



# NOV/DEC 2021



## HIGHLIGHTS

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## EDITORIAL by the UN Resident Coordinator

## KEY DATES

### NOVEMBER - DECEMBER

**25 - 10** The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence started on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and run until 10 December, Human Rights Day. The campaign in the country was jointly commemorated by all UN agencies, OSCE, EU Delegation, the Government, and the NGO sector.

### DECEMBER

**2** UN annual conference on SDGs, with a specific focus on SDG Financing in North Macedonia this year.

**6** Promotion of Hana, the first natural voice speech synthesis app in Albanian language will allow around 10,000 Albanian speaking people with visual impairments from the region access to modern, easy, functional, and accessible standard platform for delivering a wide range of applications and services – such as email, music players, navigation, audio books and many more.

**6-7** UN Women North Macedonia office hosted a strategic planning workshop with the Commission for Equal Opportunities and the intersectoral working group from the Municipality of Veles. The goal of the workshop is to introduce the participants to the basic concepts of gender equality and gender-responsive budgeting and jointly set the strategic priorities for the new four-year strategy on gender equality.

Violence against women and girls is not inevitable. It can be stopped – it must be stopped!

A lot is being done to stop it, at all levels, but we can only say enough when every woman and girl feels perfectly safe and welcome in their homes, schools, workplace, online or anywhere.

For that we need a threefold system in place.

The first pillar is an obvious one – we need adequate policies and regulations to ensure that women and girls are legally protected from all sorts of violence

I am extremely happy that North Macedonia has important achievements in this respect. Most of the legislation pertaining to violence against women and girls is in line with the Istanbul convention, the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and the European standards and norms. Some further improvements may be needed, but generally, the framework is adequate.

The second pillar, implementation, is even more important. In that context, despite clear progress in the recent years, North Macedonia could step up efforts.

However, even if we had perfect legislation and full implementation, the problem will not be solved.

The key to eliminating violence against women is changing our behaviour: our norms, our practices, policies, our attitudes, and our beliefs. What we truly need to work on, locally and globally, is to implement a set of actions that instil the zero-tolerance policy towards gender-based violence within any segment of our lives.

The children are our future – so we all need to make sure that the education system is prepared and equipped to introduce zero-tolerance policy

towards any forms of violence against children and youth.

We need to ensure a zero-tolerance policy is being implemented in all work environments, cultural settings, or online.

Secondly, we must create the safe social environment in which every case will be reported and treated with proper support, not only by the relevant institutions, but by the communities as well, never allowing the situation of the victims of violence to be further exacerbated by stigmatisation and abuse by the community.

Lastly, and most importantly, we need everyone to join in. From schools and factories to religious organizations and parental associations, everyone needs to chip in. And it is very simple.

Don't be quiet!

Don't endure!

End it!

**Rossana Dudziak**  
UN Resident Coordinator in North Macedonia



# UN ACTIVITIES

The 2021 **United Nations** Annual Conference, focusing on the topic of SDG Financing in North Macedonia, took place on 2. December 2021. The conference opened the debate on Sustainable Development Goals Financing (SDG Financing), focusing on public finance tools and private finance standards that can accelerate greater alignment of financing with sustainability. High-level representatives from government, financial sector and international organisations, such as Governor Angelovska – Bezhoska, Minister Besimi, Minister Nuredini, Sparkasse Bank CEO Bishev, World Bank Country Manager Paolucci, UNDP Resident Representative Grigoryan, UNEP Finance Initiative Europe Representative Bouzas Luis and ISAR Expert Nanush, discussed the current trends and future potentials in North Macedonia in climate and disaster risk finance, innovative finance, responsible banking, investing and insurance, as well as corporate reporting on sustainability and good environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) practices. Also, a new UN North Macedonia analysis prepared with expert support from Finance Think's Economist Petreski - [SDG Financing Landscape in North Macedonia 2021](#) - was presented at the conference.

Videos from the conference are available at the links below:

- Short video - Panel 1 Public Finance ([English](#), [Macedonian](#))
- Short video - Panel 2 Private Finance ([English](#), [Macedonian](#))
- Full conference recording ([English](#), [Macedonian](#), [Albanian](#))

In November 2021, the Migration Governance Indicators Profile 2021 North Macedonia was published and is available in English, Macedonian and Albanian on the [IOM Publications](#) website. The Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) profile presents a summary of well-developed areas of migration governance in North Macedonia, as well as areas with potential for further development, as assessed through the MGI. The MGI is a standard set of approximately 90 indicators to assist countries in assessing their migration policies and advance the conversation on what well-governed migration might look like in practice. The publication was produced with the financial support of the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

In close collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Red Cross, Macedonian Medical Association and the Association of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians and UNFPA, the final preparatory activities for field engagement of the two mobile gynaecological clinics have been completed during November. Medications, equipment, supplies, including personal protective equipment, in total value of 110,000 USD, have been delivered to the University Clinic for Gynaecology and Obstetrics in Skopje, as well as the Hospitals in Tetovo and Bitola, to ensure that the clinics have the required supplies and materials readily available.

Starting from December 1, the mobile clinics will be deployed on working days in Sveti Nikole, to provide gynaecological check-ups, screening for cervical cancer, as well counselling of family planning and sexually transmitted infections. Furthermore, information will be provided with regards to reporting gender-based violence and seeking support from the nearest service providers. By 30 November, over 100 women had expressed interest and scheduled their appointment at the mobile clinics, indicating the high demand and actual need for this type of services.

The funding for these activities also comes from the COVID-19 Multi Partner Trust Fund.

Within the frameworks of the cooperation between UNFPA and the Bureau for Development of Education in the piloting and roll-out of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in the country, on 9 November 2021 UNFPA organized working meeting - Sharing experiences related to the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Albania, Kosovo and North Macedonia. Representatives from the relevant ministries, public health professionals, academia representatives, civil society organizations, UNFPA staff



*Marija Savovska, President of NGO Akcija Zdruzenska, during a presentation at the exchange for best practices on engendering local policies and budgets through participatory processes. Photo credits: UN Women in North Macedonia*

from the participating countries and other partners, had the opportunity to share their experience in the programming, designing, implementing and monitoring CSE in their countries. This meeting was the first step towards increased cooperation of the partners from North Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo.

UNFPA continues to support the national health authorities in various processes, aimed at improving maternal health outcomes. In this regard, technical support and organization of trainings in effective perinatal care for health professionals, as envisaged with the piloting of the National Master Plan on Effective Perinatal Care is being provided. Furthermore, the final preparations are being made for roll out of the Obstetrics Surveillance and Response System in 2022, which will allow for anonymous review/audit of the cases of nearly missed maternal lives, thus identifying the bottlenecks and critical points, to be addressed and avoided in the future.

**UNOPS** continued to strengthen the capacities of the Ombudsman office through a workshop for drawing lessons from notable cases before the European Court of Human Rights. The workshop has further developed the knowledge and expertise of the Ombudsman's staff in interpretation and application of the European human rights standards, as developed by the practice of the European Court of Human Rights. The workshop also discussed the specifics of the protection of human rights of members of armed forces, including its gender perspective.

**UNHCR** North Macedonia organized an Online Study Exchange on Alternative Care Arrangements, implemented under the auspices of the "IPA II Regional support to protection-sensitive migration management in Western Balkans and Turkey" project, funded by the European Union. The aim of the two-day event was to exchange knowledge and experience related to alternative care arrangements for foreign children, regardless of their migration status. The representatives from UNHCR Netherlands, the Ministry of Justice and Security of the Netherlands, the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, and NIDOS, provided in depth information about the child protection framework in the Netherlands both in terms of legal framework as well as in relation to child friendly procedures including about information, reception, legal representation (asylum procedure), education and healthcare.

Following the adoption of the Law on Free Legal aid in 2020, which regulates provision of free legal aid to asylum and refugees, on 12-14 November, UNHCR together with its partner MYLA organized a capacity building event titled 'Refugee law, asylum system and relevant jurisprudence' for lawyers who registered with the Ministry of Justice to provide free legal aid to persons under UNHCR mandate. This training

is part of a series of events and study visits organized to develop specific capacities of attorneys to represent persons under UNHCR mandate in line with international standards.

As part of the Office's efforts to foster solidarity for refugees and stateless persons and engage influential stakeholders and prominent artists socially engaged, UNHCR North Macedonia produced an [exclusive animated video](#) for social media by the local artist IndOg.

28 – 29 October 2021 - **UN Women** North Macedonia office hosted a workshop bringing together CSOs that are implementing outreach and empowerment initiatives for increased participation of women in the local policymaking and budgeting processes. Representatives from the CSOs from North Macedonia and Albania attended a 2-day workshop to exchange experiences and best practices on engendering local policies and budgets through participatory processes and women-led initiatives. This exchange of experiences was part of the UN Women project "Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia", funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency – Sida.

Project partners AGORA and National Council for Gender Equality to the UN Women gender-responsive budgeting project have implemented the final phase of the campaign "Get Involved - Ask Aloud!", which revolves around women's engagement in decision-making processes at the local level and presenting best practices of their work for improving the lives of women in the communities.

The Swedish Embassy, in collaboration with the UN Women North Macedonia office and the local branch of Wikipedia in the Macedonian Language – Shared Knowledge, jointly organized the initiative WikiGap for narrowing the gender gap on the Internet, for the fourth time in a row. The participants/volunteers created and/or translated texts in Macedonian about women (or events related to gender equality) who had made a significant change in environmental protection, ecology and biodiversity. The event commenced on 15th November 2021, followed by a one-week edit-a-thon. During the competition week, a total of 929 articles were created, soon to be published on the Macedonian Wikipedia.

UN Women North Macedonia office supported the UN Women regional initiative "Awake not Sleeping: Reimagining Fairytales for a New Generation". Kalina Maleska, a literature professor and author from North Macedonia, has received wide recognition with her fairytale "The Child Without Golden Hair": <https://bit.ly/3I3sRE2>. During the launching event on 18th November 2021, this fairytale was performed by the North Macedonia shadow puppet theatre group Shadows and



To mark the adoption of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child – UNICEF and partners celebrate World Children's Day, an annual day of action for children, by children on November 20 and for a second year, World Children's Day took place during one of the most unique and challenging moments in our history.

Clouds: <https://bit.ly/3xhWeaz>

UNODC hosted a workshop on the Inter-institutional Exchange of Information regarding Criminal Procedure in firearms-related cases. Some 20 participants from the Ministry of Interior, Border Police, Prosecutors, and Customs officials, discussed the cooperation between them during the various stages of the criminal procedure, including arrestment and detention by the police, interrogation of the suspect, the development of the indictment and the validity of evidence.

UNODC in cooperation with the OSCE Mission to Skopje organized a conference in Skopje to support the implementation of North Macedonia's „National Strategy for conducting financial investigations and confiscation of assets“, as well as the work of the newly formed National Commission for monitoring the implementation of the Strategy.

The purpose of the conference was to present activities within the strategy related to strengthening the institutional capacities to conduct financial investigations and confiscation of assets as well as the needs and support to North Macedonia, necessitated in successful implementation of the strategy. The main objective of the conference was to initiate the work on development of a national Asset Recovery Roadmap, which will serve as a basis for assessing the existing capabilities and identifying gaps in the processes and resources allocated for conducting financial investigations and confiscation of assets in North Macedonia.

The conference brought together representatives from national and international institutions and organizations in North Macedonia, including the Public Prosecutor's Office, Ministry of Interior, Financial police, Customs office, Agency for Management of seized assets, OSCE Mission to Skopje, Council of Europe, GIZ, Embassies of Sweden, France, The Netherlands, UK as well as representatives of the National Commission for monitoring the implementation of the Strategy.

All participants recognized that donor coordination amongst international partners should be established through a national Asset Recovery Roadmap with the aim to develop coherent approach to the implementation of the Strategy and to ensure improved and efficient use of resources in providing support to North Macedonia in conducting financial investigations and confiscation of assets.

The UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme (CCP) in cooperation with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) organized training for the custom and border police officers of the Air Cargo Control Unit (ACCU) established at the Skopje International Airport. The training provides an opportunity to further enhance collaborative work at Skopje

International Airport, and stimulate continuous exchange of information, achieve regional and international cooperation, with the aim of protecting the border, and with special emphasis on air safety.

In the period 18 – 25 October 2021, WHO experts completed a technical mission to North Macedonia to strengthen public health emergency preparedness and response, including control of COVID-19, as part of the ongoing close collaboration with the national health authorities. Experts from the WHO Country office, Regional Office for Europe, WHO Balkan Emergency Hub and the Crisis Management Unit of the Robert Koch Institute in Berlin visited the Institute of Public Health (IPH) in Skopje and the ten regional public health centres assessed the capacity and needs of the current public health emergency functions and identified the organizational, capacities, human and material resources needs. Following a two-day planning workshop, the WHO experts and national health authorities jointly developed a detailed operational plan for enhancing the functionality of the central Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and the National Public Health Network in North Macedonia.

To support North Macedonia's efforts to detect, assess, analyse and respond to infodemic risks related to the COVID-19 pandemic, WHO organized a training for infodemic management. Over 30 representatives from national health authorities, fact-checking organizations, UN agencies and international partners enhanced their skills for use of risk- and evidence-based analysis and approaches to manage the infodemic which accompanies the COVID-19 pandemic.

Experts from the WHO Country Office, Regional Office for Europe, WHO Balkan Emergency Hub and the Crisis Management Unit of the Robert Koch Institute in Berlin partnered with national health authorities to conduct an Intra-Action Review (IAR) of North Macedonia's ongoing COVID-19 response. In light of the protracted nature of the pandemic, the Intra-Action Review is a country-led process that allows countries to review their COVID-19 response, identify best practices, gaps and lessons learned, and actions for immediate remediation or sustained improvement of the COVID-19 outbreak response. This technical mission is a part of WHO's support to national health authorities to effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Experts from WHO and Health Education England partnered with national stakeholders to explore the feasibility of transforming the Specialized Hospital for Geriatric and Palliative Care into an educational centre for the newly designed geriatric sub-specialization. This expert mission is an important step in the efforts to increase the number of trained specialists in geriatric and palliative care to be able to respond to the growing needs of the older population and

provide integrated and person-centred care for the elderly.

At a joint meeting with the Minister of Health, Venko Filipce, WHO and UNICEF Country Offices announced new funding from USAID for COVID-19 infection prevention and vaccination. With the new assistance, WHO will further strengthen the health system emergency preparedness and response capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure higher coverage and safe delivery of COVID-19 vaccines in North Macedonia.

In light of World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (WAAW) 2021 and aiming to address antimicrobial resistance, North Macedonia's Multisectoral Commission for Control of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) within the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Veterinary Chamber of North Macedonia jointly organized on 15-16 November 2021 a series of educational webinars with WHO support. Celebrated annually from 18 to 24 November, WAAW aims to increase awareness of global antimicrobial resistance and to encourage best practices among the general public, health workers and policy makers to avoid the further emergence and spread of drug-resistant infections.

In the period 15 – 19 November, WHO experts completed a technical mission on health equity in North Macedonia. WHO together with relevant ministries, national stakeholders and international partners aims at creating a national framework for monitoring health equity with the involvement of the Macedonian Ministry of Health, the State Statistical office, eHealth unit and several specialized health institutions such as the Institute of Epidemiology and Institute of Public Health.

On 25 November 2021, WHO launched the report “Can people afford to pay for health care? New evidence on financial protection in North Macedonia” which assesses the extent to which people in North Macedonia experience financial hardship when they use health services. The report is part of a series of country-based reviews monitoring financial protection in health systems across Europe. The findings of the report were discussed at an event which gathered representatives of the key responsible government sectors, international partners, professional associations and patient and civil society organizations.

WHO continues to facilitate access to life-saving information and health care services, including immunization against COVID-19, especially for at-risk communities such as youth, the elderly and Roma population. As part of these efforts, over 5,000 informational and materials addressing COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy were disseminated to members of the Roma community. WHO is also supporting the Red Cross SOS line for COVID-19 for the elderly.

To mark the adoption of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child – UNICEF and partners celebrate World Children's Day, an annual day of action for children, by children on November 20 and for a second year, World Children's Day took place during one of the most unique and challenging moments in our history. The coronavirus pandemic has changed the lives of children and young people in profound ways and at a stage in their lives where they should be developing to fulfil their optimal potential. But young people have not been sitting back. Through the “Reimagine the future” youth consultations - an initiative that UNICEF started a year ago together with the Cabinet of President Pendarovski - [they came together to headline at an event where they shared their views and their vision for the future they want for themselves and future generations](#). Three young speakers presented a Youth Calls to Action to Reimagine Quality education, Climate and Quality of life. Their message was clear – they don't want to go back to normal after COVID; they need decision makers to work with them to build back better. During the event decision makers, including members of the parliament, representatives of international organizations and experts had an opportunity to hear more from youth speakers and engage in a close dialogue during smaller group discussions led by youth. They also discussed what concrete actions can be taken to address the issues in each of the three themes.

# UN ACTIVITIES

In previous years, to show support UNICEF has asked partners to light up buildings and landmarks blue to help draw attention to children and young people's concerns. This year with the current energy crisis, UNICEF asked partners light up blue on their social media channels and calling on decision makers to consider young people's calls to action, for a better future for every child and young person. [Read more about the youth calls to action.](#)

UNICEF launched the initiative of Advocates for Justice for Children – first of this kind in the country with the financial support of the European Union, in the frameworks of the Just(ice) children – EU for juvenile and child-friendly justice Action. The aim of the initiative is to create the space for children and youth to participate in the legislative and policy reforms in the area of justice for children and to generate innovative tools and mechanisms to address issues that affect their life. 60 children and youth advocates have participated the kick-off workshop on children's rights from the 12th until the 14th of November. In the following period they will learn how to design mechanisms and tools for access to justice, at a design thinking workshops, whilst being supported by mentors and experts.

In the frameworks of the same Action, UNICEF is also launching a series of trainings, starting with training of trainers' workshop, for professionals working with children in contact with the law. The training of trainers' workshop was also used to validate the justice for children curriculum, introducing a multisectoral approach based on the best interest of the child. The aim is to address the issue of significant variation in the knowledge and skills among different professionals dealing with children at risk and children in contact with the law. Professionals learnt about the human and child rights approach, focusing on key competencies such as interpersonal communication skills, community engagement and mobilization, through case studies and best practices from Europe. Key principles of justice for children, children at risk of becoming in contact with the law, victims, witnesses and children in conflict with the law were also covered. The objective is to ensure the child's contact with justice systems represents an opportunity, not a threat and that going through the justice system constitutes a positive turning point for children.

UNICEF is organizing a series of sharing and playing events for both teachers and parents to introduce them to resources and strategies for social and emotional learning which they can implement in classrooms as well as at home. The first event is scheduled for December 4 in Veles.

On November 22, UNICEF launched the EDUINO Gamethon, a creative challenge for learning and playing through selected activities and games for children from 3 to 10 years old. The goal of the Gamethon is to encourage learning through play and introduce teachers and parents to the open library with educational activities on the [EDUINO platform](#).

This month UNICEF organized five webinars for school staff on relevant educational topics focusing on improving teacher skills in creating interactive and innovative teaching and learning process. Over 15000 educators attended these webinars. The series of webinars will continue in December, for more information please visit the [link](#).

On the occasion of the EU Waste Reduction Week, UNICEF and partners, realized a workshop with school teachers and kindergarten educators, on the topic of waste reduce, reuse and repair, with focus on how to integrate these practical activities and experiments in their curricula and work with children. The workshop was attended by 48 educators from 16 kindergartens and 77 teachers from 30 primary schools.

- UNICEF delivered a new supply of personal protective equipment valued at \$340,000 USD which are being donated for health care, education, and protection institutions in North Macedonia. The donation comes from [UNICEF's global supply and logistics headquarters](#).

- UNICEF has completed a rapid assessment of the self-



efficacy, perceptions and attitudes of health workers (family doctors, patronage nurses, pediatricians and immunization teams) on routine immunization. Based on the insights, UNICEF will select, adapt and translate training modules developed by Regional Office. Roll-out trainings will be launched in January, in collaboration with Macedonian Medical Association.

-Based on the findings from behavioral insights survey completed earlier this year, 5 prototypes on MMR1 vaccine are designed and will be distributed around the country to increase vaccine demand.

## IN FOCUS Femicides analysis

A total of 87,000 women were killed in 2017 worldwide, according to a study by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. More than half of them were killed by an intimate partner or other family member. The same study shows that in 2012 the number of women killed by an intimate partner globally was 48,000, which points to a rising trend in the number of femicides over the years.

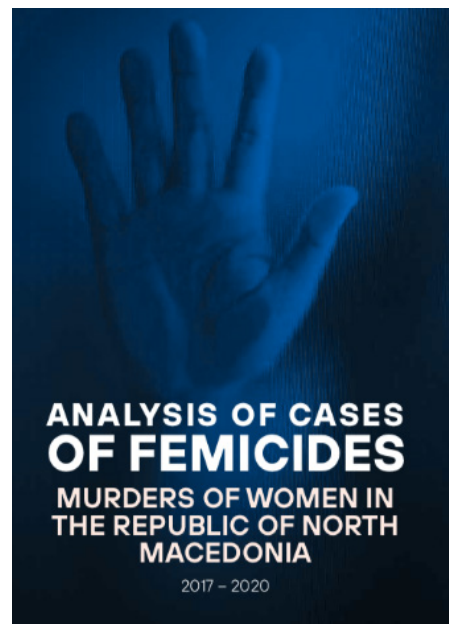
Unfortunately, the figures referring to the Republic of North Macedonia confirm these worrying statistics. Between 2008 and 2020, a total of 96 women were killed of which at least 50 cases were femicides. This and other findings emerged from the UNDP-supported [Analysis of Cases of Femicides in the Republic of North Macedonia 2017-2020](#) – part of the "Improving National SALW-related Practices and Building Violence Resilient Communities" project, published on November 26 as part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence campaign.

The analysis was conducted by the National Network to End Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, with the financial support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany through the "Roadmap for a Sustainable Solution to the Illegal Possession, Misuse and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons and their Ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024".

"Femicide" refers to the killing of women and girls because of their gender, committed and tolerated by both private and public actors. It covers murder of women, as a result of intimate partner violence, torture and misogynistic killing of women, murder of women and girls in the "name of honour" and murder as a result of other harmful practices, targeted murder of women and girls in armed conflict, and cases of femicide related to gangs, organized crime, drug dealers and trafficking in women and girls.

Gender-based violence and femicides as its most severe form of violence, can occur in all walks of life. The findings from the study clearly show that this social and unquestionably criminal deviance does not discriminate by age, nationality, and socio-economic status. The analysis covers the period 2017-2020, during which a total of 26 women were killed, according to data from the State Statistical Office. Of these, 22 murders (84%) can be classified as femicides.

From the analysis of the murder cases of 16 women, the crime can be qualified as femicide in 14 cases. In more than 75% of the analysed cases of murder of women, the crime was



committed by the current or former spouse or extramarital partner with whom they lived in a community. In more than 80% of the cases, although there was violence that was later witnessed in the procedure by close relatives of the victim, still none of the 14 women killed reported the violence they experienced at the competent institutions. Most of the women killed were exposed to more than one form of gender-based violence, and 6 of them received death threats. Most of the murders (50%) took place in the family home, i.e., the home where the perpetrator and the victim lived together, while 25% of the murders took place in the home where the victim lived alone or with her parents or other family members.

Based on the findings, the analysis offers the recommendations on policies and actions to reduce femicides, which can be read here : [Analysis of Cases of Femicides in the Republic of North Macedonia 2017-2020](#)

The latest version of the Sustainable Development Bulletin is available on UN North Macedonia website. For additional information, please contact [rc-northmacedonia@un.org](mailto:rc-northmacedonia@un.org). Produced by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in North Macedonia | 10 January 2022.

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