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FROM THE NAME DISPUTE TO THE PRESPA AGREEMENT: THE RELATIONS BETWEEN GREECE AND NORTH MACEDONIA

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Introduction: *The name dispute dominated the relations between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia approximately three decades. It was coined as one of the world's chronicl unresolved issues. During the long lifespan of the conflict, there were some moments of hope for a solution, as well as disappointments stemming from the rising tension between the parties. Some of these developments bringing a new mentality to the dispute can be labelled as the turning points. In the current state of affairs, the dispute has been going through a new phase since the signature of the Prespa Agreement between Greece and North Macedonia in 2018.*

Materials and Methods: *The article is providing a historical analysis of the name dispute. The development of the name dispute, from its beginning till its current state of affairs, is analysed under the guidance of the previous studies conducted on the subject and with references to the discourses of the leading political actors.*

Results: *The name dispute is elaborated by focusing on the key turning points. After the emergence of the conflict, the interim accord of 1995 and 2008 NATO Bucharest meeting and the Prespa Agreement are determined as the turning points of the dispute.*

Discussions and Conclusions: *The article concludes that it is too early to declare the final end of the name dispute by concentrating on the Prespa Agreement, symbolizing the final consensus between the parties of the dispute. Despite the rising hopes after the Prespa Agreement, the historical lifespan of the name dispute leads us to consider the fact that the willingness of the disputing parties to stay committed to the agreement will be definitive in terms of the future of the relations between Greece and Macedonia.*

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Introduction

Macedonian Question, turning around the division of the Macedonian territory previously under the Ottoman rule among the newly-independent Balkan states in the early 19th century, turned back to the agenda of the international politics under the new title of the name dispute after the dissolution of Yugoslavia. This time the clash was mainly between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia². The independence of this country in 1991 was not welcomed and recognized by the neighbouring Greece primarily because of its name including the term Macedonia. This unrest of Greece pushed it to carry out some immediate activities to block international recognition of the newly-independent country. It also followed a policy aiming to prevent the membership of the Republic of Macedonia to the key Euro-Atlantic institutions, namely the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Despite its bilateral character, the dispute affected Macedonia's relations with other actors since its independence and posed a threat to the volatile peace and stability in the Southeastern Europe.

Thanks to the international mediation, the parties of the name dispute were able to reach a middle way solution formalised with the Interim Accord in 1995. The accord made the dispute between parties more manageable by eliminating some of the urgent tension matters. It also put the parties under the responsibility of carrying out negotiations under the supervision of the United Nations (UN) to solve the dispute. In the aftermath of the accord, the dispute sometimes showed an escalation tendency and there were also some moments of rapprochements between the parties. However, the negotiation process under the UN mandate, including many rounds of meetings, had not produced the expected final solution of the name dispute till the signature of the Prespa Agreement in 2018. The agreement was planned to end the three decades long crisis situation between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia, which is seen one of the world's chronic unresolved issues.

The official name of the Republic of Macedonia has become the Republic of North Macedonia with the Prespa Agreement. By the way, the biggest obstacle for the international recognition of the country and its membership to the

important international organisations has been eliminated. In the current state of play, the parties completed the ratification processes and the implementation process is underway. The aim of this article is to examine the name dispute between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia in a way to include the final point reached in the dispute with the signature of the Prespa Agreement. The article provides an account of the dispute by focusing on the turning points of the dispute.

Study

The Historical Background of the Name Dispute

The Balkans has become one of the most volatile regions in the world since the dissolution process of the Ottoman Empire. The competition among the regional actors over the division of the Balkan territory produced many bloody conflicts. The disagreement concerning the division of the territory historically known as Macedonia turned into a problem called Macedonian Question at the turn of the 19th century. During the historical process, Macedonia was a mixture of people having their own religious, linguistic and communal characteristics [17. P. 50]. As a solution of the Macedonian Question, the territory was divided among Serbs, Greeks and Bulgarians after the Balkan Wars. Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria gained Vardar, Aegean and Pirin Macedonia respectively.

The territory ruled by the Serbs, Vardar Macedonia, turned into a part of multinational Yugoslavian state after the Second World War as a constituent unit and named as the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. Tito, the founder and legendary leader of Yugoslavia, formed this constituent state in order to honour the support of the Macedonian people during the struggle against the Nazis.

In line with his vision about Yugoslavia, Tito paid enormous effort for the emergence of a separate Macedonian identity basing upon an original language and history among the people of the constituent unit. His motivation was to create a broader Balkan federation with the expansion of the Yugoslav Federation in a way to have an access to the sea, especially by acquiring the lands of the Aegean Macedonia under Greek rule. In this context, the existence of a distinct Macedonian nation would be mo-

² Throughout the text, the Republic of Macedonia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or Macedonia are used for the period before the Prespa Agreement; the Republic of North Macedonia or North Macedonia are used for the post-Prespa period.

bilized by Tito as a pretext for the territorial claims towards Greece and Bulgaria for the regions populated by the Macedonian minorities, which were not recognized within the countries they were living. The Macedonians in the neighbouring countries were even invited to fight for a united Macedonia over the territory of the Ancient Macedon Empire to realise their right of self-determination [30. P. 15-16].

This line of thinking has played a role in the involvement of Yugoslavs to the Greek Civil War of 1944-1949, till the division between anti-Stalin Yugoslav and pro-Stalin Greek socialists. In this turmoil, the Slavic Macedonian minority living in the Northern Greece also sided with the Yugoslavia backed communists fighting against the government. The Civil War ended up with the defeat of the communists and many Slavic Macedonians fled their homes and settled in the Yugoslav Macedonia [16. P. 92]. These developments created a significant level of unrest in the neighbouring Greece and Bulgaria. Yet, the Cold War conditions prevented them from showing a fierce reaction [12]. However, Greece did not recognize existence of a distinct Macedonian national identity from the very beginning due to its policy of denying the existence of Macedonian minority in its territory which is very much clashing with the ethnic homogeneity and purity discourses mobilized in the formation of Greek national identity [5. P. 331].

Coming Back of the Macedonian Question in the Form of Name Dispute

Macedonia Question emerged once again after the dissolution of Yugoslavia with the end of the Cold War. Greece adopted a pro-Yugoslavia or anti-secession attitude towards the dissolution of the country. By the way, it declared that it would not recognize any country in case of a unilateral secession. That means the country did not develop initially a specific position putting only Macedonia at the target. However, absence of any negative reactions to the independence of Slovenia and Croatia from the Greek side and the organisation of the protests in Thessaloniki and other Greek cities against the independent Macedonian state are proving the fact that Greece was not in fact anti-secessionist, instead it was anti-Macedonian [15. P. 24-25].

After a referendum in favour of independence with a support of 96.44 percent, the Republic of Macedonia declared its independence on 17 September 1991 and asked for international recognition. "At the request for recognition of an independent Macedonian state, Greece re-

sponded with disturbance of the Macedonian air space with its military aircraft and military exercises near the Greek - Macedonian border" [15. P. 24]. Greece justified its negative stance against this independence on two grounds. Firstly, the official name of the country including Macedonia challenged. Greece opposed firmly to the independence of the constituent unit Macedonia with the official name of the Republic of Macedonia. Greece argued that Macedonian nation is an artificial creation of Tito as a part of its expansionist plans in the Balkans. In addition, it claimed that current population of the Republic of Macedonia has a Slavic origin and settled in the region, which was previously populated by the Macedonians having Greek origins, in AD 6th and 7th centuries. Therefore, the country's use of the name Macedonia and the mobilization of ancient Macedonian history were lack of a legitimate historical ground [3. P. 225]. As a result, Greece declared itself as the only actor having the exclusive right of using the Greek name of Macedonia [4. P. 5] and even argued that only modern Greeks have right to define themselves as Macedonians. According to this point of view, Slavs, who settled in Macedonia in the sixth century A.D. were not recognized as Macedonians by anybody until 1944, have no right to identify themselves as Macedonian. This line of argument was not put forth strongly until 1988 by the Greeks. It was also the year in which northern part of Greece was renamed as Macedonia [21. P. 156]. Greece also rejected the use of the word Macedonia in the name of the new country on the basis of a direct threat to its territorial integrity.

Secondly, Greece found some articles in the constitution of the newly established state irredentist. Especially in the early years of independence, there was the notion of uniting all the Macedonians in one country. The references made in the school textbooks to the liberation of Macedonia from Greece and Bulgaria, as well as there were maps in these books showing the Greek and Bulgarian provinces as a part of Macedonia [17. P. 50-51]. Yet the security threat perception of Greece basing on the irredentism of Macedonia was in fact basing on an overrating of Macedonia. As a newly established weak state having deep internal problems, Macedonia was devoid of a military capacity that would be enough to attack a country like Greece [3. P. 227].

Apart from the main issue of the name and allegations of irredentism, the use and ownership of the symbols (Vergina Star³ in the flag and Thessaloniki white tower over the cur-

³ A symbol found in the tombs of Ancient Macedonian kings.

rency) belonging to the Ancient Macedon Empire were also defined as the other elements of the dispute between the countries. Greece even condemned Macedonia with stealing some part of its historical and culture heritage. The strong Greek diaspora in the USA, Canada, Australia and Europe also supported to the official policy of the Greek governments in 1990s with their lobbying efforts against Macedonia [21. P. 182].

This clash between Greece and Macedonia was coined as the name dispute. Despite its appearance as a new crisis taking its roots from the dissolution of Yugoslavia, it was in fact an extension of one century-old Macedonian Question.

The Earlier Developments Regarding the Name Dispute

In August 1991 Robert Badinter⁴ was appointed by the European Council as the head of the Arbitration Committee on Yugoslavia with the aim of preparing a legal advice to define the conditions of recognition for the newly established states after the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The committee also prepared a report on Macedonia. This report precisely stated: "The name Republic of Macedonia cannot be treated as basis for any territorial claims and irredentism... and thus cannot be obstacle to the recognition of the newly established states" [7. P. 11]. The report approved the fact that Macedonia was fulfilling the conditions for independence. Despite this advice, the EU institutions and member states refrained from recognizing the country and preferred to act under the influence of Greek objections for such a recognition.

In response to Greek claims about irredentism, Macedonia made two amendments in its constitution to acknowledge that it had no territorial aspirations against any neighbouring countries. Firstly, the constitution affirmed that the country's borders can be changed only in accordance with the constitution and generally accepted international norms. Secondly, it was also openly stated that Macedonia has no territorial claims from the neighbouring states. Accordingly, it was affirmed that the country shall not interfere in the sovereign rights of other states and their internal affairs in the name of protecting the rights of Macedonians migrated to other countries including the neighbouring ones [25. P. 140-141]. These changes did not fulfil Greek expectations. Therefore, Greece continued to insist on a change in the name of the country and it blocked the recognition of the

country by the other EU member states with a name including the word of Macedonia [5. P. 328].

On the other hand, these changes caused a reversal in the attitude of the EU. The Portugal's Foreign Minister Pinheiro was given a mandate to offer a solution on the dispute. Pinheiro advised mutual recognition of the existing borders; putting restrains on the minority-related demands; and undertaking measures to prevent offensive action towards other party's cultural and historic heritage. In order to tackle the name issue, Pinheiro proposed the name of "New Macedonia" for the Former Yugoslav Republic. The Macedonian government saw this proposal as worth taking into consideration. Nevertheless, the Greek government being stuck in its hardliner competition with domestic opposition rejected the proposal as inadequate. After this point, the EU lost its negotiation capability in the dispute. By means of the Edinburgh Declaration in 1992, the EU concluded that it was not in position to solve the so-called name issue and would let the UN initiate procedure for the admission of the applicant country, Macedonia. By this, the EU unblocked Macedonia's accession in the UN [7. P. 11].

Macedonia became a member of the UN in 1993 with a provisional name after two unsuccessful applications. For the first time in the history of the organisation, a country was accepted to the membership with a provisional name [23. P. 102]. Macedonia was accepted to the UN by accepting two conditions. Firstly, the country accepted to be referred as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) temporarily. Secondly, it was put under the legal obligation of negotiating its name with Greece. Igor Janev identified these conditions as a violation of the Article 4 of the UN Charter, which defines the UN membership procedure, due to their status as an additional requirement [10. P. 155]. By accepting to become member of the UN with a temporary name, Macedonian government made a big concession. The rising security threats in the region, especially with the eruption of the Bosnian War, motivated the country to make this concession in return for some limited international recognition, which was seen vital for the survival.

The name FYROM was intended to be used temporarily by the UN. But, Greek diplomacy showed a great success in ensuring the use of this name by all the international organisations. Apart from provisional name solution, the UN

⁴ French criminal lawyer, university professor and politician.

Resolutions numbered 817 and 845 acknowledged the potential of the bilateral conflict between Greece and Macedonia to turn into a security conflict. Hence, the UN invited parties to pay effort to find a solution to this problem through negotiations under the auspices of the UN.

Interim Accord as a Half Way Solution

The US decision to establish relations with Macedonia by using its provisional name caused a frustration at Greece. The country took a total embargo decision towards Macedonia in 1994 to show its unrest about the US decision. The moving of the goods to and from Macedonia via Thessaloniki port with the exception of humanitarian aid was blocked. This embargo lasted 18 months and severely affected the weak and fragile economy of Macedonia [5. P. 329].

International community saw Greek embargo as unnecessarily antagonistic. The significant international players, namely the USA and EU, condemned the unilateral embargo decision and put pressure on Greece to lift its embargo. They also warned Greece about the inappropriateness of this embargo decision in terms of its serious political and economic implications over the region.

The European Commission for the first time in the history of the EU started a legal proceeding against a member state (Greece in this case) before the European Court of Justice, for the infringement of the EU law on free trade. The case was closed without a judgement, when the interim accord between Greece and Macedonia was signed on 13 September 1995. In this process, Greece noticed that such kind of unilateral acts would result in its international isolation and hamper its international image. Besides, Greek economic and commercial interests suffered losses and missed opportunities in the emerging new markets of the Western Balkans due to its primary focus on this conflict. This caused a within-country opposition towards the assertive policy choice [8. P. 356].

Even though the interim accord did not bring an ultimate solution to the conflict, its importance relied upon the solid foundations it laid down for the bilateral cooperation, good neighbourly relations and confidence building measures. Interim accord solved some problematic aspects of the dispute and ensured the normalization in the relations between the parties without settlement of the name dispute.

Macedonia removed the Vergina Star from its flag and eliminated so-called irredentist clauses in its constitution, especially the ones creating a pretext for the country's involvement

to the internal affairs of Greece to care the status and rights of the Macedonian minorities in the neighbouring countries. In return, Greece approved the UN promoted temporary name of the country, which is including the word Macedonia and promised that it would not object the country's accession to the international organisations as long as it uses this provisional name.

With the interim accord, Greece gave up its maximalist tendency towards the independence of Macedonia which was closing all the gates for the recognition of a Macedonian state which is bearing the word Macedonia in its name [15. P. 25]. Greece also put an end to its punitive embargo. In addition, both parties agreed to continue negotiation to erase all the disagreements regarding the name dispute under the UN auspices by paying attention to the development of the friendly and good-neighbourly relations [13. P. 56; 29. P. 155].

Under the positive climate pioneered by this accord, the relations of the parties normalized. The countries achieved to form a certain setting of trust in various fields, such as economics, commerce and legal issues. They became close economic partners and Greece became the largest foreign investor in Macedonia. Interim accord also produced positive implications for the relations of Macedonia with the EU. In this scope, the country signed cooperation agreement with the EU in 1997 and it became the first country in the Western Balkans which concluded a new generation stabilization and association agreement with the EU in 2001. Greek diplomacy contributed a lot to the conclusion of these agreements [28. P. 78].

In the positive setting of negotiations after the interim accord, Greece and Macedonia came near to a deal in 2001 with the probable name of Upper Macedonia. However, the negotiations came to a halt with the eruption of an ethnic conflict in Macedonia between the security forces and the ethnic Albanian minority [1; 27. P. 241]. During this crisis, Greek government showed its support for the Macedonian territorial integrity by condemning any actions targeting to change borders in the Western Balkans. It refrained from using the internal trouble of Macedonia as an opportunity to get a favourable solution in the name dispute [28. P. 77-78].

Matthew Nimetz, the US Special Envoy to the dispute, proposed a solution basing on double name in 2005. In this scope, Macedonia would have two names. One of which would be used in the bilateral relations with Greece and the other would be used internally and internationally. Greece found this proposal unacceptable. In 2008, the envoy came up with the new

name alternatives such as Upper Macedonia Republic and New Macedonia Republic. Greece stated that it can accept a name that is making reference to the geographical location of the country or delimiting itself from the historical heir of Ancient Macedon Empire, whereas Macedonia rejected all the proposals [17. P. 51]. During the Gruevski government ruled Macedonia after 2006, the UN Special Envoy could not show any effectiveness to bring parties closer to the solution and the policies of the government basing upon nationalism and ontological security discourses brought the negotiations to an impasse. Greece, on the other hand, did not show any inclination to step back from its entrenched position in this period [26. P. 386].

The End of Normalization between Greece and Macedonia by 2008

The initiation of the antiquisation policy⁵ by the Macedonian government under Gruevski leadership caused a radical shift in the Greek foreign policy towards Macedonia, which became concrete with its blockade of the country's NATO membership in 2008 Bucharest Summit. The feeling of failure emerged after this summit led Macedonian government under Gruevski leadership to intensify the antiquisation steps and this created a vicious cycle in the relations of the parties [6. P. 5]. Ivanoski defines this policy as an exercise leading to identity clashes, which irritated Greeks extensively especially those who are living in the northern Greece and identifying themselves with the Hellenic part of the Ancient Macedon Empire [9. P. 68]. Hence antiquisation policy was an attempt to establish a direct link with the current Macedonians and Ancient Macedon Empire [30. P. 13]. In addition, Macedonian Prime Minister sent a letter to the Greek Prime Minister on 14 July 2008 to call him to recognize the rights of the Macedonian minority, which does not even exist for Greece [17. P. 49].

After Greek blockage in NATO Summit, Macedonia made an application to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2008 by claiming the breach of 1995 interim accord. The ICJ ruled in favour of the country in 2011 with its decision verifying Greek violation of the accord. Since the Court's decision was not enforceable, this ruling did not cause any change in

the Greek policy [1]. According to the interim accord, the ICJ was not given any authority to solve the name dispute, it was agreed to solve the issue by means bilateral negotiations. The ruling of the ICJ was an advisory opinion, which is not legally binding over the parties [4. P. 6]. As a result, the decision caused no changes in the positioning of the EU and NATO towards Macedonia. By the way, the ruling of the ICJ did not contributed to the Euro-Atlantic integration of the country, as well as it did not have any effect on the solution of the name dispute [5. P. 328].

After blocking integration of Macedonia to the NATO security scheme, Greece also took steps to prevent the country's progress in the EU accession process. The European Commission recommended for the first time the initiation of the accession negotiations between Macedonia and the EU in 2009 and continued to make this recommendation in the succeeding four years. All the recommendations were ignored by the European Council due to the Greek veto. In 2012, Bulgaria joined Greece by using its veto card due to the conflicting views about history [13. P. 58].

The response of the Macedonian people to the veto of Greece in Bucharest Summit became the massive support given to the rightest-centrist party under the leadership of Nikola Gruevski. The government could not achieve the proposed economic boom due to the lacking investments under the insecurity towards the country, as well as it felt the negative influences of the global economic crisis severely. In this setting, Gruevski government spent lots of money, time and energy to strengthen national identity to shift the attention of the public away from the economy [14. P. 125-126]. Apart from its populist policies, the government also used a discourse of security to play nationalism card. This way of acting also caused tensions within the country, the problems of the Macedonians having Albanian ethnic origins intensified [26. P. 383].

A New Contextual Setting in the Negotiations for the Name Dispute

Thanks to the developments experienced after 2015, a new rationale emerged in the bilateral relations between Greece and Macedo-

⁵ Constructing buildings having an appearance as if they are heired from Roman Empire and Ancient Greece or using symbols and names belonging to the Ancient Macedon Empire. In this context, monuments of the ancient figures erected and facilities were renamed by using the names taken from the Alexander the Great's dynasty. For example, Skopje airport was renamed as "Alexander the Great", the Skopje stadium was also renamed the "National Arena Philip II" and the main highway was renamed "Alexander of Macedonia. All of the actions taken in this process was named as the Skopje 2014 Project.

nia. This new rationale also paved way to a new contextual setting that is convenient for the negotiations aiming to find a solution to the name dispute. Firstly, the flow of refugees to Europe made a peak in 2015. This crisis has forced Greece and Macedonia to cooperate to ensure the security of their shared border against the flow of refugees. They started to work together on the issues of organized crime, corruption, terrorism, illegal migration and narcotics after 2015. After the success of the confidence building measures adopted in the scope of this cooperation, the countries understood the importance of the good bilateral relations [24. P. 12, 20].

Secondly, Macedonia has been experiencing a lower level of identity crisis with Bulgaria since its independence. These two countries signed a treaty called Treaty for Friendship, Good Neighbourliness and Cooperation in 2017 to erase the negative implications of this limited identity crises over their bilateral relations. Bulgaria, after solving its bilateral problems with Macedonia, provided an open support to the resolution of the name dispute. Its acting as the owner of the European Council Presidency facilitated this role [2. P. 3].

Thirdly, Macedonia became a weak state after gaining independence. The country faced serious governance problems, such as high levels of corruption, politicization and discrimination, a tendency toward authoritarianism, as in most countries of the Western Balkans [31. P. 99]. The internal dynamics of the country never became enough to cure these governance problems [22. P. 35, 36]. Therefore, Macedonia has always puts a higher value to its integration to the Euro-Atlantic political and security mechanisms. Apart from strengthening the state, the country considers that such integration will serve best to the achievement of harmony within its borders, normalization of its relations with the neighbouring countries, as well as its standing in the regional and global arena [13. P. 64]. The weariness and despair of the country about such problems created a higher willingness in the country to be a member of the EU and NATO.

Fourthly, the rising influence of other actors, notably Russia, Turkey and China, in the Balkans motivated the EU and NATO to support strongly the negotiations between the parties. As an evidence of this support, the EU-Western Balkans Summit was brought the heads of government from EU-28 and Western Balkans together in Sofia on 17 May 2018 and operated as an impetus for the integra-

tion of the Western Balkans to the EU. After the 2003 Thessaloniki Summit, Western Balkans once again came to the agenda of the EU strongly and this created a new hope for the countries of the neglected region, including Macedonia.

Fifthly, the election of the Zoran Zaev in Macedonia as a prime minister in 2016 brought about changes in the stance of Macedonia towards the name dispute. Newly elected Macedonian Prime Minister Zoran Zaev took office in 2017 and he pledged to pay utmost effort to solve the bilateral problems with Greece and to make the country closer to its overarching objective of Euro-Atlantic integration. During Zaev government, the renaming of the Macedonian airport from "Alexander the Great" to "International Airport Skopje", as well renaming the Macedonian part of the Highway E7 from "Alexander the Great" to "Friendship" happened. In return, Greek government decided to unlock Macedonia's entrance in the Adriatic & Ionian Initiative and to open a border-crossing in the Prespa region [20. P. 12]. That means, the existence of the pro-solution governments ready for the solution initiatives in both countries created a rare window of opportunity for a settlement [19. P. 578]. Tsipras framed the name dispute as a real burden over his country. On the one hand, he also noticed the depreciating effect of this dispute over the country's international image and its blocking of Greece from playing the regional leadership role in the Western Balkans. In addition, as a leader aware of his government's closeness to end in a short period under the influence of the challenges of massive debt and assertive Turkish foreign policies, Tsipras wanted to conclude his political career as the prime minister of the country with a success story [11. P. 42]. To put it briefly, both sides were experiencing deep frustrations due to the risings costs and missing opportunities.

Under the conditions and motivations identified above, the invitation to launch a new round of negotiation for a settlement of the name dispute came from the Macedonian Prime Minister Zoran Zaev. He announced the readiness of his country to negotiate with Greece and add a geographical qualifier to the name of the country [20. P. 1]. Previous proposals of the US Special Envoy Matthew Nimetz could not achieved to take the approval of both parties [18]. Yet, this time, the UN mediation produced the long expected result of solution because it was the right time.

Prespa Agreement as an Attempt to Solve the Name Dispute

“Making the impossible possible”⁶

After 27 years of negotiations, including many rounds, under the mandate of the UN, Greece and Macedonia governments achieved to reach a settlement over the name dispute. The agreement brought a final end to the negotiation process which was foreseen by the UN Resolutions numbered 817 and 845 and the interim accord of 1995. It is commonly known as the Prespa Agreement, with a reference to the lake on Macedonia-Greek border where it was signed. The agreement was signed by the foreign ministers of the countries with the existence of their prime ministers. In addition, the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commissioner for European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Policy also attended the signing ceremony.

In the preamble of the Prespa Agreement, the parties mention their loyalty to the existing borders between themselves and in the region. Apart from stating their intention of widening and deepening the bilateral relations to a level of strategic partnership, the parties also stressed openly the need of strengthening peace, stability, security and cooperation in the Southeastern Europe by creating an atmosphere of trust and good neighbourly relations and refraining from any forms of irredentism and revisionism. That is, the preamble of the agreement takes the bilateral issues with strong references to the regional issues. This can be interpreted as an evidence of the fact that the agreement is seen as an asset for the dominance of peace, security and cooperation in the region, on the one hand; on the other hand, the transformation of the region is seen vital for the success of the agreement.

Agriculture, civil protection, defence, economy, environment, energy, industry, infrastructure, investments, political relations, tourism, trade, trans-border cooperation, transport are defined as the sectors of cooperation between parties. Greece and North Macedonia also put forth their intention to continue with the already-existing confidence building measures. The solution choice formalized with the Prespa Agreement is summarized below by making references to the important articles of the Agreement⁷:

- The Republic of Macedonia is renamed as the “Republic of North Macedonia” and it

can be shortened as North Macedonia. The name shall be used domestically, as well as in all bilateral and international relations. Even the countries previously recognized the country as the Republic of Macedonia are expected to adopt new name.

- The citizens of the North Macedonia are named as Macedonian or the citizen of the Republic of North Macedonia.

- The official language of North Macedonia is recognized as Macedonian language, which is member of the South Slavic language family and has no linkage with the ancient Hellenic civilization.

- The understanding of the terms Macedonia and Macedonian are defined in a limited way and two countries will have diverse understandings about them. When these terms are used in Greece, they will denote to the northern part of this country and the people living in there, as well as the Hellenic civilization, history, culture, heritage of this region coming from antiquity to present day. In North Macedonia, these terms will refer to the territory, language, people and their attributes with their own history, culture and heritage, which are distinctly different from the northern part of Greece.

- All public institutions and state-funded cultural organizations in North Macedonia shall be renamed in accordance with the new name of the country.

- The Republic of North Macedonia shall carry out all the constitutional and legal amendments to ensure the implementation of the agreement.

- The transformation of the commercial names, trademarks and brand names in line with the agreement in a period of three years shall be supported by a group of experts, composing of the nationals of the parties, as well as the international ones.

- The ratification of the agreement by Greece shall be launched only after the ratification of the agreement and completion of the relevant constitutional amendments by North Macedonia. The Republic of North Macedonia is also put under the responsibility of making necessary notifications to Greece about the finalisation of these processes.

- Greece accepts not to object to the application and membership of the Republic of North Macedonia to any international organizations of which it is a member, as long as the

⁶ Donald Tusk made this statement while expressing his feelings on the Prespa Agreement.

⁷ Prespa Agreement. 2018. URL: https://www.thenationalherald.com/archive_politics/arthro/the_full_text_of_the_greece_fyrom_agreement_pdf-52760/

country uses its new name. The admission of North Macedonia to the EU and NATO are covered under a separate title and Greece is put under obligation of notifying these organisations about lifting its veto. In addition, the parties will also cooperate within the international organisations, in which both of them are members, to promote peace and prosperity in the Southeastern Europe.

- The parties shall take necessary measures to correct the mistakes during the implementation process and notify each other. The parties shall mobilize peaceful mechanisms to settle any kinds of disputes between themselves, which are even on topics that are beyond the scope of this agreement.

- The parties shall not interfere the internal affairs of each other and shall not act with motivation of protecting the rights and status of the people who are not their citizens.

- The parties shall refrain from the use of any symbols constituting a part of the other side's history and culture. In this scope, North Macedonia will review the monuments, public building and infrastructure, as well as the removal of the former flags including Vergina Star from all the public sites will be ensured.

- The parties shall remove irredentist contents in their school textbooks and education materials.

- The parties shall support and encourage contacts, exchanges and meetings between the citizens, civil societies and public institutions of their countries.

- Apart from the sectors identified in the preamble of the agreement, the fields of education, science, culture, technology, as well as health and sports are defined as the areas of cooperation between the parties.

- The provisions of the article shall remain in force for an indefinite period of time without any modifications.

Despite the achievement of North Macedonia in maintaining the word of "Macedonia" in its name, the Prespa Agreement caused a significant change in the identity of the country. The agreement interfered to the country's right to self-determination with its chosen name. Macedonians accepted to qualify their name with an adjective to show their respect to the Greece's Macedonia region. It also forced Macedonia to interpret its history, language, identity and culture in a certain way [5. P. 72]. The North Macedonia gave up its ownership claims over the Ancient Macedon Empire and committed itself to the Slavic history. Hence, North Macedonia accepted to reject the historical links between the its own populations and Ancient

Macedon Empire, which was extensively used in the nation formation process experienced after the independence of the country, especially during the name dispute with Greece. On the other hand, Greece said yes to a name including the word Macedonia by giving up its claims for a monopoly over the use of the name Macedonia. Greece guaranteed its monopoly over the ownership of the Ancient Macedonian history. In addition, Greece acknowledged the existence of Macedonian nation and language, but the distinction of the Macedonian culture from the Slavic or Hellenic cultures is approved by the parties.

The official ratification of the Prespa Agreement according to the constitutional procedures of the parties became one of the greatest challenges for the success of the agreement. Despite the difficulties faced during the approval processes, the two countries became successful in completing this thorny process. Both leaders showed a great determination in order to ensure the approval of the agreement and faced with lots of objections and critics. Greek Prime Minister Tsipras even sacrificed his foreign minister Nikos Kotzias, who was Prespa negotiator of the country, to keep its coalition partners together for a time period enough for the end of the ratification process [2. P. 3-4]. During the ratification process, North Macedonia conducted a non-compulsory referendum through which the people were asked whether they are in favour of EU and NATO membership by accepting the agreement between Macedonia and Greece. More than 90 percent of the participants said yes and stated their support for the name change. However, the failure of the referendum in achieving a voter turnout of 50 percent, which is required for its validity, led to further debates during the approval process of the agreement [13. P. 62]. The ratification process of the Prespa Agreement and the conduct of necessary constitutional amendments were completed on January 2019 in North Macedonia. Upon finalisation of the ratification process in North Macedonia, Greece ratified the agreement in the same month and the implementation phase started. Besides, Greece notified both the EU and NATO about the removal of its veto regarding the membership of North Macedonia to these organisations.

Conclusion

After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the historical Macedonian Question came back to the Balkan politics with its redefined version between Greece and Macedonia and called as

the name dispute. The Republic of Macedonia, as one of the constituent units of Yugoslavia, reached its independence in 1991 and it immediately started to have problems with the neighbouring Greece. The name including the word of Macedonia, the use of symbols belonging to the Ancient Macedon Empire, the irredentist intentions showing itself as an enthusiasm for establishing relations with the nationals in the neighbouring states constituted the major issues of contestation between the parties.

Under the influence of this dispute, Macedonia could be able to become a member of the UN with a provisional name and mostly conducted its international relations with this temporarily given name. Despite the continuation of the dispute, the parties signed a document named the interim accord in 1995. Thanks to this document, they solved the great majority of the conflictual issues in their relations except the critical name one. Afterwards, the parties achieved normalisation in their relations until the Greek decision to blockade the NATO integration of Macedonia in 2008.

After Greek decision to blockade the NATO membership of Macedonia, the name dispute turned into a deadlock once again. Each side responded the negative actions taken by the other side with some provocations and these acts of retaliation caused the worsening of the relations. This impasse was overcome with the signature of the Prespa Agreement in 2018. With this Agreement, the parties made an open choice to improve their mutual dependences in many fields, as well as to enhance stability in the region.

In the current state of affairs, Greece and North Macedonia are trying to carry out their obligations under the Agreement to promote their relations to the level of strategic partnership and the Prespa Agreement has showed a good performance as a solution of the name dispute until now. However, it is too early to define the exact performance and potential of the Prespa Agreement as a solution of the dispute. The willingness of the parties to stay committed to the agreement will be definitive in terms of the fate of the dispute.

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ОТ СПОРА О НАЗВАНИИ К ПРЕСПАНСКОМУ СОГЛАШЕНИЮ: ОТНОШЕНИЯ МЕЖДУ ГРЕЦИЕЙ И СЕВЕРНОЙ МАКЕДОНИЕЙ

Введение. Почти тридцать лет в отношениях между Грецией и Республикой Македонией доминировал спор о названии страны. Он стал одной из хронических нерешенных проблем в мире. В течение длительного периода непонимания между сторонами изредка появлялись надежды на решение, которые вновь сменялись разочарованием и ростом напряженности. Некоторые из этих событий, привносящие новые нюансы в спор, могут быть обозначены как поворотные пункты. В настоящее время диалог перешел в новую фазу после подписания в 2018 году Преспанского Соглашения между Грецией и Северной Македонией.

Материалы и методы. В статье представ-

лен исторический анализ спора о названии. Его развитие, от возникновения до нынешнего положения дел, анализируется на основе предыдущих исследований, проведенных по данному вопросу, со ссылками на высказывания ведущих политических деятелей.

Результаты. Спор о названии изучен с акцентом на ключевые поворотные моменты. В ходе развития конфликта Временное соглашение 1995 года, Бухарестская встреча НАТО 2008 года и Преспанское Соглашение определены как поворотные пункты в споре.

Обсуждение и выводы. В статье делается вывод о том, что еще слишком рано объявлять об окончательном прекращении конфликта на

основе Преспанского Соглашения, которое символизирует достижение окончательного консенсуса между сторонами. Несмотря на растущие надежды, историческая продолжительность спора заставляет нас констатировать, что готовность сторон сохранять приверженность Соглашению будет иметь решающее значение с

точки зрения будущих отношений между Грецией и Македонией.

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Ключевые слова:

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бывшая югославская Республика
Македония, Северная Македония,
македонский вопрос, временное
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Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, North
Macedonia, Macedonian Question, Interim
Accord, Prespa Agreement