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## THE ROLE OF STABILISATION MISSIONS IN THE PROCESS OF POLICE REFORM IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

**ABSTRACT** In 2001, the increasing tension led to a threat to Macedonian sovereignty and territorial integrity due to the events that took place in the north-western regions of the country bordering Albania and Kosovo. The actions of Albanian separatists associated with National Liberation Army that aimed at making Albanian and Macedonian nationalities equal within the Republic resulted in an increase of anti-Albanian attitudes that contributed to the Macedonian-Albanian conflict. The six-month fight was ended on 13 August 2001 when the peace agreement was signed in Ohrid. The agreement, which was accepted by both sides of the conflict, was more favourable for the Albanians since it made their status as citizens almost equal to that of Macedonians. A growing tension among the Albanian minority forced immediate implementation of the decisions included in the Ohrid Agreement. The European Union in cooperation with the OSCE and NATO played a key role in the process of stabilising the socio-political situation. The police reform in the Republic of Macedonia was a crucial element of the Ohrid Agreement. The changes were to ensure proportional representation of all nationalities comprising the Macedonian society in law enforcement services. The European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe conducted three stabilisation missions: one was a military mission – CONCORDIA, and two were police missions: PROXIMA and EUPAT.

**Key-words:** stabilisation mission, the mission of the police, OSCE, European Union, PROXIMA, EUPAT, CONCORDIA, National Liberation Army, the conflict in Macedonia

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of a stabilisation mission derives from the American doctrine of the operation of land forces. It has been acknowledged by both the military and media as well as by specialists in international relations. A stabilisation mission is proper usage of armed forces or operations in the economic sphere which aims at ensuring safety on a given territory.<sup>1</sup> Stabilisation missions are usually military or police projects. The conflict that took place in Macedonia in 2001 caused alarm in the international community which still remembered ethnic conflicts resulting from the breakup of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The experience of war in post-Yugoslav states enabled rapid and radical launch of operations by international organisations in Macedonia. The aim of this article is to find an answer to a question concerning the degree to which the stabilisation missions conducted by international organisations helped to carry out the police reform, i.e. one of the most important decisions included in the Annex C of the peace agreement signed on the 13 August 2001 in Ohrid. Numerous authors, who discussed the socio-political situation in Macedonia, emphasise that external organisations that took part in the stabilisation process in Macedonia made the republic dependent on their help thus creating a protectorate.<sup>2</sup> The article below attempts to demonstrate that conducting the reform of the Macedonian police would not be feasible without the participation of foreign political organisations in the form of mediation, specialist counselling and stabilisation missions.

## 1. CIRCUMSTANCES OF LAUNCHING MILITARY AND POLICE MISSIONS IN MACEDONIA

When on 8 September 1991, the option of leaving the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia won in the national referendum, the local politicians rushed to create a constitution of the newly established state. On the 17 November, two months after declaring secession, a constitution draft was prepared and accepted.<sup>3</sup> The primary version of the Macedonian fundamental act assumed equality of all citizens irrespective of the ethnic origin. The Macedonian language became the official national language. However, the constitution contained a provision which stated that other languages may also become official in the regions where the national minority constituted a considerable proportion of the population. Moreover, principles of religious equality and

<sup>1</sup> R. Tyślewicz, 'Znaczenie działań ekonomicznych w osiągnięciu celów misji stabilizacyjnych z udziałem sił zbrojnych – przykład doświadczeń Polskiego Kontyngentu Wojskowego w Iraku', *Studia Gdańskie. Wzjęcie i Rzeczywistość*, Vol. 5 (2008), p. 315.

<sup>2</sup> W. Walkiewicz, *Jugosławia. Państwa sukcesyjne*, Warszawa 2009, p. 303 (*Historia państw świata w XX wieku*).

<sup>3</sup> I. Stawowy-Kawka, *Historia Macedonii*, Wrocław 2000, p. 297.

separation of church and state were also introduced. Nevertheless, the constitutional provisions occurred to be insufficient for the Albanian minorities residing in the north and west of the country.<sup>4</sup> The Albanians demanded that the Albanian language become official in the regions where they constituted the majority. They also believed that despite the provisions concerning equality of religion in the Macedonian constitution, Islam was still not treated as equal to Orthodox Christianity.<sup>5</sup> In spite of the aggravating political situation, many factors indicated that an armed conflict would be avoided. Internationally, such a situation was even referred to as “the Switzerland of the Balkans”.<sup>6</sup>

In 2001, the increasing tension led to a threat to Macedonian sovereignty and territorial integrity. The events that took place in neighbouring Kosovo affected the deteriorating situation in Macedonia. In the face of the Kosovo conflict, the northern and western regions of the country became a hideout and training site for Albanian guerrillas from the National Liberation Army closely associated with the Kosovo Liberation Army.<sup>7</sup> Soon after, Albanian separatists began organising attacks on Macedonian villages. They also targeted the buildings of Macedonian public administration.<sup>8</sup>

As an answer to the actions of Albanian separatists, Macedonian president Boris Trajkovski and prime minister Ljubčo Georgievski accused the National Liberation Army of attempting to control the northern and western regions of the country bordering Albania and Kosovo. They accused the Albanians of conducting separatist activities with the aim of reviving the idea of the Greater Albania.<sup>9</sup> The Macedonian society became increasingly anti-Albanian, which led the country to the verge of a civil war. All attempts to resolve the conflict inside the country failed.

When two main Albanian political parties suggested support for the actions of the National Liberation Army in Macedonia, discussion erupted in the Macedonian parliament. As an answer to guerrilla attacks against the Macedonian people, the government decided to launch an offensive in order to drive back the Albanian militias from the northern regions of the country. Earlier, the Macedonians had undertaken actions

<sup>4</sup> The official census from 1994 conducted by the parliament with the help of the OSCE: population: nearly 2.1 million citizens, 66.5% of whom were ethnic Macedonians. The second most numerous group were Albanians who constituted approximately 23% of the population. Cf. the data of the Macedonian Statistical Office: ‘Попис на населението’, Државниот завод за статистика – Република Македонија, at <<http://www.stat.gov.mk/OblastOpsto.aspx?id=31>>, 10 April 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> C.A. Monteux, ‘Decentralization: The New Delusion of Ethnic Conflict Regulation?’, *LIMS: International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (2006), p. 172.

<sup>7</sup> R. Woźnica, ‘Rola Unii Europejskiej w realizacji postanowień Porozumienia ochrydzkiego dotyczących policji’ in M. Kawka, I. Stawowy-Kawka (eds.), *Tożsamość narodowa w społeczeństwie multietnicznym Macedonii. Historia, kultura, język, literatura, media*, Kraków 2008, p. 277.

<sup>8</sup> A. Czymmek, K. Viciska, ‘Model for Future Multi-ethnic Coexistence? Macedonia 10 Years after the Ohrid Framework Agreement’, *KAS International Reports*, 11/2011, at <[http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas\\_29404-544-2-30.pdf?111114144350](http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_29404-544-2-30.pdf?111114144350)>, 7 April 2014.

<sup>9</sup> J. Kim, ‘Macedonia: Country Background and Recent Conflict’, *CRS Report for Congress*, 7 November 2001, p. 5, at <<http://www.fas.org/man/crs/RL30900.pdf>>, 8 April 2014.

to stop the influx of Albanian refugees from Kosovo to Macedonia so as to protect the country from the increase in the number of Albanians.<sup>10</sup>

The Macedonian leaders accused NATO and EU of dilatory and ineffective actions to resolve the conflict. The leaders of the National Liberation Army declared that such actions were not related with the conflict in Kosovo, but with a wish to gain rights for the Albanian minority in Macedonia which, according to the separatists, were not rightfully respected. Legalisation of the Albanian-language university in Tetovo was one of the main postulates of Albanian politicians led by Ahmeti and Veliu.<sup>11</sup>

The conflict was ended after five years by the agreement signed on 13 August 2001 in Ohrid. Having analysed its provisions, it may be concluded that it was more beneficial for the Albanians. Shortly after signing the act, Ali Ahmeti said that "a new chapter is opening in which Macedonia is also becoming a country for the Albanians".<sup>12</sup>

The representatives of the Albanian minority forced the official status for the Albanian language in regions where the Albanian diaspora exceeded 20%. The Albanians gained equal rights to the Macedonians. From then on, the personnel of public administration bodies were to reflect the ethnic composition of the Macedonian society. Higher education in the Albanian language was to receive public financing.<sup>13</sup> The Ohrid Framework Agreement determined reforms in four main fields: 1. Preserving peace; 2. Decentralisation of power and principles concerning the usage of national symbols; 3. Regulation of relationships between the Macedonians and national minorities; 4. Issues concerning education and language status.<sup>14</sup> The task of monitoring the implementation of provisions included in the document signed in August 2001 was entrusted to the OSCE mission and the European Union.<sup>15</sup>

## 2. ASSISTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN IMPLEMENTING THE POLICE REFORM

In the period between 1995 and 2001, the role and number of OSCE observation mission members in Macedonia were limited and mainly focused on preventing ethnic conflicts similar to those taking place in Croatia or Bosnia and Herzegovina. The range of the OSCE operation was considerably extended in 2001 due to the conflict that took place in the northern regions of the country. The OSCE became the main observ-

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> V. Popetrevski, V. Latifi, 'The Ohrid Framework Agreement Negotiations' in *Ohrid and Beyond. A Cross-ethnic Investigation into the the Macedonian Crisis*, Skopje 2002, p. 57.

<sup>13</sup> A. Czymmek, K. Viciska, 'Model for Future...', pp. 75-80.

<sup>14</sup> Original English version of Ohrid Framework Agreement, cf. Framework Agreement (Ohrid Peace Agreement), 13 August 2001, at <[https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/site\\_media/media/accords/Macedonia\\_framework\\_agreement.pdf](https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/site_media/media/accords/Macedonia_framework_agreement.pdf)>, 8 April 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Cf.: 'OSCE Mission to Skopje – Human Rights', OSCE, at <<http://www.osce.org/skopje/106938>>, 9 April 2014.

er of implementing the provisions included in the agreement and a guardian of respecting the treaty on the entire territory of the Republic of Macedonia.

When the NATO mandate ended in Macedonia and the situation in the regions where armed conflicts took place in 2001 was still far from stable, the prime minister of Macedonia, Branko Crvenkovski, requested help from the European Union. A consequence of the negotiations was the organisation of a military mission CONCORDIA conducted as part of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). CONCORDIA was a prelude to launching two police missions carried out on the territory of Macedonia.<sup>16</sup>

During peace negotiations, the issue concerning the police was one of the key problems in the process of creating a common agreement. The basic postulate of the Albanians was obtaining a proportional ethnic representation in law enforcement services.<sup>17</sup> Both sides of the conflict differed in terms of views on the manner of control and police management. The Albanians aimed at decentralisation of management and transferring control over the services to local governments. The Macedonians, on the other hand, wanted to maintain the centralised police entirely subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior since they believed that it was the primary condition of maintaining unity and integrity in the country. The international community that participated in the process of formulating the Ohrid Framework Agreement decided to introduce a compromise in which heads of the police would be selected by municipal councils from lists of candidates proposed by the Ministry of the Interior.<sup>18</sup>

The first changes in Macedonian legislation concerned the right to select the head of the police by the local authorities from lists of candidates proposed by the Minister of the Interior. One of three proposed candidates was to come from the ethnic group that constituted the majority in a given region. If the local authorities<sup>19</sup> did not select the head, the minister would indicate new candidates. If the candidates were rejected again, the Minister of the Interior would be responsible for the selection of a proper candidate. The minister was to select the head from the candidates indicated by him-/herself and from the list of candidates suggested by the local councils.<sup>20</sup>

In the society composed of divided groups, a role of a neutral observer proved to be essential. An observer performed the function of an arbitrator in implementing the provisions of the truce. The main external initiators of building peace in Macedonia were the European Union and NATO. The OSCE supported the operation of these organisations and in practice, it tried to implement the strategy that they had chosen.

<sup>16</sup> Cf.: 'Concordia/FYROM – Mission Description', European Union External Action, at <[http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/concordia/index\\_en.htm](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/concordia/index_en.htm)>, 6 May 2014.

<sup>17</sup> In 2001, the Albanians constituted 20% of the Macedonian population, but their representation in police services did not exceed 6% Cf.: R. Woźnica, 'Rola Unii Europejskiej...', p. 282.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 280.

<sup>19</sup> Opština – a basic territorial unit in Macedonia. The country is divided into 84 administrative units (Opštinas).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 283.

The OSCE provided help to the Macedonian government in fulfilling the agreed decisions concerning appropriate representation of the Albanian minority in police services. The organisation was responsible for tasks in three areas: monitoring and implementing the resolutions included in the Annex C to the Ohrid Framework Agreement,<sup>21</sup> training and recruiting candidates for police officers as well as preparing a social campaign addressed to both Macedonian and Albanian communities. The aim of OSCE activities was to build trust to police officers and develop a belief that a proportional ethnic structure in law enforcement services was reasonable.<sup>22</sup> The OSCE acted in close cooperation with the EU and was financed from the EU assistance measures. The participation of the European Community in preparing and implementing reforms of uniformed services began on the day of signing the Ohrid Agreement and lasted until the EUPAT mission ended in 2006.<sup>23</sup>

### 3. EUPOL-PROXIMA POLICE MISSION

On 15 December 2003, the EU launched a two-year police mission called EUPOL-PROXIMA.<sup>24</sup> The PROXIMA programme was initiated by the prime minister of the Republic of Macedonia – Ljubčo Georgievski. He requested the help of the EU in reforming uniformed services. As an answer to the request of the Macedonian government, the European Union organised a mission with nearly 200 participants, mainly police officers from the Member States. The main aim of the mission was to assist in reforming police services in accordance with the provisions included in the Ohrid Agreement. The PROXIMA programme was also a tool to fulfil the EU's obligations to support the Macedonian government in their path for integration with the European Union.<sup>25</sup> Acting in cooperation with the OSCE, the European Union decided to change the military character of the mission in Macedonia into the police one due to a satisfactory result of similar operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>26</sup>

The main aim of the mission was to conduct the police reform and implement mechanisms to fight against organised crime.<sup>27</sup> In the PROXIMA programme, the OSCE

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Framework Agreement (Ohrid Peace Agreement)...

<sup>22</sup> A. Dikici, 'Introducing Multi-Ethnic Policing in Macedonia. The Role of OSCE', *Uluslararası Hukuk ve Politika*, Vol. 3, No. 10 (2007), pp. 129-146, at <<http://www.usak.org.tr/dosyalar/dergi/5oyepb66sexkzXI3MhNFxsfB8McgPO.pdf>>, 8 April 2014.

<sup>23</sup> B. Przybylska-Maszner, 'EUPAT – Policyjny zespół doradczy w Byłej Jugosłowiańskiej Republice Macedonii' in eadem (ed.), *Misje cywilne Unii Europejskiej*, Poznań 2010, p. 248.

<sup>24</sup> EUPOL – European Union Police Mission.

<sup>25</sup> B. Przybylska-Maszner, 'EUPAT...', p. 250.

<sup>26</sup> Cf.: M. Garb, B. Eržen, L. Jelušič, 'Police in Peace Operations (the Case of Missions in South-Eastern Europe and Case of Slovenian Police Peacekeepers)' in G. Meško, M. Pagon, B. Dobovšek (eds.), *Policing in Central and Eastern Europe. Dilemmas of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, Ljubljana 2004, at <<http://www.fvv.uni-mb.si/conf2004/papers/garb.pdf>>, 8 April 2014.

<sup>27</sup> 'Council Joint Action 2003/681/CFSP of 29 September 2003 on the European Union Police Mission



was responsible for practical implementation of reforms prepared by the Macedonian Minister of the Interior concerning the local police. In the face of an increasing number of drug smuggling incidents by criminal groups acting in Albania and northern Macedonia, adequate training of the customs services was a significant element to make their operations more effective in fighting against organised crime. Moreover, the operations involving border protection were a part of a broader EU policy to promote more integrated management of borders in the Balkans.<sup>28</sup> As part of the PROXIMA programme, the OSCE helped in the cooperation between Macedonia and its neighbours in terms of creating a safe country of law. Its task was also to preserve the dialogue between the citizens and law enforcement services.<sup>29</sup>

The head of the PROXIMA was a German, Jürgen Scholz. In his first speech, the chairman emphasised that the main tasks of the new mission, following its transformation from the military to police one, would be counselling and training.<sup>30</sup> Soon after establishing institutional tools for conducting such an operation, the organisation began training candidates for police officers. 1,156 cadets were trained in the first months of the mission.<sup>31</sup> Nearly 67% of them were Albanians, 17.4% were of Macedonian origin, 6.5% – Turkish, 2.3% – Serbs, 3.6% – Romanians, 1.9% – Bosnians and 0.2% – Croatians.<sup>32</sup>

In 2001, the number of Albanians who worked in the Macedonian police services did not exceed 4.5%. As a result of the implementation of the peace agreement and completing training programmes that prepared the Albanian community to work in the Macedonian uniformed services, this number increased to 15% in 2005.<sup>33</sup> Apart from the Albanians and Macedonians, the representatives of other minorities in the police services constituted over 4%.<sup>34</sup> However, in 2005, merely 1.1% of Albanians were employed on managerial positions compared to 98% of Macedonian people despite the fact that the number of Albanian police officers increased several times.<sup>35</sup>

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in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (EUPOL 'Proxima'), *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 249/66 (2003), at <<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/Council%20Joint%20Action%202003%20681%20CFSP.pdf>>, 5 May 2014.

<sup>28</sup> Cf.: 'EUPOL PROXIMA Fact sheet', EU @ UN, 13 December 2003, at <[http://www.eu-un.europa.eu/articles/en/article\\_3088\\_en.htm](http://www.eu-un.europa.eu/articles/en/article_3088_en.htm)>, 10 April 2014.

<sup>29</sup> Cf.: 'EUPOL PROXIMA Fact sheet', at <[http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/proxima-fyrom/pdf/15122003\\_factsheet\\_proxima-fyrom\\_en.pdf](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/proxima-fyrom/pdf/15122003_factsheet_proxima-fyrom_en.pdf)>, 10 April 2014.

<sup>30</sup> Cf.: 'Extension of the EU police mission PROXIMA in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Appointment of new Head of Mission', Brussels, 14 December 2004, S/0351/04, at <<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/Extension%20of%20the%20EU%20police%20mission%20Proxima%2014.12.04.pdf>>, 10 April 2014.

<sup>31</sup> A. Dikici, 'Introducing Multi-Ethnic Policing...', p. 136, as in: *General Statistics*, Police Academy Database Office, Skopje 2003.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Cf.: *2005 Annual Report on OSCE activities*, OSCE, at <<http://www.osce.org/secretariat/18847?download=true>>, 10 April 2014.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> R. Woźnica, 'Rola Unii Europejskiej...', p. 284.

The main problem faced by the OSCE in Macedonia was training the cadets with Albanian origin to hold various positions in the Macedonian police. This had to be done as fast as possible. The training actions undertaken by the OSCE as part of the PROXIMA programme took place at two levels. First of all, instructors, who would train young candidates in the future, had to be trained themselves. The second level involved training officers who had already worked in the Macedonian police prior to signing the agreement and commencement of the mission. The aim was to introduce uniform standards for all police officers. The training involved principles of police operation in a democratic country, issues of tolerance of religion, race and sex as well as detection of and investigation into organised crime with the prime attention paid to human trafficking. The training was supplemented with practical tips concerning self-defence.<sup>36</sup>

The OSCE also introduced more complex, specialist programmes associated with a selected group of police officers specialising in certain more specific services, such as road safety or fight against organised crime. The cadets could participate in a uniform educational programme that prepared them to take final exams in the police school. The main conditions that had to be met by a candidate were: completing secondary education, having the citizenship and age between 18 and 25. The cadets were qualified to the subsequent stage of recruitment if they passed psychological and physical ability tests, if their military service status was regulated and if they had no criminal record. The psychological profile of a qualified candidate was as follows: strong character, high level of moral sense and commitment to protect human rights and rights of minorities.<sup>37</sup>

The first cadets for the reformed Macedonian police were chosen on 1 January 2002 and sent to the centre for training uniformed services localised in Idrizovo. The training involved 420 hours of intense practice conducted by experienced Macedonian police officers and OSCE international instructors with the best qualifications possible. The training consisted of both theoretical and practical parts.<sup>38</sup> Graduates of the police academy completed six- or nine-month training that entitled them to begin their service as police officers, but did not entitle them to possess firearms. In the entire country, pairs of police officers were established in which an experienced armed police officer served as a mentor who introduced the young officer to the profession with all its complexity and specificity.<sup>39</sup>

Apart from training police officers as part of the mission, the observers also interacted with the government bodies and stimulated cooperation in various government agencies. For instance, it was possible to create dialogue between prosecutors and rep-

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>37</sup> A. Dikici, 'Introducing Multi-Ethnic Policing...', p. 137.

<sup>38</sup> Cf.: *Implementation of Police-Related Programmes. Lessons Learned in South-Eastern Europe*, Vienna 2008 (SPMU Publication Series, 7), OSCE, at <<http://www.osce.org/secretariat/35659?download=true>>, 10 April 2014.

<sup>39</sup> A. Dikici, 'Introducing Multi-Ethnic Policing...', p. 137.



representatives of the Ministry of the Interior in terms of operational aspects of investigations or witness protection.<sup>40</sup>

The reform of the Macedonian police as part of the PROXIMA programme was positively evaluated by the Macedonian society. 46% of Macedonians noticed changes that resulted from actions conducted as part of the PROXIMA programme. 35% of the respondents had a different view and 17% did not express any opinion. According to the OSCE observers, it was possible to create local bonds between citizens and police officers, which considerably improved the image of uniformed officers.<sup>41</sup>

The EUPOL-PROXIMA programme ended on 14 December 2005. The representatives of the European Union decided that the results of the mission were satisfactory. Both the Macedonians and European representatives did not express a wish to continue a similar mission. However, towards the end of the PROXIMA programme, the EU Council decided that further police missions in Macedonia, but with a slightly different nature, were still needed.

#### 4. EUPAT STABILISATION MISSION

In accordance with the obligation of supporting the Macedonian government, the European Union established a new police mission in 2006. The mission was called EUPAT.<sup>42</sup> The main motivation was maintaining the effects achieved within the previous two years. The aim of the project was to support and professionalise police services on the basis of European standards. Both missions were similar in terms of goals and organisation structure. However, the EUPAT programme was more modestly compared to the PROXIMA and was only the transition between the previous project and a new assistance programme – CARDS.<sup>43</sup>

The fact that Jürgen Scholz remained the head guaranteed consistency and continuation of the goals set in the PROXIMA project. The previous profile of OSCE operation under the auspices of the European Union was supplemented with the fight against corruption and improving cooperation between the police and judicial authorities as well as introduction of internal control mechanisms.

The EUPAT differed from the PROXIMA in the attitude of the Macedonian government to the mission. The previous one was organised at the prime minister's request.

<sup>40</sup> R. Woźnica, 'Rola Unii Europejskiej...', p. 286.

<sup>41</sup> Cf.: M. Dotsenko, 'Skopje Mission helps Citizens' Advisory Groups to strengthen trust between people and police', OSCE, 27 February 2007, at <<http://www.osce.org/skopje/57581>>, 10 April 2014.

<sup>42</sup> EUPAT – European Union Police Advisory Team.

<sup>43</sup> CARDS (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation) – a programme of technical and financial aid for the western Balkan states launched in 2000 by the Directive of the Council No. 2666/2000. It lasted until 2006 and its total cost amounted to € 5.13 billion. Cf.: 'CARDS Programme (2000–2006)', Europa – Summaries of EU legislation, 5 February 2007, at <[http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/enlargement/western\\_balkans/r18002\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/enlargement/western_balkans/r18002_en.htm)>, 23 April 2014.

The EUPAT, on the other hand, was not welcomed by the Macedonian politicians with enthusiasm since they believed that the PROXIMA had fulfilled its objectives completely and that the subsequent stage of uniformed services reform did not need another external intervention. Macedonia wanted to stop being perceived as a country that needed EU assistance in terms of emergency management.<sup>44</sup> The European Union interpreted this situation differently, in a strategic perspective. It was believed that continued cooperation with the Macedonian police could contribute to stability and safety not only in Macedonia, but in the entire region. The Macedonians agreed to the continuation of the police mission because they considered it a means that might help them access the CARDS programme that was beginning in the Balkans.<sup>45</sup>

Within six months, it turned out that the EUPAT was the last police mission conducted by the European Union in Macedonia and the nature of operations in this region transformed into integration. In 2005, Macedonia was one of the countries that continued their efforts in order to join the EU. Stabilisation operations were continued by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe which still monitored the socio-political situation in this country by means of the Twinning Project.<sup>46</sup>

Preparing over a thousand police officers for duty, who mainly came from the Albanian minority, was a challenge, the responsibility for which rested on the shoulders of OSCE observers, coordinators and trainers. In June 2006, both the European Union and the Macedonian government decided that further continuation of the stabilisation mission was no longer necessary. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe became the observer and coordinator of further actions aimed at building a strong, democratic country.

The support of external observers and involvement of international organisations by establishing military missions proved to be essential in creating peace and stabilisation in the Republic of Macedonia. The deadlock in the peace dialogue between the Macedonian government and Albanian separatists in 2001 brought the country to the verge of bloodshed similar to that in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia or Kosovo. The involvement of the European Union, NATO and OSCE helped to implement the provisions of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. The essential police reform, which was particularly important for the Albanian minority, was conducted in a relatively short period of time. The international intervention helped Macedonia to create grounds for Macedonian-Albanian dialogue.

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<sup>45</sup> B. Przybylska-Maszner, 'EUPAT...', p. 253.

<sup>46</sup> Cf.: OSCE Mission to Skopje, at <<http://www.osce.org/skopje>>, 23 April 2014.

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