the open competition announced in 2010 has already selected projects to be supported by MES. Pursuant to the Law on Scientific and Research Activity, as part of this open competition contracts were signed between the ministry and the institutions whose projects were selected for funding. The contracts signed on 26.7.2010 indicate that projects should be completed by 31.12.2011, that they should last for a period of one year and that their implementation should start on 1.1.2010. Later in time, annexes to the contracts in question were signed in order to rectify the timeframe inconsistency, according to which projects should be implemented in the period from 1.10.2010 until 30.9.2012. According to the new timeframe, research projects supported by the MES should be completed by now and their results should be made publicly available for the purpose of achieving transparency, but also creating results-based effects and changes that would contribute to further development in the society. Nevertheless, the team was unable to find these projects and thus addressed MES with information request on the status of these projects (discontinued, completed or underway). Unfortunately, no response was obtained, and therefore we addressed the institutions performing the approved research projects with the same set of questions. According to responses obtained by these institutions, the projects are discontinued due to ministry's failure to disburse the funds. At the same time, it should be noted that in addition to relevant timeframes, annexes to the contracts also implied changes to the amount of funds approved. Thus, from the initially approved funding in the amount of 1,200,000 MKD, the annexes indicate an amount of 600,000 MKD, which accounts for 50% decrease in funding. In regard to funding, important is to note that the 2012 state budget allocated 64 million MKD to scientific and research work, but this amount was reduced by 20 million MKD with the budget adjustment. In other words, the budget account of 44 million MKD should cover: developmental and scientific and research projects, bilateral projects, costs for preparation of impact factor papers, and PhD dissertations. As already noted, research and innovations are given high priority on the EU agenda for growth and jobs. By 2020, EU Member States are encouraged to allocate 3% of GDP (1% from public funds and 2% as private sector investment) to research and development. Although Macedonia is not a member of EU, science and research policies must be geared towards attainment of these targets, which is also proved by the Draft Program on Scientific and Research Activity and Development 2012–2016. Actually, this program anticipates an increase to 1.8% of GDP in the next 5-year period. This forecast raises concerns given that in Macedonia the share of GDP invested in research and development has been decreasing throughout the years. If there are serious will and motivation to develop the scientific and research activity, state's vision on the share increase should be realistic and attainable.

Actually, the National Program on Scientific and Research Activity and Development in the Republic of Macedonia (2012–2016) should provide the basis for development of research capacity and science in general. This document is written in the style of a strategy that precisely and clearly detects weaknesses and challenges of the reality in Macedonia concerning the field of science. The document covers the period 2012–2016, and although 2012 is near its end, the program has not entered parliamentary procedure for adoption. Committed opening of perspectives for de-

velopment of science necessitates motivation and seriousness that do not allow shortfalls of this type. If the proposed program is accepted as strategy, then it should serve as baseline for development of annual programs on scientific and research activity that are realistically attainable (instead of being projected as desired vision) and that will be gradually implemented in the following years. The entire document is based on obsolete data (by 2008) and they need to be updated (by 2010 or 2011) in order to provide an actual overview of the situation that would later serve as baseline for development and conceptualization of future steps. And finally, the implementation action plan attached to the program is only a rough approximation, despite its exceptionally optimistic and favourable overtone. On this account, if this document is strategic, it should have included activities and implementing entities that would be designed and presented with dedication and seriousness, while the financial implications should be realistically attainable or projected as part of annual implementation action plans. As was already indicated, according to the plans and commitments presented therein, this document, which is exceptionally realistic and serious in detecting weaknesses and challenged, resembles a "wish list" and fails to convince us that they are attainable, especially in terms of finances. This paper enlists several problems faced by the state in implementing its developmental policies for scientific and research activity, but they are sufficient to state that unblocking the development necessitates taking several steps backwards and facing the situation that is not promising at all. Having in mind that the program is not adopted and that investment of efforts and funds in science development become a priority in our state, in addition to assuming a critical position, the author hopes that this paper will contribute to identification of possibilities for prosperity that would be successfully utilized because science development also implies development of the society as a whole.

IS INSUFFICIENT FUNDING THE ONLY "OBSTACLE" TO DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES?

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Contrary to global trends, in particular those in Western Europe, where social sciences and humanities continue to have great impact, the impression about the state-of-affairs in the Republic of Macedonia is quite the opposite. An overview of the National Programme for Scientific and Research Activity and Development in the Republic of Macedonia 2012-2016 provides the conclusion that our country lags behind in comparison to other countries worldwide. Developed countries allocate as high as 4.7% of their respective GDP as investments in scientific and research work, while in Macedonia this percentage amounted to 0.22% in the last five years. According to UNESCO 2010 Science Report, development of social sciences and humanities in Asia and Latin America, especially in China and Brazil, are marked by great and rapid expansion, i.e., according to data enlisted for sub-Saharan Africa, 75% of academic publications are in the field of social sciences and humanities. This report shows another important fact: it is often the poorest countries that are in greatest need of social sciences and humanities.

The negative situation in the field of social sciences and humanities in our country is mainly due to the non-existing climate for perceiving their importance, role, applicability, and especially the benefits they could create by means of scientific research and the manner in which the institutions could use the results of research in these disciplines. In the opinion of scientific workers, disputable is the allocation of funds for social sciences, primarily because there are no priorities set and because due care is not made of the research complexity, which ultimately results in problems related to procedures on ranking and reviewing research works. Moreover, the dominant politicization in the Macedonian society affects the selection of projects for funding and often results in selection of incompetent reviewers and bodies that decide on allocation of funds.

It is not by accident that social sciences and humanities in the Republic of Macedonia are considered a completely different story. As a result of this situation, technical sciences were given greater priority and funding in the last several years.

Contrary to the generosity and inclination demonstrated towards the technical sciences, in December 2012, the Republic of Macedonia was prepared to shut down, or to use the word of relevant line ministers Pance Kravel and Sprio Ristovski – to "phase out" university departments on Macedonian literature and language. As absurd as it may sound, this would have become a reality should the academics, writers, linguists, professors and students in Macedonian literature and language did not sign a petition against that decision. This is illustrative of the fact that the

state does adequately define and finance its strategic interests and thus fails to preserve the national identity. Moreover, the state does not feel obliged to consult the scientific public about these matters. Truth to be told, studies in Macedonian literature and language must not be terminated; on the contrary, increased investments in scientific and research work in this filed and in human resources are needed. As a reminder, the Institute for Macedonian Language has not recruited new staff for 13 years in a row.

Social sciences and humanities are not addressed under political parties' programmes, while the commitments made in regard to science development are purely declarative. Unofficially, dominant is the perception that social sciences and humanities, with the exception of economics, are of no use nowadays, are expensive and only contribute to creation of an army of unemployed. All these contribute to the erroneous image about and the unfavourable climate for development of above referred disciplines. However, the truth is different. For decades, the Republic of Macedonia has not developed an analysis of labour market demand and the relevant strategy to address it. As a result, certain vocations are given primacy, but only on the detriment of other vocations. This is done in an utterly non-transparent manner and without relevant criteria in place. Consequently, the state does not have a strategy on future development of scientific and research work.

Recently, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy presented in public an analysis on the basis of which announcements were made for termination of certain groups of studies in the field of social sciences and humanities. Although no indications were given as to the assessment indicators used in the analysis, the public was informed that the Macedonian labour market is more than saturated with lawyers, economists, administrative workers, professors in Macedonian language, philosophy and in geography ...

As bitter as it might sound, such actions only confirm the thesis that Republic of Macedonia is a country of absurdities and failed experiments. Competent authorities are still far from recognizing and acknowledging the role and the possibilities offered by the science, especially social sciences and humanities, in creating new values and economic prosperity. Therefore, the need for raising awareness on the overall benefits from science development is even stronger and more essential and can contribute to changed image about the science in general. The vision on development of sciences is based on the image about the desired society. Having in mind that science and overall development in the society are intricately linked, scientific achievements are an indispensable condition for the state's future development. If the Republic of Macedonia truly strives to become an EU Member State, which implies country's strive for development, societal stability and permanent cultural development, then the state needs innovative, creative and globally acknowledged scientific and research work. However, past practices in the country indicate to the contrary, especially knowing that innovation implies development of new ideas and knowledge, including application and commercialization thereof. Scientific and research work should have an impact on the public, which means it should analyse developmental issues and their interpretation by the public and by the decision-makers in the field of social sciences, as well as putting forward proposals and evaluating measures aimed to solve certain problems. Unfortunately, the fact that

internationally recognized competitive scientific work can support development is broadly undermined in the Republic of Macedonia, including the fact that quality science is based on quality and efficient scientific education at higher education institutions, which produce creative, motivated and issue-oriented human resources with extensive knowledge. On this account, the Republic of Macedonia must significantly increase its investments in science and scientific and research work, especially in the field of social sciences and humanities.

The humiliating small budget funds allocated to support science demonstrate that for a long period now state institutions have marginalized the social sciences and humanities, and have thereby obstructed development and narrowed the space for scientific and research work. The dilemma whether this is pursued purposefully remains open. Clear is that social sciences and humanities are those that create critical thinking, which in turn is the main instigator of development in all spheres of society.