



UNITED NATIONS
NORTH MACEDONIA



North Macedonia
**Common
Country
Analysis**



for the 2021-2025 United Nations
Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework



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Common Country Analysis
for the 2021-2025 United Nations Sustainable
Development Cooperation Framework**

November 2020

United Nations in North Macedonia

North Macedonia Common Country Analysis (CCA) has been commissioned and undertaken by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in North Macedonia.

The methods of analysis, conducted between November 2019 and March 2020, included the use of commonly applied tools such as documentary review, interviews, information triangulation, analysis and synthesis. A participatory approach was applied to data collection, analysis and formulation of findings and identified development challenges. The 12-factor multi-dimensional risk analysis framework was used to identify factors and risks that could impact the country's development trajectory and hinder national efforts to achieve SDGs in efforts to reduce inequalities and exclusion and meet the country's international human rights commitments. The process and the methodology are explained in [Annex 3](#).

This report was produced and quality-assured by Mr. Pradeep Sharma based on the sectoral analysis conducted by Mr. Robert Scott Heaslet, Ms. Slavjanka Pejcinovska-Andonova, and Finance Think Economic Research and Policy Institute.

Most of the analysis supporting CCA was conducted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The assessment of the pandemic's impact on the development trajectory of the country and on specific sectors and population groups has not yet been fully integrated in this document and will be considered in the next update of the North Macedonia CCA at the end of 2020.

The latest version of this document is accessible at <https://northmacedonia.un.org/>.

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Currency conversion rate:

US\$ = 52.243 MKD (1 September 2020)

ACRONYMS AND TERMS

ACCMIS	Automated Court Case Management Information System
CAT	Convention Against Torture
CCPR	Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Agreement
CERD	Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
CESCR	Covenant or Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CO ₂	Carbon dioxide
COP	Convention of Parties
CPED	Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRMW	Convention on Protection of Rights of All Migrant Workers
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil society organisation
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
CSWs	Centres for social work
DALY	Disability adjusted life years
DPPA	United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
DPM	Deputy Prime Minister
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EFTA	European Free Trade Agreement
EPR	Environmental Performance Review / Extended Producer Responsibility
EU	European Union
EWS	Early warning systems
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FDI	Foreign direct investment
FTF	Foreign terrorist fighters
GBV	Gender based violence
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDP	Gross domestic product
GHGs	Greenhouse gases
GMA	Guaranteed minimum assistance
HDI	Human development index
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
HRs	Human rights
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICT	Information and communications technology
IEA	International Energy Agency
IFI	International financial institution
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INFORM	Index for Risk Management
IPPU	Industrial processes and product use
IT	Information technology
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LFPR	Labour force participation rate
LGBTI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons
LNOB	Leave no one behind
MAPS	Mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support
MCH	Maternal and child health
MEAs	Multilateral environmental agreement
MICS	Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey
MSM	Men who have sex with men

MSW	Municipal solid waste
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCD	Non-communicable disease
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPAA	National Plan for Adoption of Acquis
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFA	Ohrid Framework Agreement
OP	Optional Protocol
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PAR	Public administration reform
PFM	Public finance management
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPP	Purchasing power parity
PRTRs	Pollutant release and transfer registers
PWD	Persons with disabilities
RBMPs	River basin management plans
RIA	Rapid Integration Assessment
SDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
SDG	Sustainable Development goal
SDSN	Sustainable Development Solutions Network
SEA	Strategic environmental assessment
SFA	Social financial assistance
SILC	Survey on income and living conditions
SMEs	Small and medium enterprises
SSO	State Statistical Office
TB	Tuberculosis
TIDZs	Technological industrial development zones
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDESA	United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNDS	United Nations Development System
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
US\$	United States Dollar
VAW	Violence against women
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WB	World Bank
WBIF	Western Balkans Investment Fund
WEEE	Waste electrical and electronic equipment
WBA	Waste batteries and accumulators
WFD	Water framework directive
WHO	World Health Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Executive summary

Introduction

North Macedonia is an upper-middle income and a high human development index (HDI) country that has undergone significant transformation since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015. Change in its constitutional name and improved relations with its neighbours, among others, earned the country global praise and paved the way for Euro-Atlantic integration. In 2020, NATO welcomed the country as its 30th member and the European Council decided to start negotiations with North Macedonia for full European Union (EU) membership. The country has stepped up reforms by improving its policies and governance institutions. But ensuring accelerated and sustainable growth and building an inclusive and just society will require further concerted efforts in many areas.

The EU accession process offers an opportunity to carry out major structural political and economic reforms. To achieve this, North Macedonia must swiftly tackle its immediate challenges which include deficiencies in rule of law and prevalent corruption, insufficient administrative capacities challenging inter-sectoral and inter-institutional coordination, inadequate data collection and analysis that result with limited policy coherence and ineffective implementation of the laws. Frequent elections and lack of political consensus on strategic issues pose additional challenges to the prosperity of the country.

Progress towards Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals

North Macedonia would benefit from giving new impetus to the national development strategy based on a wide national consensus on the priorities and targets to be achieved at long-term level. The 2009-2030 National Strategy for Sustainable Development was developed prior to the formulation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and therefore does not address all aspects and the integrated approach of Agenda 2030. The National Council for Sustainable Development provides the institutional foundation for leading the SDGs nationalization and implementation. However, the principles of Agenda 2030 are yet to be fully integrated in national policies. There is no roadmap for nationalization and implementation of Agenda 2030 and, consequently, no mechanism to monitor the progress towards achieving the SDGs. The country has prepared its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) for the July 2020 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) that sets a baseline for sustainable development planning. However, setting national SDG indicators and targets, that should enable an effective monitoring of the development agenda remains a work in progress.

EU accession policies broadly converge with the SDG framework, with two thirds of the agenda fully in line. Based on the Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) carried out in 2019, convergence of SDG agenda with the national sector policies is even higher surpassing 80%. Alignment and coordination of the SDG agenda and the EU accession could be further strengthened to increase attainment of sustainable development outcomes. A deeper SDG analysis, which would identify acceleration opportunities, financing options, and establish a national SDG monitoring and evaluation framework, would be highly desirable.

The country has made significant progress on the SDGs under the *People* category. Poverty levels have declined over time, though still high in rural areas and in multi-children households. Poverty reduction has been accompanied by improved living conditions with access to housing, drinking water and sanitation, electricity, education, and health, though quality of services could improve. Inequality has declined. With the de-institutionalization process, all children under the age of 18 in care institutions have been resettled in community homes. Yet, women, ethnic communities, people with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons, youth not in education, employment or training (NEET) and the elderly continue to face exclusion and discrimination.

Health insurance coverage is universal, but high out-of-pocket expenses make it difficult for poorer households to access full benefits. High level of non-communicable diseases, accounting for 87 percent of life years lost, is a major health challenge. On top of this, skilled medical personnel, including doctors, specialists, nurses and midwives have intensively emigrated which poses a threat to the public health system. On a positive note, the infant mortality and maternal mortality rates have declined. Overall, the

quality of education is not meeting international standards and is not aligned with the market needs. Despite universal literacy, the international student assessment reviews show that a significant number of young people are functionally illiterate, with low skills in math and science.

State-funded pensions have had the strongest positive impact on poverty decline, while benefits from social protection, active labour measures, remittances and subsidies have been somewhat less impactful. Recent changes in social protection programmes that aim to improve the coverage of vulnerable groups, design and targeting have been positive. The country is ageing fast, which is increasing the dependency ratio, and is likely to face significant labour force challenges due to the shrinking youth population, low birth rates, and emigration.

Under the *Prosperity* category, the unemployment rate in the country has fallen significantly as a result of active employment measures as well as increased emigration. Women, youth, persons with disabilities and certain ethnic communities are more likely to be out of labour force, unemployed or in precarious employment. Unemployment tends to be long-term, with more than half of the unemployed looking for a job for over four years, predominantly due to the lack of market appropriate skills.

Key economic concerns relate to high informal economy, and low productivity, and competitiveness as result of the skills mismatch and obsolete technology. North Macedonia is a small economy and strongly integrated in EU and Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) markets. Through its pro-FDI policies, it has managed to attract FDIs in export-led high-value products, increasing and diversifying its export, however the spill-over effects to the domestic economy are limited due to the scarce backward linkages of foreign direct investment (FDI)-led firms with domestic industry.

Its economy has been predominantly stable at macro-level, but performing below its full potential, largely due to non-economic reasons such as inconsistent legal framework for businesses resulting with lack of effective law enforcement, as well as widespread corruption, inefficient administrative service and political uncertainties due to frequent elections. This slows down the economic reform and prevents a more pronounced and sustained growth, despite some recent efforts to define a consistent economic model that prioritizes technological upgrade, innovation and propulsive industries.

Under the *Planet* category, the decline in greenhouse gas emissions has been an important achievement but the country remains highly vulnerable to climate-induced natural disasters, including floods, heat waves and forest fires. The country has committed to reducing emissions from fossil fuels by as much as 36 percent against baselines by 2030. The energy policies and legislation are now fully aligned with the Energy Community, prioritising energy efficiency and renewable energy, but coal still accounts for 60 percent of electricity production. Air pollution, pollution of water bodies, improper waste management, climate change impact, loss of biodiversity, and forest degradation are key environmental challenges that will need tackling to meet the EU's environmental standards and policies.

Progress has been challenged under the *Peace* category due to weaker performance in rule of law, justice and human rights. The legal framework for the protection of human rights is congruent with international and European standards, but implementation needs to intensify in some areas. Infringement of rights of women, Roma, journalists, LGBTI, persons with disabilities are common and discrimination against them by mode of hate speech or outright violence is inadequately addressed by enforcement agencies. The underlying inter-ethnic tensions appear to persist, thus calling for promotion of social cohesion through community engagement. Media freedom and freedom of expression have improved as a result of legislative amendments. The regulatory framework to address corruption and to ensure the impartiality and efficiency of the judiciary has also been strengthened.

Under the *Partnerships* category, the country has earned global praise for resolving the name dispute with Greece and for improving relations with Bulgaria, which unlocked the Euro-Atlantic integration process. North Macedonia has become a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in March 2020 and may commence the EU accession negotiations before the end of the year. The domestic resource base, the single biggest source of SDG financing, can be enhanced by introducing innovative ways of development funding and by building partnership with the private sector. Efficiency of public spending and improved statistical capacity to monitor SDGs needs further strengthening.

Leave no one behind, drivers of exclusion and vulnerable groups

The approach of leaving no one behind (LNOB), which recognises the primacy of people in development efforts, is core to sustainable development. LNOB, grounded in the UN's fundamental normative standards, means moving beyond income and looking into non-income inequalities and discriminations, which are often multiple and intersecting. It means moving beyond averages and ensuring progress for all population groups; and moving beyond today to address a new generation of inequalities triggered by climate change and technological transformations.

Despite the country's upper-middle income and high HDI status, several population groups are excluded and face discrimination due to interlinked *drivers of inequalities* which are reinforced by *root causes* of social norms, prejudices and attitudes. The key drivers of exclusion are:

1. **Structure and performance of the economy:** Stable growth but lower than that of the peers; high FDI but lack of integration into domestic economy; high and long-term unemployment amidst skills erosion and mismatch with the market needs; unfavourable labour market for youth, women and ethnic communities with high NETT shares; large informal economy preventing competitiveness; and low productivity of domestic firms.
2. **Governance institutions:** Low public trust in governance institutions – parliament, judiciary, executive – due to the perceived political bias; lack of capacity for effective policy, planning, implementation and monitoring; challenging cross-sectoral collaboration data and information-sharing between institutions; perception of elites being above law; high corruption and perceived impunity; politically polarised media and social narrative, along with spread of disinformation and lack of media literacy; insufficient inclusion of some minorities; disproportionate impact of deficient governance on women and children; limited capacity and bottlenecks related to decentralized/municipal authorities; insufficient migration management and absent integration policies and programmes; and a fragmented and donor-dependant civil society.
3. **Social infrastructure:** Rising burden of non-communicable diseases; inefficient referral system and lack of standardized care; high out-of-pocket healthcare expenses and reliance on experts and speciality equipment, disproportionately affecting the poor; exclusion of Roma and rural population from quality healthcare services; limited quality, relevance and equity of education; and until recently inefficient, heavily pension-oriented, not well-targeted, mostly state-funded and fiscally unsustainable social protection.
4. **Climate change and natural resources management:** Increased vulnerability to natural hazards – floods, droughts, forest fires, heat waves and erosion risks – affecting agriculture, health, infrastructure, food, water and energy security with disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups; air pollution, especially indoor air quality due to wood and other hazardous materials burning, affecting mostly poor and those living in settlements which are below basic living standards.
5. **Social norms, prejudices and attitudes:** gender stereotypes, prejudices against some ethnicities and LGBTI, stigma against persons with disabilities, attitudes towards refugees, drug users, and tolerance for corruption all reinforce key drivers and further perpetuate exclusion, which prevents marginalised groups from realising their full potential. At the root of exclusion are deep-set social prejudices and negative stereotypes which even have influence on policy making.

To identify groups at risk of being left furthest behind, the CCA uses a five-factor framework:

- discrimination based on sex, age, or disability;
- geographical location or fragile ecology;
- vulnerability to shocks;
- impact of governance, i.e. laws, policies etc; and
- socio-economic status.

Based on this framework, the CCA identified nine groups left behind or at risk of being left behind. The risks are higher for those individuals and groups which fall into several of these categories:

1. youth not in education, employment or training (NEET);

2. women and girls, especially those from certain ethnic communities and rural areas;
3. Roma community;
4. children, especially those of certain ethnic communities;
5. people with disabilities;
6. refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and stateless;
7. LGBTI persons;
8. people in rural areas and small farmers;
9. older persons.

Commitments under international human rights and environmental norms and standards

North Macedonia is a party to most key international human rights, environmental and labour treaties. It maintains regular dialogue with the UN Charter and treaty-based bodies, including the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and special procedures of the UN Human Rights Council; and it files periodic progress reports on the ratified UN core human rights instruments. The Ombudsman, appointed by the Parliament, and human rights defenders play a pivotal role in monitoring, reporting and protecting human rights and society's most vulnerable.

The country's ratification of several more multilateral environmental treaties (METs) since 2011 demonstrates the importance it has placed on actively engaging in international environmental cooperation, although there is room for improvement with implementation and monitoring.

Cross-border perspectives

North Macedonia maintains good relations and participates actively in regional initiatives. The Prespa Agreement (2018) with Greece ended a long-standing dispute over the country's name. The Treaty of Friendship (2017) with Bulgaria established a framework for overcoming differences and for building stronger cooperation between the two countries.

The country is an active regional partner in combating illicit movement of drugs, transnational crime and terrorism, as well as pursuing the transboundary water sharing and management initiatives. Regional cooperation in the Western Balkans, however, remains fragmented and impeded by bilateral issues such as the disagreement over the status of Kosovo (UNSCR1244) or border disputes. Furthermore, weak rule of law, paired with high levels of corruption continue to diminish trust within and between countries, though with different intensity across the region.

Cooperation on other cross-border environmental issues, such as air pollution or the movement of refugees and migrants, present opportunities to bring countries together to work on shared issues of concern and to better address significant human vulnerability of populations on the move, particularly women and children.

SDG financing

The SDGs have not been fully mainstreamed in the policy making; it is thus difficult to estimate resources required to implement Agenda 2030 or to trace financing to the implementation of a specific SDG. There is a need for further assessments to estimate the required funding.

A preliminary analysis suggests that some 61 percent of development financing in North Macedonia is secured through domestic public sources including public revenues, domestic public borrowing and public-private partnerships. International private financing – FDIs, commercial borrowing abroad and international remittances – accounts for 27 percent of the total financial envelope; domestic private financing – bank credits and non-bank financing – comprises 7 percent; and international public financing – international government borrowing and official development assistance – accounts for 5 percent.

Key risks

The CCA has identified the following key factors and risks which could impact the country's development trajectory and hinder national efforts to achieve SDGs, reduce inequalities and exclusion, and meet the country's international human rights commitments:

- political polarisation and lack of political consensus on development priorities;

- insufficient institutional capacity and resilience;
- climate change and environmental risks, including natural hazards;
- external environment – economic protectionism and regional disagreements;
- limited ability to address corruption;
- insufficient policy coherence; and
- ineffective judicial system.

As the country is embarking on the EU accession process, monitoring and managing these risks will be key. Major reforms are needed, as envisaged by the EU, and must be carried out in a consultative manner and free of party-political or business interests. Democratic institutions must be further strengthened, including ensuring judicial independence, to instil public confidence. Corruption cases should lead to effective and timely conclusion. Risks from climate change and public health emergencies must be factored into the reform agenda.

Key gaps

1. **Lack of a formulated long-term national sustainable development strategy.** The policymaking is largely driven by EU accession. Mainstreaming of SDGs is an ongoing process and should be expedited for synergy given that most EU chapters are aligned with the SDGs. The national mechanism to monitor SDGs is yet to be set. No costing of SDGs has been done and no SDG finance assessment has been carried out to guide planning and budgeting. The national ownership of the SDG agenda must be further improved.
2. **Lack of accurate and disaggregated data for policy making.** Evidence-based policy making requires strong, disaggregated data bases and strengthened analytical capabilities, among others, to examine the impact of policies on certain population groups. Absence of census for almost two decades, lack of reliable demographic data disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, disability status, migration pattern etc. are impediments in policy making for vulnerable population groups who may not be counted and not receive social services. Sector policies are not effectively linked to SDGs.
3. **Implementation capacity weaknesses** hampers progress towards SDGs. Public administration suffers from lack of adequate skills., accountability and responsiveness towards citizens, with some recent progress in transparency and policy consultations.
4. **Insufficient civil society capacity and resources.** By and large, the civil society in the country is vibrant and there is improved cooperation between the Government and civil society on major policy and legislative issues, but it is dependent on donors due to the lack of capacity and resources. The capacity of private sector, particularly domestic private sector, is limited by the size and scale, productivity, and technological innovation among others. As such, it has not been an important partner in the achievement of SDGs so far, though private sector partnership can add pace to achieving SDGs.
5. **Insufficient of social cohesion and trust** is an impediment to building inclusive society and implementing LNOB. Societal attitudes and norms towards ethnic communities, women/girls, LGBTI, refugees and persons with disabilities are at times not conducive to building cohesion in society. For a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society that North Macedonia is, social cohesion should be both a goal, as well as an instrument that contributes to the achievement of inclusive and sustainable growth.

In addition to the cross-cutting gaps and challenges identified above, there are thematic gaps and challenges around *People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace*, and Partnerships which must be addressed for the country to progress towards Agenda 2030.

Emerging development priorities

The CCA draws four main conclusions:

1. Making the growth more inclusive, just and resilient is the key development priority for the country.

2. The achievement of the Agenda 2030 would require a stronger integration with the ongoing reforms for EU accession, national development strategies and sectoral programmes. Identifying and prioritising accelerators of sustainable development remains essential.
3. Strengthened policy coherence while prioritizing sustainable measures, political consensus on strategic issues, and addressing deficiencies in governance institutions will be imperative for further progress towards SDGs.
4. Societal transformation for more responsible individual and community approach towards sustainable and inclusive development.

As a result, the following emerging development priorities have been identified:

1. Building a robust, formal, competitive, innovative, inclusive and resilient low-carbon economy for accelerated and job-rich growth at par with European peers.
- 1.
2. Decisively addressing exclusion and inequalities that affect women and children, youth not in employment, education or training, ethnic communities, LGBTI, and people with disabilities, rural population / small farmers, refugees and asylum seekers, persons at risk of statelessness, minority and other vulnerable groups.
3. Increasing the quantity and quality of jobs and coping with outmigration of labour force, especially skilled labour force, by fighting informal economy and creating decent employment opportunities equally for all and promoting rights at work.
4. Investing in human capital through improved quality of education, technical and vocational education and training, lifelong learning and the recognition of prior learning, and health, especially in view of the changing demographic profile.
5. Addressing design and efficiency issues in delivery of social services to make it more efficient, fiscally sustainable, and potentially productive by focusing more on activation policies and delivery of quality services.
6. Improving governance by taking decisive action against corruption, making judiciary independent and effective, and improving policy coherence and performance management in the administration, and consulting with civil society partners.
7. Adapting to climate and other environment-related challenges and taking steps at mitigation in line with EU environmental and climate change standards; improving environmental governance and managing natural resources more sustainably, improving human health and building resilience.
8. Promoting social coherence and trust building amongst youth and marginalized groups and strengthening cooperation with countries from the Western Balkans region.
9. Ensuring compliance in practice with international norms and standards in dealing with refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and other people on the move, and stateless persons.

1 Country context

The Republic of North Macedonia is a country in the Balkan Peninsula in Southeast Europe, geopolitically known also as the Western Balkans. It borders Kosovo (UNSCR1244) to the Northwest, Serbia to the Northeast, Bulgaria to the East, Greece to the South and Albania to the West. The majority of its 2.08 million inhabitants are ethnic Macedonians; other ethnicities include Albanians, Turks, Romani, Serbs and Bosnians¹. The country is an upper-middle income and high-human development country, economically considered as a transition economy². The country, a parliamentary democracy, gained independence from former Yugoslavia in 1991 and became a UN member in 1993 as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYRM). The name FYROM was a temporary reference due to a name dispute with neighbouring Greece, which also delayed its Euro-Atlantic integration process until 2019, when its constitutional name was changed to the Republic of North Macedonia.

1.1 Politics and governance

North Macedonia has undergone significant reforms in recent years. The change of its constitutional name following the Prespa Agreement (2018) has been widely recognized as an achievement by the international community that gave a new momentum to its Euro-Atlantic integration trajectory.³ This was preceded by the Macedonia and Bulgaria Friendship Treaty (2017) which set the frame for resolving disagreements on historical and linguistic issues between the two countries. In March 2020, the country became a member of NATO and received green light to start EU accession negotiations.

North Macedonia went through several consecutive periods of prosperity and crisis since its independence. It joined NATO's Partnership for Peace in 1995 and was the first country in the region to sign a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU in 2001, gaining EU candidate status already in 2005. The internal armed conflict between the ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians was resolved by the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA) in 2001 that opened the path for decentralization of power, more equitable representation in state institutions, and the official use of minority language and symbols. It also set out an informal practice of forming multi-ethnic coalition Governments.

North Macedonia's Parliament consists of 120 seats with the majority traditionally switched between the centre-right VMRO-DPMNE and centre-left Social Democrats (SDSM), while the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), a party of rehabilitated National Liberation Army (NLA) soldiers has been the partner in almost all subsequent Governments since 2001.

The country enjoyed a period of stability and increased prosperity between 2006-2008 led by VMRO-DPMNE. In 2008 the visa facilitation and readmission agreements between North Macedonia and the EU entered into force and the country received the first positive recommendation to start negotiations with EU. However, following the status quo due to the name dispute, the next period demonstrated signs of democratic backsliding leading to a conditional recommendation in 2015 following the outbreak of a severe political crisis in the period 2015-2016.

The country's complex and volatile situation erupted towards the end of 2014 and beginning of 2015 with number of manifestation events such as the students' protest against the controversial standardised testing⁴

¹ The numbers are likely inaccurate as the last Census was organised in 2002

² State Statistical Office (SSO)

³ Government of the Republic of North Macedonia: Final Agreement for the Settlement of Differences as described in the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 817 (1993) and 845 (1993), the Termination of the Interim Accord of 1995, and the Establishment of Strategic Partnership between the Parties. <https://vlada.mk/sites/default/files/dokumenti/spogodba-en.pdf>

⁴ Balkan Insight: Student Protest Blocks Macedonian Capital (10 December 2014) <https://balkaninsight.com/2014/12/10/mass-student-protest-clogs-skopje/>

and the wire-tapping scandal implying abuse of state institutions to interfere in the elections and judiciary and enable high-level corruption. This led to widespread citizens' protest until the situation was resolved with the so-called Przino Agreement, brokered by EU and US. The agreement included the EU-defined Urgent Reform Priorities in the judiciary, electoral system and media as conditions to holding free and fair elections, as well as setting out a Special Prosecutor to investigate the crimes deriving from the illegal wiretaps.

The snap parliamentary elections were finally held in December 2016 with VMRO-DPMNE winning most of the votes, but subsequently failing to ensure the majority. Following this, the majority was formed by SDSM and DUI, but the Speaker was elected only at the end of April 2017, after a massive filibustering and a violent incident caused by opposition supporters who stormed the building and injured members of parliament, including some party leaders. A new, reform-oriented Government formed in June 2017 embarked an ambitious reform programme and energetic diplomatic activity to resolve disputes with the neighbours and managed to demonstrate for EU to remove the conditions to start recommendations in 2019.

However, due to the internal disagreements on negotiations methodology, in June and October 2019, the EU postponed the decision to start accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania. This led to the resignation of the Prime Minister of North Macedonia who was replaced with the technical government in charge of organising parliamentary elections in April 2020 and formation of a new coalition Government. The elections were subsequently postponed to July, due to COVID19 outbreak.

Meanwhile, after the adoption of a new accession methodology and subsequent to the publication by the European Commission of updated progress reports on Albania and North Macedonia, the European Council gave green lights for starting accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia in March 2020.

Another major crisis faced by the country was the massive influx of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, between mid-2015 and March 2016, mainly from the Middle East and Asia.

These crises severely tested the country's governance systems and deflected government's attention from more important long-term development challenges, including progress towards SDGs. The political volatility that the country experienced over the past 5-6 years may impact the political consensus building on key development challenges in the country.

1.2 Human rights

The overall human rights situation in the country has continued improving as a result of accelerated reforms aiming to restore democracy, the rule of law and media landscape, after years of 'state capture'. The legal framework for the protection of human rights and gender equality is largely aligned with international human rights standards. Implementation, however, remains a challenge. The country has ratified seven of the nine core international human rights treaties.⁵ The list of key human rights, labour and environmental treaties is available in [Annex 1](#).

⁵ The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Convention against Torture (CAT), the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

The UN human rights mechanisms (HRM)⁶ highlight overriding human rights challenges and institutional deficiencies, recommending ratification of the remaining key international human rights instruments⁷, and strengthening human rights protection for vulnerable categories including women, victims of gender based and domestic violence, children, Roma people, LGBTI, persons with disabilities, migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers, and people deprived of liberty. Following the HRM recommendations⁸, the country developed legislation for prevention and protection from discrimination on all grounds recognized by international law, especially gender equality and sexual orientation, which envisions an independent monitoring and complaints mechanism. Also, a draft law on gender-based violence and domestic violence addressed many of the CEDAW Committee recommendations⁹ in terms of prevention, remedies and support services for women victims of violence, but has not yet criminalized marital rape. These two pieces of legislation are awaiting adoption.

Positive measures to close the gender pay gap and ensure gender-responsive approach in policies, and attainment of substantive equality for disadvantaged groups of women, have been undertaken. Gender representation mainly in parliament and at central level institutions has increased. Despite general health care coverage, women's access to quality health care services and sexual and reproductive health, especially among Roma and other marginalized groups, remains an issue. The civic space and freedom of expression have expanded. Amendments to the Law on Media and Audio-visual Services improved environment for more independent and professional media, however pressures on journalists persist. Systemic and institutional reforms are underway to strengthen the independence and efficiency of the justice system, improve prison conditions and overcome impunity, along with fighting high-level corruption, hate crime and hate speech mainly against LGBTI and marginalized people, human trafficking and organized crime, while protecting the rights of victims.

Important policy milestones towards enhancing human rights have been the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2016-2020, ratification of the Istanbul Convention and its Action Plan, Action Plan on Sexual and Reproductive Health 2018-2020, National Deinstitutionalization Strategy 2018-2027 to improve the rights of persons with disabilities,¹⁰ National Strategy for Roma 2014-2020 and Judicial Reform Strategy 2017-2022.

Institutional capacities for policy development and implementation, and accountability have been gradually improved. Transparency, representation and participation in a meaningful and inclusive manner, across a wide spectrum of society, including women is increasing. There are vulnerable groups whose voices are not yet heard and reflected, mainly persons with disabilities, Roma, other minorities, unregistered and stateless persons, victims of violence. Government implementation mechanisms and administration at central and local level, have no full capacity to deliver on the human rights obligations. Inter-institutional coordination and cooperation has been scaling up as a result of HRM recommendations. Several implementation and coordination mechanisms were set-up, like 'Inter-sectorial Body on Human Rights' (NMRF) to coordinate the state reports' submission and follow-up, national coordination body for CRPD implementation and body for equality and non-discrimination. National oversight needs to be reinforced over new communication control agency (OTA), Anti-Corruption Commission, and Agency for Media and Audio-visual Services.

The capacity of the Ombudsman as National Human Rights Institution to promote, protect and monitor human rights needs to be strengthened. Further steps should be taken to enhance its transparency, financial and functional independence in order to attain A accreditation status as per Paris Principles. The Anti-Discrimination Commission envisioned under the new law, compliant with the international human rights

⁶ The human rights analysis focuses on key observations and recommendations stemming from the UN Charter-based bodies, UPR (Third Cycle) as well as UN Treaty Bodies. Given the evolving circumstances since these were issued, progress and gaps are tracked and corroborated with new data and information in all sections of the document. The human rights perspective is engraved throughout the analysis. It includes assessment of the situation and capacity of right holders, particularly those vulnerable and left behind, to claim and exercise their rights, as well as capacities of the government and other duty bearers to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, and to comply with international human rights norms. Existing policies, legal, and institutional frameworks and human rights accountability mechanisms are also elaborated.

⁷ International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance, which the country signed in 2007 but has yet to ratify.

⁸ [2019 Third Cycle UPR](#)

⁹ [CEDAW/C/MKD/CO/6 \(CEDAW, 2018\)](#)

¹⁰ [CRPD/C/MKD/CO/1 \(CRPD, 2018\)](#)

norms, is yet to be established. Civil society organizations also play an important role in monitoring alone or in broad networks. More information could be found in Section 4.10.

At last, but not least, lack of systematic collection of disaggregated data hinders progress in monitoring and evaluation whether and to what extent the country meets its human rights obligations, both from a quantitative and qualitative aspect. This is adversely affecting the design of evidence driven and right based policies and actions to reach those left behind. The long overdue census, announced to take place in 2021, is expected to alleviate this gap.

1.3 Economic growth and restructuring

North Macedonia is an upper-middle income country with a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of US\$13,483,¹¹ which positions it at 38 percent of EU-28.

Growth in the past three decades has been insufficient for faster convergence of Macedonian economy with that of the EU. The multitude of political and economic setbacks, including the embargoes in the early 1990s, the Kosovo crisis in 1999, domestic military conflict in 2001, the global economic crisis of 2008 and subsequent European sovereign debt crisis of 2011, as well as 2015 domestic political crisis all dimmed North Macedonia's economic prospects.

Between 2002 and 2008, the country grew on average 4.3 percent annually, which has been reflective of the surge in global economy. Between 2009 and 2019, however, the growth rate has declined to an annual average of 2.1 percent as a result of global recession and political uncertainties (Figure 1)¹². Overall, the sluggish overall growth since independence can be attributed to factors like weak state institutions, deficient business legal framework, labour force shrinking due to emigration, labour force skills mismatch, and political uncertainties among others.

The most recent pre-COVID-19 economy outlook was *moderately positive*, with projected average growth rate of 3.2 percent through 2021,¹³ but the country's real GDP is expected to decline by more than 4 percent in 2020 due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic which has had a significant impact on domestic and external demand.¹⁴ Authorities have been quick to mitigate the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 crisis and to support the recovery while maintaining macroeconomic, financial and external stability. Fiscal policy support has been targeted and temporary, focusing on protecting employment and poor households. Taking a prudent approach, policies in the financial sector have encouraged banks to restructure debt of affected borrowers.

The EU accession process offers an opportunity for the country to carry out major structural reforms: fiscal consolidation and tackling informality, as well as corresponding governance reforms; integrating the economy with the rest of the EU; attracting more FDIs to accelerate growth; and addressing the relatively low productivity of the private sector. The country has already embarked on structural reforms in several key areas over the past decade.

In 2018, services accounted for 59.6 percent of the GDP composition; industry for 33.5 percent; and agriculture, forestry and fisheries for 6.9 percent¹⁵. The share of services – information technology, finance, retail, transport, insurance – continues to grow over the years.

Macedonian industry is characterised by dualism: a high-tech FDI-led, high-productivity, export-oriented sector co-existing with domestic firms that suffer from low productivity, low competitiveness and low

¹¹ Per purchasing power in 2018 at 2011 prices. Source: SSO

¹² SSO <http://www.stat.gov.mk/OblastOpsto.aspx?id=7>

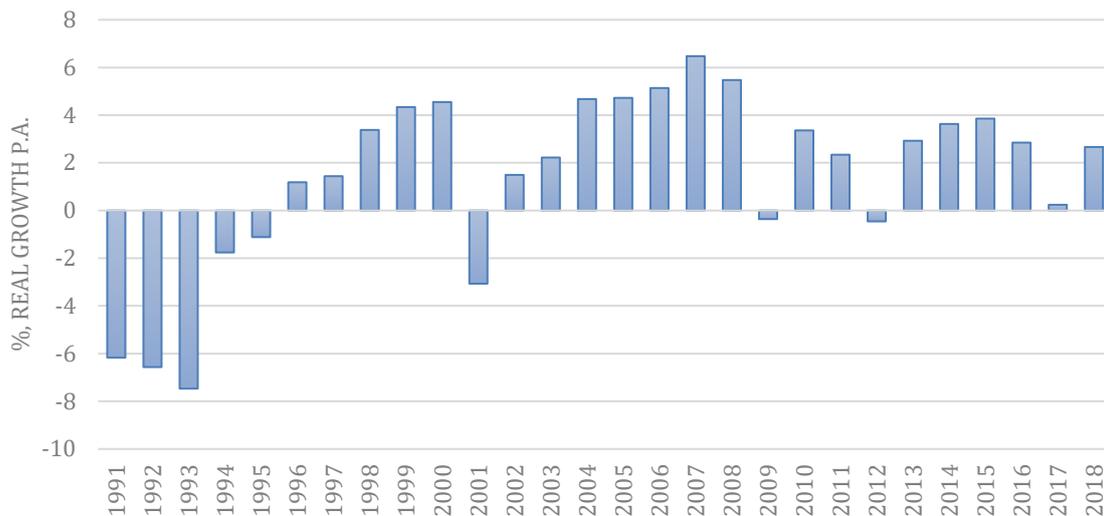
¹³ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/northmacedonia/overview#3>

¹⁴ <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2020/04/16/Republic-of-North-Macedonia-Request-for-Purchase-Under-the-Rapid-Financing-Instrument-Press-49340>

¹⁵ Ministry of Finance, State budget for 2018

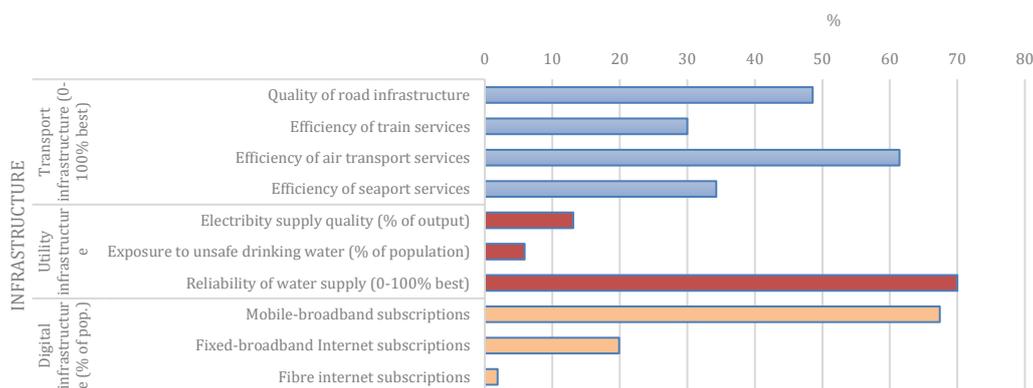
technology. Agriculture has been hampered by small farm size and insufficient agricultural infrastructure such as access roads, irrigation and drainage systems. High level of fragmentation of agricultural land makes the use of modern, large-scale technologies unattractive and is a limiting factor to sustainable agricultural intensification. Agriculture is highly subsidized, with direct payments in the form of simple cash transfers and few incentives for farmers to modernize or invest in productivity growth.¹⁶ Such support does not facilitate the necessary structural transformation in agriculture. Shifting from direct subsidies to carefully targeted support for farm competitiveness and broader rural development would enhance agricultural efficiency and productivity, encourage high-value production and unlock the sector’s full potential.

Figure 1: Real GDP Growth



Between 2009 and 2019, the overall quality of infrastructure in North Macedonia has improved from the 66th percentile on the World Competitiveness Index to the 53rd percentile. Despite progress, the overall quality of infrastructure remains weak (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Infrastructure Access and Quality



Source: World Economic Forum 2019. Categories measured on (1-7) scale have been rescaled to (0-100 percent).

¹⁶ Subsidies for market support and direct payments constitute 80 percent of the agricultural budget, leaving just 10 percent for rural development and 10 percent for all other functions. Source: World Bank (2019) Sowing the Seeds of a Sustainable Future. North Macedonia Public Finance Review 2019 available at: <https://bit.ly/2y8o52Z>

1.4 Demographic and labour force trends

The population of North Macedonia is estimated at 2.08 million (2018). This is based on projections of 2002 census data and is likely an overestimate as large-scale emigration – approximated at around 0.5 million between 1990-2017¹⁷ – has not been factored in. Many Macedonian citizens have obtained Bulgarian passports to migrate to EU countries; low-skilled citizens are more likely to migrate to Germany and Switzerland, while skilled workers migrate transcontinental.¹⁸ Though reliable data is limited, such large-scale migration – especially of young and skilled workers – has had an impact on the size of the labour force and quality of human capital¹⁹ On the positive side, the country receives remittances of around US\$ 300 million annually which accounted for 2.5 percent of GDP in 2019.²⁰ But there are estimates that remittances could be as high as €600 million / US\$710 million per year, or 5-6 percent of GDP, if transfers that do not pass through official channels are taken into account²¹ Remittances play an important role in poverty reduction since most money is used for private consumption.

The birth rate in the country is in decline and the population has been ageing, in line with the broader European trend. Between 2013 and 2018, the fertility rate declined from 1.48 to 1.42, which is below the EU average (1.6) and far below the replacement level (2.1). By 2035, a 10 percent decline in the population is expected. In 2019, people older than 65 years comprised 14 percent of the population and their share is expected to increase to 18.8 percent by 2030.²² This will have serious fiscal implications as the pension payments and healthcare expenditure for the elderly will increase. COVID-19 further exposed the vulnerability of elderly in the country.

The overall labour force participation in the country is 66.3 percent (77.3 percent for men and 54.8 percent for women). Employment rates (2019) revealed large gender gap, with women's employment rate only 48.4 percent compared to 69.7 percent for men. In 2019, unemployment in 15-64 age group was at 17.4 percent and inactivity level at 33.7 percent.²³ Youth unemployment rate (15-24) was 35.6 percent, while the rate of youth NEET (15-29) was 29.8 percent in 2018 (men 25.9 percent and women 33.9 percent). NEET rates were much higher for Roma community, estimated at 71 percent for Roma youth in 2017 (81 percent women, 67 percent men).²⁴ Overall, women, youth and ethnic communities are more likely to be out of labour force, unemployed or in precarious employment. Such large unemployment and relatively low activity rates, in particular for women, are a wasted opportunity and is untenable in the context of large-scale emigration. Unused labour potential is a major growth constraint.

However, despite growth slowdown, new jobs are created, mainly in manufacturing, transport and storage, and unemployment has been declining to 17.4 percent in 2019.²⁵ The positive trend has been driven by a combination of market (intensified opening of foreign-owned factories) and non-market factors (active labour market policies). High, yet declining unemployment may be concealing structural problems, including low activity rate.²⁶ A unique feature of the unemployment structure in the country is its structural or long-term character. As many as 56 percent of those unemployed have been unemployed for four years or more and 78 percent of those unemployed have been looking for a job for one year or more. Also, 25 percent of

¹⁷ These are World Bank calculations based on UN population statistics in *Seizing a Brighter Future for All, FYRM Systematic Country Diagnostic*, November 2018, p35

¹⁸ Brücker H., Capuano, S. and Marfouk, A. (2013). *Education, gender and international migration: insights from a panel dataset 1980-2010*, mimeo.

¹⁹ Youth Study North Macedonia 2018/2019, The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

²⁰ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/migrationremittancesdiasporaissues/brief/migration-remittances-data>

²¹ Petreski, M. & Jovanovic, B. eds. (2013). *Remittances and Development in the Western Balkans: The cases of Macedonia, Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Scholars' Press.

²² World Population Dashboard, UNFPA

²³ http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/2020/2.1.20.06_mk.pdfEndFragment

²⁴ In comparison NEET rate in EU is 14.3 percent and in Germany 8.6 percent. Source: Regional Roma Survey, UNDP, 2017. Also see <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/01/30/roma-face-brunt-of-western-balkans-demographic-crisis/>

²⁵ http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/2020/2.1.20.06_mk.pdf

²⁶ European Commission Progress Report on North Macedonia, 2019, page 50

workers retire between the age of 55 and 64; over his lifetime, an average Macedonian man loses 25 years of productive years and woman loses 30 years.²⁷

As per 2002 census data, of 1,596,267 people aged 15 and above, 67,358 (4.2 percent) were without education, while 219,507 (14 percent) had incomplete primary education. There are no indications to suggest that the situation has improved significantly and hundreds of thousands of adults likely remain illiterate or without completed primary education.

High unemployment can be traced to multiple factors, including structure of the economy, unfavourable education system, skills mismatch, rising wages – due to a hike in minimum wages and skills shortage from emigration – and high share of informal economy. The latter is estimated at between 30 and 40 percent of GDP and annually costing 0.8 percent of GDP,²⁸ which undermines competitiveness of the economy and acts as an impediment to doing business. The unfavourable educational structure of the labour force in the country led employers to articulate stronger voices in demanding skilled labour. In 2019, 26 percent of the manufacturing employers reported lack of qualified labour force as a limiting factor of production, compared to only 5 percent a decade ago. This raised a series of unstructured voices by economic chambers for importing labour force.²⁹

Due to emigration and skills scarcity, accelerated job creation, particularly by foreign factories, and Government support to employment creation and wages, the average net wage rate in the country increased from MKD 20,000 to MKD 25,000 between 2009 and 2019. Large recent increases in the minimum wage (a cumulative increase of 45 percent since 2016) have also not been aligned with productivity and represents a major risk for employment and formalization of economy.³⁰

Collective bargaining in the country is weak. The overall density of trade union membership is still high when compared to other countries in Central and Eastern Europe (approximately 22 percent in 2017 as compared to the EU average of 23 percent), but most members are from the public sector. There are no trade unions in most of the private foreign companies in TIDZs. Recently established employers' organizations face the dual challenge of expanding their membership base and increasing their capacity to effectively engage with Government and trade unions in policymaking.

The COVID-19 pandemic has imposed more challenges on society, especially amongst the most vulnerable including women, older persons, and people with disabilities. Across the region, including in North Macedonia, there has been a trend of returning labour migrants which will reduce remittances flow and may contribute to a rise in unemployment.

1.5 Poverty and inequality

The country estimates the at-risk-of-poverty rate (the share of people below the at-risk-poverty threshold income after social transfers) at 60 percent of the national median equalized disposable income after social transfers.

When so measured, the at-risk-of-poverty rate in North Macedonia in 2018 was 21.9 percent - a decline from 35 percent in 2009. Economic growth and favourable labour market developments (including growth of jobs and wages), growth of pensions and social assistance, introduction of and increases in the minimum wage, all contributed to such a decline in at-risk-of-poverty rates. The significance of social transfers may be gauged from the fact that in the absence of social transfers, the at-risk-of-poverty rate would have been 40.8 percent (instead of 21.9 percent).

²⁷ Seizing a Brighter Future for All: FYRM Systematic Country Diagnostic, World Bank, November 2018.

²⁸ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/northmacedonia/overview#3>. However, the official share of informal economy is 18 percent based on the SSO data.

²⁹ See, e.g. <https://www.24.mk/details/stopanstvenici-baraat-uvoz-na-rabotnici-od-stranstvo>

³⁰ IMF 2019

The Human Development Report 2019 ranks North Macedonia at 82 (High Human Development) with HDI of 0.76. Cumulatively, HDIs have grown at 11 percent annually between 2003 and 2018.

Income distribution in the country is becoming more equal. As measured by Gini index, income inequality declined from 33.6 percent in 2016 to 31.9 percent in 2018. At this level, it was not very different from EU average of 30.9 percent.³¹

Beyond 2009, the growth has been more pro-poor with heavy Government interventions in the poorest decile. Between 2007 and 2017, incomes of the bottom 40 percent grew by 39.1 percent compared with average growth of 22.3 percent.³²

The at-risk-of-poverty situation is most critical in households of two adults with three or more dependent children (50.2 percent) and least critical (6.1 percent) in single-person household (65 years or older). Single-parent households with dependent children face an at-risk-of-poverty rate of 33.5 percent.³³ At-risk-of-poverty rate was 41.9 percent for the unemployed (men 46.5 percent, women 35.2 percent) and 8.8 percent for the employed. Other inactive population faced at-risk-of-poverty rate of 31.1 percent with no significant difference between men and women. Poverty is higher in rural areas (30 percent) than in urban (17 percent).³⁴ It is also higher in the northern regions of the country.³⁵ Poverty is much higher among women,³⁶ and ethnic minorities.³⁷ Also, at-risk-of-poverty rate for children remains high (30.9 percent in 2013, 28.6 percent in 2015 and 2016, and 29.9 percent in 2017).

The improvements in the poverty indicators based on income have been accompanied by improvements in non-monetary poverty indicators. For example, the share of households with indoor toilet with access to water was 94.6 percent in 2017. The number of households with inadequate housing conditions (leaking roof, wet walls, floors, foundation or rot in window frames or floors) declined to about 13 percent from 25 percent a decade ago. The access to electricity is universal; 92 percent of homes have water supply; and 91 percent access to basic sanitary conditions.³⁸

The social protection system in North Macedonia is heavily tilted in favour of pensions with poorly designed and inadequate social assistance to the vulnerable groups. Social assistance reduces poverty by only 3 percentage points compared to pensions that reduce it by 16 percentage points. Following the reform in the social protection system in 2019, social transfers have increased. For example, compared to the old system of Social Financial Assistance (SFA), the new system of Guaranteed Minimum Assistance (GMA) provides both the child allowance and education allowance to GMA beneficiaries. The total transfers per household under GMA thus increased and was twice (Euro 100) of what the beneficiaries received under SFA (Euro 48).³⁹ Figure 3 below shows the importance of social transfers and pensions for the poorest quintile with wages accounting for only 33 percent of total disposable income.

³¹ Some other countries in the region have higher Gini index, e.g. Serbia exceeding 35 percent.

³² Human Development Report 2019, UNDP

³³ Press Release, Poverty Line, Republic of North Macedonia, SSO, 23 December 2019.

³⁴ Seizing a Brighter Future for All: FYRM Systematic Country Diagnostic, World Bank, November 2018., page 26

³⁵ Ibid, page 27

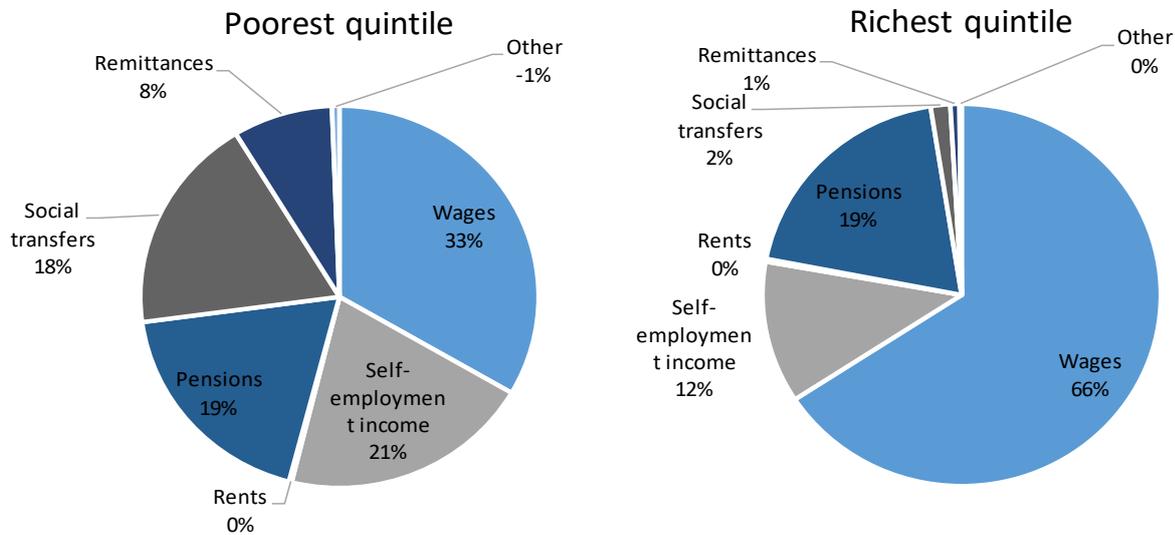
³⁶ As per a study, 62 percent of the at-risk-of-poverty and exclusion households are found to be headed by women. A women-headed household is 7.3 percent more likely to be AROPE. Source: Mapping of Social Vulnerabilities and Exclusion at Local Level Using a Gender Lens – A Report, Republic of North Macedonia, UN Women, 2018

³⁷ As per Quality of Life Survey 2017, an average ethnic Macedonian earned four times more market income than a Roma.

³⁸ Survey on Income and Living Conditions – SSO.

³⁹ Voluntary National Review, May 2020 (page 67)

Figure 3: Social Transfers for Poorest Quintiles



Source: Survey on Income and Living Conditions 2018 – State Statistical Office

1.6 Health and education

North Macedonia spends 6.3 percent of GDP on healthcare (2017) and this proportion has remained stable over the years. Health expenditure is below EU-17 levels, which is around 10 percent, but some countries like Romania and the Baltics are similar to North Macedonia.⁴⁰ The country has done well in terms of improving life expectancy, reducing maternal mortality and infant mortality; however, systemic changes are needed to sustain the declining trend. While nearly all births are attended by skilled health personnel, service delivery is fragmented and there is a lack of care continuum. Secondary hospitals are not distributed according to needs, and levels of mother and newborn health care are not defined⁴¹. TB incidence has been steadily declining from 20.5 to 10.6 (between 2010 and 2018) per 100,000. Most of the target population was covered by vaccination though it was still below the recommended 95 percent. The full immunisation coverage was lowest (56.8 percent) for Roma children (24-35 months) compared to non-Roma children (84.5 percent).

Yet in many areas the performance has not been sufficient. Perinatal mortality at 16 per 1000 live births was among the highest in Europe in 2016. Infant mortality declined to 6.8 in 2011 from 17.2 in 1990, but then again increased to 11.9 per 1000 live births in 2016. According to the official statistics of from the State Statistical Office (SSO) the infant mortality rate as of 2018 was 5.7. Although both maternal mortality and infant mortality have declined, accessibility and quality of emergency obstetrics and neonatal care is limited due to a poor referral system and insufficient number and capacity of health care providers. Protocols and guidelines are not adapted, and, where in existence, are not implemented. Related benefits package and entitlements are not known or inadequately communicated. Standards of care are not well recognized and not routinely utilized⁴². It is indicated that the quality of care for mothers and infants is often suboptimal and

⁴⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Healthcare_expenditure_statistics

⁴¹ Joint MOH/WHO/ UNICEF /UNFPA assessment mission on reversing neonatal mortality trends and improving pregnancy outcome and child health 19-24 March 2018, Skopje

⁴² Joint MOH/WHO/ UNICEF /UNFPA assessment mission on reversing neonatal mortality trends and improving pregnancy outcome and child health 19-24 March 2018, Skopje

that some improvements are needed to achieve a standard level of care, whereas in some cases significant improvements are needed to ensure a standard level of care.⁴³

The total adolescent birth rate is 21; in Roma settlements, the birth rate is 114⁴⁴. The modern contraceptive prevalence rate among women aged 15–49 years (not in union/married) in seven years increased for only 1.2 per cent, from 12.8 per cent in 2011 to 14.0 in 2018. Among the Roma population, this percentage is even lower at 8.6 in 2018.⁴⁵

North Macedonia is a low HIV prevalence country with the total number of cases reported at 460 since 1987. The number of new HIV infections were reported at 57 in 2019 of which 55 were male (70 percent are MSM).⁴⁶ As the country's population is ageing, health services have to especially address the needs of the older persons including health services, including socio-psychological support, and lifelong education. The national health data lacks information on sex and reproductive health including use of contraceptives.

The growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is a major health challenge. In 2017, NCDs accounted for 84.5 percent of all disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) lost.⁴⁷ In 2018 the mortality rate from cardiovascular diseases, cancer, and chronic respiratory diseases was 20 percent (for those aged 30–70) which was much higher than the EU average of 13 percent.⁴⁸ Rates for cancer (especially lung cancer for men) have increased considerably (from 15.7 per 100,000 inhabitants in 1991 to 53.8 in 2016 to 67.3 in 2018).⁴⁹ NCDs also have huge economic costs. WHO estimated that the country is losing 19,900 productive years annually due to early retirement, disability and premature deaths.⁵⁰ The high air pollution in recent years is also a pressing issue with large health-related economic costs. The annual loss of GDP due to air pollution, which is caused mostly by fossil fuels, is estimated at 3.2 percent.⁵¹ There are risk factors contributing to heavy burden of NCDs including obesity⁵² or overweight, tobacco consumption⁵³, alcohol consumption, dietary habits, and lifestyles. Poor nutrition and unhealthy lifestyles are prevalent in North Macedonia⁵⁴; data from anthropometric measurements of children show that about 39.4 percent of boys and 32.9 percent of girls are overweight, and 20.3 percent of boys and 16 percent of girls are obese.⁵⁵

The coverage of health insurance is almost universal with 90.3 percent of people in 2016. However, 20.5 percent of people have faced challenges using the healthcare services (SILC data). This figure mimics the poverty rate (21.8 percent in 2016), suggesting a link between the difficulty in accessing healthcare and income poverty. In 2017, out of pocket expenditures was 31.91 percent of current health expenditure.⁵⁶ This level of out-of-pocket expenditure creates difficulties of healthcare access particularly for the poor, refugees and asylum seekers and people with disabilities creating social discrepancies in health care.

Although the country has attained universal literacy, the quality of education remains a key priority area for all ages and levels. According to the international OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Macedonian pupils are lagging significantly behind their international peers, although the progress between 2015 and 2018 has been notable (as indicated in Table 1: PISA scores).

There are also inequalities in early childhood education with only 7.4 percent of the children from the poorest quintile attending pre-primary school compared with 67.4 percent of the children in the richest quintile. Ethnicity is another determinant with 53.9 percent Macedonian children, of which 14.1 percent ethnic

⁴³ Evaluation of the Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care Availability, Use and Quality in Macedonia – UNFPA Report 2018

⁴⁴ North Macedonia [MICS Survey](#)

⁴⁵ Ibid, page 70

⁴⁶ <https://www.iph.mk/en/overview-of-the-epidemiological-situation-with-hiv-in-north-macedonia-and-the-results-achieved-under-the-2019-hiv-population-protection-program-up-to-december-1/>

⁴⁷ IHME 2017

⁴⁸ WHO NCDs Progress Monitor 2020

⁴⁹ Institute of Public Health

⁵⁰ WHO Global Health Observatory data repository.

⁵¹ Seizing a Brighter Future for All: FYRM Systematic Country Diagnostic, World Bank, November 2018

⁵² It may be noted that 22% of men and women were found to be obese in 2018.

⁵³ Prevalence of tobacco use among persons above 15 years was found to be 46% (54% men, 33% women).

⁵⁴ A UNICEF supported survey on micronutrient intake in 2017 showed that the food for children in pre-school and school population is not planned systematically, general recommendations for energy consumption are not followed and there is a low consumption of nutritionally rich food like fruit and vegetables and milk and dairy.

⁵⁵ Institute of Public Health of the Republic of Macedonia. Report out the implementation of round 4 of the WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (COSI) in the Republic of Macedonia. Skopje: IPH; 2017

⁵⁶ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.OOPC.CH.ZS>

Albanian children and 9.8 percent children from other ethnicities (including Roma) in early childhood education. A similar survey conducted exclusively within the Roma settlements showed that only 11.9 percent Roma children were in early childhood education. Also, percentage of children in early childhood education in urban areas is much higher (46.6 percent) than in rural areas.⁵⁷ Children who attend early childhood education have more developed socio-emotional skills in later life.

Table 1: PISA scores

		<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Science</i>
North Macedonia	2015	371	352	384
	2018	394	393	413
International average		489	487	489

Source: PISA Report (<https://pisadataexplorer.oecd.org/ide/idepisa/report.aspx>)

At the primary school level, 1.7 percent of primary school age children were out-of-school with 7.9 percent children out of school from non-ethnic Macedonian and non-ethnic Albanian ethnicities. More children in urban areas (2.3 percent) were out of school than in rural areas (0.7 percent) and more children from poorest quintile were out of school (3.6 percent) than none from the richest quintile.⁵⁸

Weak performance extends to secondary education with a higher out of school rate at 8.4 percent going up to 22.5 percent among the poorest quintile. The overall secondary school completion rate was 87.4 percent, but it drops to 64.4 percent among the poorest quintile.⁵⁹ A survey within the Roma settlements showed that 52.8 percent Roma children were out of secondary education – a ratio that goes up to 79.5 percent if we consider the poorest quintile. Among the Roma children, the secondary school completion rate was 36.9 percent and among the Roma poorest quintile as low as 11.7 percent.⁶⁰ While ethnicity and wealth status were significant determinants of educational attainments, there were no significant gender differences. There is no disaggregated data about pupils with disabilities in primary and secondary education and the number of pupils with disabilities that transfer from primary to secondary education.

UNDP's Human Development Report also documents significant discrepancies between pupils residing in poor and in well-off households. For example, 37 percent of youth living in the poorest households have been out of school, compared to 1 percent in the richest households. Similarly, despite being compulsory, the rates for completion of secondary education are devastatingly low among the poorest segments. The poorest segments also feature worse in terms of their attendance of universities, with rates for completion of higher education limited to 0 percent, as compared to rates of 40 percent to 70 percent for the richest segments. To a large extent, such inequalities of opportunities relate more to parental endowments and to the perpetuation of early inequalities than to income, especially since primary and secondary education, and to a large extent public tertiary education, are free of charge.

1.7 Climate change, environmental protection and natural resources

The country faces multiple environmental problems, further exacerbated by climate change, such as:

- pollution of water bodies due to disposal of untreated wastewater; depletion of groundwater and wastage of water due to inefficient irrigation infrastructure;

⁵⁷ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2018-2019, SSO-UNFPA-UNICEF, May 2020 (page 178) At the national level, 36.8 percent children (age 36-59 months) were in early childhood education.

⁵⁸ Ibid, page 184

⁵⁹ Ibid, page 189

⁶⁰ Ibid, page 201

- poor air quality especially in the cities due to high CO₂ emissions mainly contributed by energy production and energy use inefficiencies; industry, transport and agricultural infrastructure; private properties and business and agricultural activities;
- energy use inefficiencies; high CO₂ emissions mainly contributed by energy, industry and agriculture⁶¹ causing loss of life and damages of water, transport and agricultural infrastructure, private properties, business and agricultural activities;
- lack of biodiversity protection and forest degradation due to large-scale illegal felling, particularly for fuel wood improper and unsafe waste disposal and lack of remediation of historical contamination sites.

In the Environmental Performance Index (EPI), the country ranked 68 out of 168 countries. The Third UNECE Environmental Performance Review (EPR) of North Macedonia, carried out in 2018-2019, assesses the progress made by the country in managing its environment and in addressing new challenges since the Second Environmental Performance Review in 2011. The Review's findings and recommendations have been referenced and integrated in this CCA.

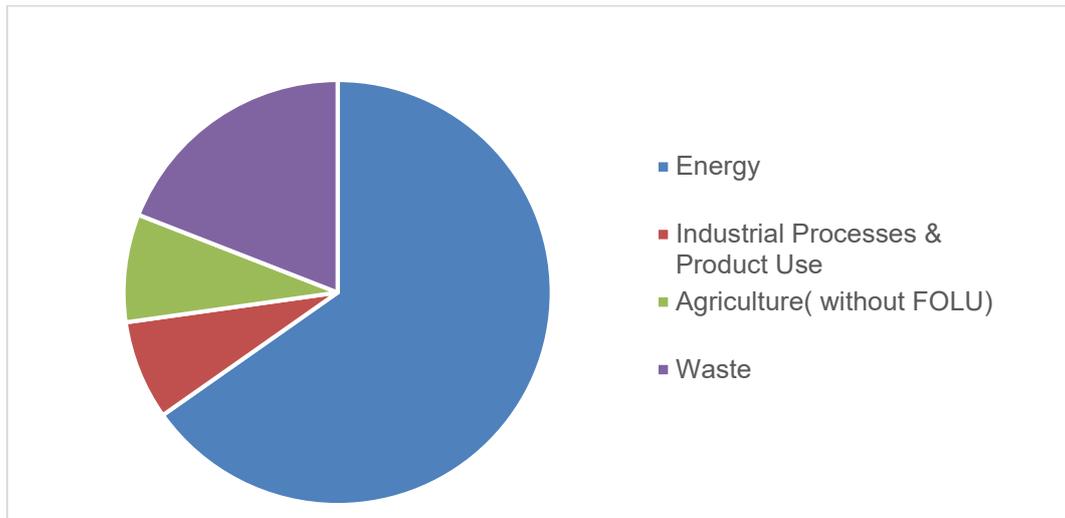
The country's economy and people's quality of life is dependent on climate-sensitive natural resources, making the protection of natural resources and their sustainable use a key priority for the Government. The country has ratified numerous Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA) and is continuing efforts to enhance environmental protection and natural resources management. The EU accession process and alignment with the EU's environmental policies opens opportunities for a shift towards low carbon development and more sustainable management of natural resources. North Macedonia ratified the UNFCCC in 1997 and the Paris Agreement in November 2017 in its commitment to join the global climate change mitigation efforts. North Macedonia set up monitoring and reporting mechanisms, and regularly fulfils reporting obligations under the UNFCCC, Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement. The country is also working on strengthening its national institutions for monitoring, reporting and verification of emissions, mitigation and adaptation. It has been praised as one of the only 16 countries that are on track to honour their commitments under the Paris Agreement.

North Macedonia has not yet undertaken obligations of the Annex-1 countries but will have to do so once EU accession negotiations start. Annual greenhouse gas emissions decreased from 10.0 Mt CO₂-eq. in 1996 to 7.0 MtCO₂ eq in 2017⁶² which is partially due to changed methodologies in the calculations of the emissions, as well as availability and better access to data. As a party of the UNFCCC, North Macedonia delivered its Intended National Determined Contributions (INDCs) with an overall goal to reduce the CO₂ emissions from fossil fuels combustion for 30 percent, that is, for 36 percent at a higher level of ambition, by 2030 compared to the business as usual (BAU) scenario. This initial commitment targeted sectors such as Energy Supply, Buildings and Transport; it also recognized the potential of the Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector to reduce emissions. The revision of the NDC is expected to further increase the ambitions for reduction of GHG emissions. The enhanced mitigation targets for North Macedonia as an EU candidate country will be a step forward towards the alignment with the EU's ambitious Green Deal which aims to make Europe the first climate neutral continent by 2050.

Figure 4 below shows that the greatest share of GHG emissions comes from the Energy sector at 65.2 percent followed by the Waste sector at 19 percent, Agriculture excluding FOLU (Forestry and Other Land Use) at 8.2 percent, and the IPPU sector with 7.6 percent.

⁶² IEA: <https://www.iea.org/data-and-statistics?country=FYROM&fuel=CO2%20emissions&indicator=Total%20CO2%20emissions>

Figure 4: Distribution of GHG emissions by the main sectors (2014)



In 2020, North Macedonia enacted a long-term Strategy on Energy Development until 2040, as the platform for overall energy sector modernization and transformation in line with EU energy trends. This aims to facilitate enhanced access, integration and affordability of energy services; reduce local and global pollution and increase private sector participation in the energy sector. The Strategy integrates climate and environmental aspects of the energy sector while proposing affordable, reliable and sustainable energy for the future.

The Strategy is based on the following five pillars:

1. **Energy efficiency:** to maximize energy savings up to 51.8% of primary and 27.5% of final energy through measures to implement energy efficiency in buildings, public sector, industry, transport and promotion of efficient heating and cooling;
2. **Integration and security of energy markets:** to ensure stronger integration into European markets;
3. **Decarbonisation:** to decrease by 2040, GHG emissions up to 61.5% vs. 2005 or 72.8% vs. BAU, while strongly increasing the usage of renewable energy sources in a sustainable manner up to 45% in gross final energy consumption;
4. **Research and innovation and competitiveness:** to minimize total system costs based on least cost optimization taking into consideration country specific situation; and
5. **Legal and regulatory aspects:** for full compliance with Energy Community acquis.⁶³

The implementation of the strategy depends on the secondary legislation (related to energy efficiency goals, eco design for the products, energy efficiency in public procurement procedures, energy audit of big companies, building energy characteristics, etc.) which is yet to be prepared and adopted.

All priorities defined in the Strategy were considered while developing the climate change legislation, long-term climate action strategy (under preparation), and relevant climate change policy documents including the Fourth National Communication on Climate change and Third Biennial Report on climate change. As the energy sector is by far the largest contributor to the GHG emissions in the country, the proposed strategy measures could contribute in parallel to climate change mitigation.

⁶³ It is the core EU energy legislation and ensures that the contracting parties keep pace with EU developments and continuously align their regulatory frameworks in the energy and related sectors to those of the EU.

According to the results of the climate change projections and changes in climate extremes up to the year 2100, the country will face hotter and drier climate in the future. Amplitude of this change will primarily depend of the future concentration of GHG. Associated with hotter climate in future, an increase in hot extremes and a decrease in cold extremes are expected, along with even a drier condition that could potentially increase extreme precipitation and pose a higher risk of flash floods. On the other hand, expected decrease in summer precipitation and the extension in duration of consecutive dry days will increase the risk of drought. Finally, due to warmer climate, season lengths will increase on average.

Extreme weather events, including droughts, would likely result in the loss of topsoil and reduced overall soil quality, decreased biomass production and crop yields, and limited fodder availability for livestock farming. The negative impact of climate change on agriculture is expected to translate into negative impacts on yields by 2050, particularly perennial and summer crops.

The consequences of climate change are expected to vary significantly throughout North Macedonia with explicit implications in the southern part of the country such as increased average temperatures and reduced access to water. This effect would enhance current vulnerabilities in terms of droughts, forest fires and heat waves. In terms of population groups, small farmers are particularly vulnerable. Women also bear disproportionate burden of climate change as managers of natural resources and care providers for the family.

The country has made significant efforts to access climate finance particularly through the Green Climate Fund (GCF), while exploring access to diverse sources of climate finance including partnering with the private sector. The policy framework and the human and technical capacities devoted to estimate the likely economic impact of climate change and combat climate change are not sufficient. In absence of legislation or an overall strategic document, the National Communications are setting priority actions for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Sectoral strategies e.g. the Energy Strategy are also defining the priority actions that are contributing to mitigation or adaptation. Coordination amongst the different ministries takes place in the National Climate Change Committee, which has been inactive for a long time, but the new Law on Climate Action is expected to further define its composition and role.

Availability of water in the country will decline, also due to unknown and unregulated use of surface water and groundwater, especially by the industry, enabled by the lack of accurate data for monitoring. Water demand from other areas, such as for drinking water, is increasing. There is no nexus approach which highlights the interdependencies between achieving water, energy and food security for human well-being, e. g. basic services and economic development, while ensuring ecologically sustainable use of globally essential resources.

Rivers are largely polluted, and unlikely to meet the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) criteria for the status “good”. Bigger cities still have no sewage treatment plants. Certain rural areas have developed combined domestic sewage and storm wastewater collection systems, but no treatment is performed prior to wastewater discharge. Landfills close to rivers or lakes are a further source of pollution by infiltration or run-off into surface water and groundwater.

The country is vulnerable to river floods and flash floods, but an effective system of flood prediction, warnings, and appropriate measures is missing, bar some Flood Risk Management Plans developed with donor support. Total economic damage caused by floods from 1990 until 2020 is estimated to be US\$ 382 million.⁶⁴ The country is yet to establish river basin management councils (RBMCs) and to develop detailed criteria for representation of various groups of stakeholders, methodological guidance and funding issues. The National Water Council is not in operation.

North Macedonia has successfully preserved the abundance of wild native species of fauna, fungi and flora. These include numerous species categorized by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as globally threatened by extinction, species included in the European Red List and many endemic species, such as the Balkan lynx and Balkan chamois. The integrity of almost all-natural ecosystems in the country

⁶⁴ https://www.emdat.be/emdat_db/

is currently threatened due to the climate changes, but also due to anthropogenic pressures, resulting in habitat degradation and the increasing threat of forest fires. The process of revalorization and re-proclamation of existing protected areas has not yet been completed, which impeded the preparation and adoption of all required management plans for protected areas. Protected areas covered 8.93 percent of the country's territory in 2017, which is well below the minimum value of at least 17 per cent by 2020 indicated in the CBD Aichi Biodiversity Target 11.

The National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) created in 2009 after the Hyogo Framework, was aligned accordingly in 2015, when the country acceded to the Sendai Framework on DRR, aimed at prevention of disasters and facilitating early warning and response during crises and recovery. The Sendai Framework sets the priorities to prevent new and decrease existing disaster risks in the period 2015-2030, which requires substantial capacity strengthening. Fortunately, the country benefits from the support of multiple UN agencies, the EU, and other development actors at national and local level to build disaster and climate resilience following the “building back better” approach.

The concept of “building back better” was adopted at the UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015. It uses disaster as a trigger or an opportunity to create more resilient societies and nations than before. It combines the principles of disaster risk reduction and sustainable development to improve resilience and prepare societies for future shocks and disasters. It promotes improved land use, spatial planning, improved building codes among others and addresses the root causes of vulnerability. Institutionally, it encourages empowerment of local bodies and establishing risk management systems DRR is a comprehensive task that require policy and institutional coordination and cooperation, clearly defined institutional obligations and support of the public, civil society and expert community.

2 Country progress towards the Agenda 2030

2.1 National vision for sustainable development

Since the endorsement of the SDGs in 2015, the country has undergone a politically sensitive period, prioritizing the resolution of political issues that impeded the Euro-Atlantic accession process. North Macedonia does not have an articulated long-term national development strategy. The National Strategy for Sustainable Development for 2009-2030 was developed prior to the formulation of the SDGs in 2015 and therefore does not address all aspects and the integrated approach of Agenda 2030.

The country has prepared its first Voluntary National Review⁶⁵ which sets the baseline for more effective planning of sustainable development. Within this process, the Government has drafted a set of national SDG indicators, but these need to be formally adopted and a set of targets must be streamlined within the national strategies.

EU accession policies broadly converge with the SDG framework, with two-third of the agenda fully in line, and the remaining refers to areas of “national competence” which fall outside EU accession protocols (such as health and education). Integrating EU accession within the SDG framework is an opportunity to accelerate sustainable development. It is therefore important to identify the specific UN leverage, not only in the areas not covered by the EU (e.g. health), but also in the areas where the UN has competence notably in mainstreaming Leave No One Behind (LNOB) aspects in the EU reforms.

Although there is no one comprehensive long-term national development strategy, there are a set of strategic documents which may constitute the development pathway: The Government Programme 2021-2025⁶⁶, the Economic Reform Programme 2020-2022⁶⁷ and the National Plan for Adoption of Acquis (NPAA). Yet, the short duration of the first two programmes could hardly be called a long-term vision for the country. Nevertheless, the following strategic directions can be culled out of the strategic documents: 1) Economic growth, more productive jobs, particularly for youth; 2) More dynamic private sector, with focus on domestic SMEs; 3) Health, education and social protection for all; 4) Improved governance – rule of law, access to justice, human rights, professional police for security of all citizens, free media; 5) environmental protection and disaster risk preparedness; and 6) social cohesion and promotion of multi-cultural and tolerant society.

A Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) that was carried out in 2019 to tag the nationalised SDGs with national development policies found that 83 percent of SDGs and targets are aligned with the national development documents. If alignment with the international obligations is also considered, then the percentage goes up to 98 percent. The same study also looked at EU acquis from the lens of alignment with SDGs. About 65 percent of the SDG targets (109 of 169 targets), were found to be having strong link with the chapters of the Acquis Communautaire.⁶⁸ Chapter 27 (Environment), 23 (Justice and Human Rights) and 17 (Employment and Social Policy) represent the greatest drivers of SDG progress. In addition, the VNR report also reports progress against a set of national indicators⁶⁹.

The government's key national priority is EU accession. Despite strong alignment, as mentioned above, there is weak integration of the SDG agenda with national development strategies, sector strategies and

⁶⁵ The first Voluntary National Review is due for presentation in July 2020.

⁶⁶ <https://vlada.mk/node/18029?ln=en-gb>

⁶⁷ <https://vlada.mk/node/18029?ln=en-gb0>

⁶⁸ The European Pathways of the Republic of North Macedonia: Achieving Fast, More Inclusive Sustainable Growth, Government of North Macedonia-EU-UNDP, February 2020

⁶⁹ [VNR Statistical Annex](#)

ongoing reforms for EU accession. Many of the sector strategies, though directly linked to the SDGs, make no explicit reference to them. For the achievement of the SDGs and national development objectives, the SDG agenda should be better integrated with EU accession process.

Overall, a deeper SDG analysis, which identifies acceleration opportunities, financing options, and establishes a national SDG M&E framework is highly desirable, as well as a SDG financing analysis.

Absence of political consensus around strategic issues is a key challenge the country is facing. This is even more serious than the risk of political instability. Most policies confine themselves to a very short political period of four years or less, thus seriously jeopardising continuity of reforms and create reform fatigue among the citizens. Policymaking shows signs of being ad hoc and populist rather than based on carefully collected evidence. High and mounting subsidies, including those to top up low incomes, is an example. The above is further exacerbated by insufficient institutional capacities for policy planning and implementation, which does not only challenge the Agenda 2030 but also the overall development policy making in the country. A more meaningfully consultative, participatory, multi-stakeholder approach which makes evidence-based policy decisions is essential.

The people's perception survey⁷⁰ that was conducted with a purpose to inform the report showed that over 75% of the country finds the need for national vision amongst the most urgent priorities in the country, along with the other development challenges described above.

2.2 Progress towards the SDGs

The Government of North Macedonia endorsed the Agenda 2030 in 2015 and thus committed to its implementation. The process of nationalisation of SDGs started in 2015. In 2016 the process of integrating SDG framework into national development plans began. However, the National Council for Sustainable Development, the formal institutional mechanism set up, among others, for coordination of implementation and monitoring of SDGs is not very active. The overall ownership of SDGs is also low as is awareness of the Agenda 2030 among local government authorities.⁷¹

Towards the end of 2018, a decision was made by the National Council for Sustainable Development to prioritize SDGs 1, 4, 8, 13 and 16 as priority development objectives for North Macedonia.⁷² These largely corroborate with UNDAF's 2016–2020 priority areas of cooperation: employment (SDG 8), social inclusion (SDGs 1, 3, 4), good governance (SDG 16), and environmental sustainability and climate action (SDG 13). Gender equality (SDG 5), a priority area in UNDAF, was not adopted as a priority SDG by the National Council. It is also not clear why a selective approach to SDGs was adopted or why SDG 5 was not prioritized.

Even though the Government has reaffirmed commitment to the SDG process, the progress in this regard could be judged as partial. As stated above, EU accession is a priority for North Macedonia. Reaching most EU goals will also achieve, to larger or lesser extent, the SDGs. Therefore, matching EU policies and funds, mechanisms and tools in line with the SDGs should go hand in hand and the two should not be seen as separate processes. The current Public Finance Management reform, specifically the budgetary reforms provides an opportunity to plan, M&E and report against SDGs.

As previously highlighted, the Government has not yet selected a complete set of national SDG indicators or targets. Nor does it monitor the five SDGs which it had prioritized in 2018. The country has also not had a MAPS (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support) mission which generally undertakes a deeper analysis of adaptation of SDGs to the national development processes, identifies acceleration opportunities,

⁷⁰ The people perception survey is an ethnographic field research aimed to understand people's priorities personal through collecting first-hand narratives and to validate the findings from the desk review. The survey was conducted in February 2020 on a representative sample of 1096 respondents from the whole country. The research was undertaken in partnership with the Faculty of Philosophy, using innovative mobile-based data collection software (Sense-Maker®) and computer-based analysis tool.

⁷¹ Environmental Performance Review (EPR)-Third Review, UNECE, 2019

⁷² Meeting of the National Council for Sustainable Development, 25 December 2018.

identifies SDG financing options, and establishes a national SDG M&E framework. In view of this, the actual progress of SDGs cannot be assessed with any degree of precision or reliability.

Despite overall good statistical capacity in the country, the data availability for measuring progress of SDGs varies greatly. Although the country has not had a MAPS mission, as noted above, a scoping analysis⁷³ carried out in February 2019 points out lack of data for SDG indicators and mentions that data is available only for 24 indicators with values fully aligned with the UN calculation methodology. Though with relatively modest additional efforts, this could go up to 40 indicators. This is topped up with some 10+ additional indicators from the EU adopted SDGs framework of around 100 indicators (number of indicators varies from year to year, between 99 and 102). In December 2019, however, an “Agenda 2030 indicator framework” workshop was held, as part of the VNR process, with 80 representatives from the Government and UN agencies. In this workshop, a proposed indicator framework of 100 indicators was discussed pending definite agreement on the issue of indicators⁷⁴

Data gaps represent a significant obstacle to evidence-based development policy making. SSO as the primary agency responsible for data collection and the whole national statistical system, need to tailor its statistical capacities towards SDG reporting and needs to set up a dedicated website which could function as a repository of useful SDG related data and statistics.

For measuring the SDG progress, following possible sources were available:

1. The Gap Analysis conducted in 2016 to elaborate SDG mainstreaming into the National Sustainable Development Planning for the Period 2016-2030. The analysis is presently being updated to reflect progress and shifts since 2016.
2. A review of relevant indicators (selection of SDG indicators and/or their best approximations) published in 2019 by SSO.
3. A draft VNR that makes use of data from SILC, SSO, MICS and other sources.
4. The 2019 Sustainable Development Report which includes SDG index and country-specific dashboards⁷⁵

At the time of revising the CCA, a final version of VNR was available which makes use of the SSO data and provides a more complete picture of SDG progress. Hence, this CCA primarily makes use of statistical tables in the VNR to comment on the SDG progress. This information is then supplemented by other sources including the EPR report of UNECE, among others (Table 2).

⁷³ Scoping Analysis of The Potential for Linking the National Open Data Efforts with Monitoring of The SDGs and the EU Accession Progress in North Macedonia, United Nations, February 2019 (draft)

⁷⁴ Voluntary National Review – North Macedonia, May 2020, page 12

⁷⁵ Prepared by Sachs, J., Schmidt-Traub, G., Kroll, C., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G. Bertelsmann, published by Bertelsmann Stiftung and Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN).

Table 2: Assessment of SDG progress in North Macedonia

SDG	Global goals and targets	Assessment
	<p>1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere Targets include eradicating extreme poverty; implementing social protection measures; and ensuring equal access of men and women to economic resources</p> <p>Right to an adequate standard of living [UDHR art. 25; ICESCR art. 11; CRC art. 27]</p> <p>Right to social security [UDHR art. 22; ICESCR art. 9; CRPD art. 28; CRC art. 26]</p> <p>Equal rights of women in economic life [CEDAW arts. 11, 13, 14(2)(g), 15(2), 16(1)]</p>	<p>The proportion of the population living below the national poverty line declined from 27.3 percent in 2010 to 21.9 percent in 2018 [National SDG Indicator 1.2.1]. The poverty rates in 2018 by sex did not reveal any significant differences between men (21.8 percent) and women (22.0 percent). However, youth (15-24 years) faced higher poverty (29.7 percent) than the entire adult population of 15 years and above (20.6 percent). The proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions declined from 47.2 percent (2010) to 41.1 percent (2018). Over 30 percent population was severely materially deprived as per EU SILC data. [NSDG 1.2.2]</p> <p>The country also estimates at-risk-of-poverty rate which is the share of people below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold income (after social transfers) which is set at 60 percent of the national median equalized disposable income (after social transfers). When so measured, at-risk-of-poverty rates in North Macedonia in 2018 was 21.9 percent - a decline from 35 percent in 2009. At-risk-of-poverty rate for children is not declining (30.9 percent in 2013, 28.6 percent in 2015 and 2016, and 29.9 in 2017) [State Statistical Office, Poverty Lines, News Release, 23 December 2019].</p> <p>The social transfers, pensions in particular, play a significant role in poverty reduction. In the absence of social transfers, the at-risk-of-poverty rate would have been 40.8 percent (instead of 21.9 percent) [Ibid]</p> <p>Poverty rate for households with two adults and three or more children was 50.2 percent. Poverty amongst older adults (65 years or more) was lowest at 6.1 percent (for single-person household), which could be due to pensions. [Ibid]</p> <p>The country spends 25 percent of GDP on health, education and social transfers of which 15 percent on social transfers (11 percent on pensions).</p>
	<p>2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture Targets include ending hunger and malnutrition; halting food insecurity, improving agricultural production, sustainable and resilient food production; correcting trade distortions, and ensuring functioning food commodity markets.</p> <p>Right to an adequate standard of living [UDHR art. 25; ICESCR art. 11; CRC art. 27]</p> <p>Right to social security [UDHR art. 22; ICESCR art. 9; CRPD art. 28; CRC art. 26]</p>	<p>Prevalence of food insecurity (severe and moderate and severe food insecurity) indicators based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) were provided by FAO Statistics Division⁷⁶ ESS (State of Food Security and Nutrition team). The FIES has been and will be used for the assessment of impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security in many countries. It is also recommended to be used in North Macedonia.⁷⁷</p> <p>Amongst children under 5 years of age, 4.3 percent were stunted (11.5 percent Roma children) and 11.2 percent were overweight (6.1 percent Roma children). However, 5.6 percent Roma children were underweight compared to less than one percent non-Roma children. [NSDG 2.2.1] [MICS 2018-2019, pp 12-13]</p> <p>But among adults, 10.5 percent were found to be obese and 55.7 percent overweight. [EU SILC]</p> <p>Cultivable area under organic farming is not available. However, area under “productive and sustainable agriculture” is 0.31 percent. [NSDG 2.4.1] [SSO]</p> <p>Subsidies in agriculture are distorting investment decisions and farming efficiency. Structural issues like land markets, small holdings and land fragmentation are being addressed. However, FAO, through the EU funded</p>

⁷⁶ FAO (2019) Food Security and Nutrition Statistics.

⁷⁷ FAO (2020) The Food Insecurity Experience Scale.

Equal rights of women in economic life [CEDAW arts. 11, 13, 14(2)(g), 15(2), 16(1)]

Right to adequate food [UDHR art. 25; ICESCR art. 11; CRC art. 24(2)(c)]

International cooperation, including ensuring equitable distribution of world food supplies [UDHR art. 28; ICESCR arts. 2(1), 11(2)]



3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well – being for all at all ages

Targets include reducing maternal mortality; ending preventable child deaths; ending or reducing AIDS other diseases; universal health coverage, affordable essential medicines, sexual and reproductive health care; vaccine research, and access to medicines.

Right to life [UDHR art. 3; ICCPR art. 6], particularly of women [CEDAW art. 12] and children [CRC art. 6]

Right to health [UDHR art. 25; ICESCR art. 12], particularly of women [CEDAW art. 12]; and children [CRC art.24]; Special protection for mothers and children [ICESCR art.10]

Right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its application [UDHR art. 27; ICESCR art. 15(1)(b)];

International cooperation [UDHR art. 28, DRtD arts. 3-4], particularly in relation to the right to health and children's rights [ICESCR art. 2(1); CRC art. 4]

MAINLAND Project, is supporting the development of an operational National Land Consolidation Programme.⁷⁸

Only around 60-70 percent of the arable land is cultivated⁷⁹ and only 20 percent of land with irrigation facilities is irrigated.

Life expectancy from birth increased from 75 years of age in 2010 to 76 years in 2018.

Almost all births are attended by skilled health personnel [NSDG 3.1.2]; however, service delivery is fragmented and there is a lack of care continuum. Secondary hospitals are not distributed according to needs, and levels of mother and newborn health care are not defined⁸⁰. Under-5 mortality declined to 6 in 2018 after peaking to 12.9 in 2016 [NSDG 3.2.1]. Infant mortality rate has declined from 11.9 (2016) to 5.7 (2018) and perinatal mortality rate declined from 16.0 to 10.4 over the same period. Neonatal mortality also peaked in 2016 (10.2) to decline to 4.1 in 2018 [NSDG 3.2.2] [SSO Vital Statistics Annual]. Still, quality of care is not standardized and with differences throughout the country.

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are emerging as a key health challenge as 50 percent of all deaths are caused by cardiac diseases and 18 percent by cancer (2018) [NSDG 3.4.1].

North Macedonia is a low HIV prevalence country with a total of 460 cases reported since 1987. The number of new HIV infections were reported at 57 in 2019 of which 55 were male (70 percent are MSM) [NSDG 3.3.1]. TB incidence has been steadily declining from 20.5 to 10.6 (between 2010 and 2018) per 100,000 [NSDG 3.3.2] [Institute of Public Health, IPH].

Early marriage is another area of concern. Among Roma women, 45.7 percent married before the age of 18. The adolescent birth rate was 114 for Roma women per 1,000 women in 15-19 age group compared to 21 for non-Roma women [NSDG 3.7.2]. The modern contraceptive prevalence rate among women aged 15-49 years (not in union/married) in seven years increased for only 1.2 per cent, from 12.8 per cent in 2011 to 14.0 in 2018. Among the Roma, this percentage is even lower, 8.6 (in 2018)⁸¹.

Prevalence of tobacco use amongst persons above 15 years was found to be 46 percent (54 percent men, 33 percent women). Over 22 percent men and women were found to be obese (2018) [NSDG 3.a.1] [IPH].

By end of 2019 around 95% of the population were vaccinated, but rates for certain vaccines (Measles for example with 75%) are way below the recommended 95 percent [NSDG 3.b.1].

The current levels of population exposure to PM2.5 are responsible for 1,794 deaths annually in the cities. As per the 2018 report on air quality in Europe

⁷⁸ Mainstreaming of the National Land Consolidation Programme (MAINLAND): www.fao.org/in-action/mainstreaming-national-land-consolidation-programme/en/

⁷⁹ According the Land Parcel Information System of North Macedonia, the total available land is 530,000 ha. The Farm Structure Survey carried out by the SSO in 2016 reported that the total Utilized Agricultural Area (UAA) was 320,738 ha.

⁸⁰ Joint MOH/WHO/ UNICEF /UNFPA assessment mission on reversing neonatal mortality trends and improving pregnancy outcome and child health (19-24 March 2018, Skopje).

⁸¹ Ibid, page 70

(EEA Report No. 12/2018), premature deaths attributable to PM2.5, NO2 and O3 exposure in the country in 2015 were 3,000, 110 and 90 respectively; these deaths can be avoided through active interventions to improve air quality including changing the energy mix.

The number of fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants in road accidents was 6.4 (in 2018) and for every 100,000 vehicles it was 49.1 [NSDG 3.6.1].

The country spends 6.5 percent of GDP on health sector. The out of pocket expenses account for a little over one-third of total expenses.



4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all

Targets include universal access to free, quality pre-primary, primary and secondary education; improving vocational skills; equal access to education; expanding education facilities, scholarships, and training of teachers.

Right to education [UDHR art. 26; ICESCR art. 13], particularly in relation to children [CRC arts. 28, 29]; persons with disabilities [CRC art. 23(3), CRPD art. 24]; and indigenous peoples [UNDRIP art. 14]

Equal rights of women and girls in the field of education [CEDAW art. 10]

Right to work, including technical and vocational training [ICESCR art. 6]

International cooperation [UDHR art. 28; DRtD arts. 3-4], particularly in relation to children [CRC arts. 23(4), 28(3)], persons with disabilities [CRPD art. 32], and indigenous peoples [UNDRIP art. 39]

Participation rate in organised learning (one year before the official primary entry age) increased from 29.6 percent in 2010 to 49.9 percent in 2018 with no significant gender gaps.

The percentage of children aged 36-59 months who are developmentally on track in at least three of these four domains: literacy-numeracy, physical, social-emotional, and learning, was at 81.8 percent. For Roma children, this ratio was a low of 59.1 percent [NSDG 4.2.1] [MICS]

Over the same period, tertiary education attainment (for population aged 30-34) increased from 17.1 percent to 33.3 percent [LFS Annual].

Early leavers from education (aged 18-24) declined from 15.5 percent to 7.1 percent. The share of female early leavers was 8.5 percent compared to 5.6 percent for men [EU SILC].

Education parity indices show high disparities in foundational learning skills between the poorest and the richest quintiles (the ratio being 0.59 for reading and 0.57 for numeracy in 7-14 years age group). The corresponding ratios for the Roma children were 0.24 and 0.39. [NSDG 4.5.1] [MICS]

The expenditure on education as proportion to GDP declined from 4.5 percent to 3.8 percent between 2010 and 2017.

There is no precise data about the children and adults with disabilities in all levels of education.



5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Targets include eliminating discrimination and violence against women and girls; valuing unpaid care and domestic work; ensuring the full participation of women; access to reproductive health care; and equal access of women to economic resources.

There is large gender gap in workforce participation with women's LFPR being 54.8 percent compared to 77.3 percent for men. Similarly, in employment there was a large gap: only 44.7 percent women were employed compared to 64.4 percent men (in 2019).

Women held 38.3 percent of seats in the national Parliament and 12.2 percent ministerial positions in the Government [NSDG 5.5.1]. They further held 19.7 percent managerial positions (and board members) and 26.2 percent positions of executive members [NSDG 5.5.2].

Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women [CEDAW arts. 1-5] and girls [CRC art. 2], particularly in legislation, political and public life (art. 7), economic and social life (arts. 11, 13), and family relations (art. 16)]

Right to decide the number and spacing of children [CEDAW arts. 12, 16(1)(e); CRC art. 24(2)(f)]

Special protection for mothers and children [ICESCR art. 10]
Elimination of violence against women and girls [CEDAW arts. 1- 6; CEVAW arts. 1-4; CRC arts. 24(3), 35]

Right to just and favourable conditions of work [ICESCR art. 7; CEDAW art. 11]

Based on the latest available data on earnings (2018), the gender pay gap is estimated to be around 17 percent.⁸²

Early marriage is an area of concern. The proportion of women who were married before the age of 18 years was 7.5 percent. Among Roma women, 45.1 percent married before the age of 18 [NSDG 5.3.1].

Teenage pregnancies are also high at 114 births per 1,000 Roma women in 15-19 years of age group compared to 21 for non-Roma women (in 2018 as per MICS).

60% of women in North Macedonia think that violence is common, while 82 per cent of domestic violence survivors are women.

Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care was 75.1 percent compared with 54.9 percent for the Roma women [NSDG 5.6.1]. The use of modern contraceptive methods is low, only 14.0, due to poor sex education, prejudices, high market prices and poor quality of family planning services.

As many as 62.3 percent women were inactive due to caring responsibilities compared to only 6.7 percent men. [SSO/EU SILC]

According to the National Agency for Real Estate Cadastre data as of 2019, only 27 percent of landowners are women.

North Macedonia participated in the piloting of the methodology for SDG indicator 5.c.1 ("Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment"), through consultation with Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, and SSO.



6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Targets include ensuring universal and equitable access to safe, affordable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene for all; reducing pollution; increasing water-use efficiency; and promoting participatory management of water and sanitation services.

Right to safe drinking water and sanitation [ICESCR art. 11]

Right to health [UDHR art. 25; ICESCR art. 12]

Equal access to water and sanitation for rural women [CEDAW art. 14(2)(h)]

The proportion of the population using safely managed drinking water services was close to 100 percent as per MICS [NSDG 6.1.1].

The proportion of the population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water was also close to 100 percent [NSDG 6.2.1]. This is a significant improvement over 2015 when WHO/UNICEF estimated that 94 percent of the country's total population had access to improved sanitation facilities in 2015.

Around 73 to 75 percent of the total municipal waste is still dumped near human settlements, in mostly non-compliant landfills and dumpsites placing stresses on the environment and human health. Furthermore, the prevailing method of hazardous waste management, i.e. its removal by the generating business entities, poses considerable risk to the environment and human health.

There is lack of sewage connections and wastewater treatment facilities. It is estimated that up to 24.5 percent of urban wastewater is potentially treated.

Only 8.7 percent of all assessed water bodies are estimated to be of good ambient water quality (they meet at least 80 percent compliance with the core parameters of country-defined target values). Only 12,5 percent of the rivers assessed are of good ambient water quality.

In respect of change in water-use efficiency over time, no reliable data is available.

⁸² http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/2019/4.1.19.117_mk.pdf

The water stress, defined as freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available (renewable) freshwater resources, was estimated at 13.78 percent in 2014. It seems moderate but high demand and resultant stress on surface water could likely deplete water resources and create shortages.

According to a 2016 UNEP survey, the current degree of integrated water resources management implementation is 22, which is classified as low. The country's target for 2030 is 65.

Responsibilities for water supply and sanitation are assigned to the municipalities. Not all River Basin Management Councils are established and operational. Although established, the National Water Council is not in operation.



7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Targets include ensuring universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services.

Right to an adequate standard of living [UDHR art. 25; ICESCR art. 11]

Right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its application [UDHR art. 27; ICESCR art. 15(1)(b)]

The entire population has access to electricity [NSDG 7.1.1]. The proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technologies for cooking, space heating and lighting was 38.2 percent for general population and 11.7 percent in Roma settlements [NSDG 7.1.2].

The dependence on imports for energy has gone up from 44 percent in 2010 to 58.6 percent of total energy consumed in 2018. The share of renewables (largely hydro power) in final energy consumption went up from 16.5 percent in 2010 to 18.1 percent in 2018. The share in heating and cooling sector was 32.2 percent.

About 25 percent of population is unable to keep their homes adequately warm.

Biomass use for heating is high (39 percent of current heat demand of the country), of which 74 percent is inefficient use (inefficient stoves, biomass not properly dried, etc.)⁸³ However, this percentage of 39 is very likely much higher; in 2017, UNDP conducted a study which found that 45 percent of the households in Skopje valley use biomass for heating⁸⁴. Biomass usage in other towns and rural areas is much higher, having in mind that there are no central heating systems in those areas.

The support mechanisms for development of renewable energy projects are feed-in tariffs and feed-in premiums.

In the last two years, competitive tendering procedure for 35 MW and 100 MW PV solar parks were completed which was positively recognized by the EU as the Western Balkans largely relies on coal-fired power plants.

The energy intensity of GDP, measured as CO₂ emissions in kg per PPP\$ of GDP, has shown a downward trend from 0.70 in 2005 to 0.27 in 2014.⁸⁵ Primary energy producer (over 70 percent) for electricity in the country is coal-fired power plant with installed capacity of 675 MW build in mid 80s.⁸⁶



8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Targets include promoting sustained economic growth;

Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita (GDP in constant 2010 US\$) was 0.7 percent in 2017 and 2.8 percent in 2016. In absolute terms, nominal GDP per capita in 2019 was estimated at US\$ 6,143 while PPP GDP per capita was US\$16,253. The country is an upper-middle income country [NSDG 8.1.1].

Share of investment in GDP in 2018 was 19.8 percent, down from 23.1

⁸³ Biomass-Based Heating in the Western Balkans – A Roadmap for Sustainable Development, World Bank <https://energy-community.org/documents/heating.html>

⁸⁴ www.skopjesezagreva.mk

⁸⁵ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.ATM.CO2E.PP.GD?locations=MK>

⁸⁶ In January 2020 the government adopted the new Energy Development Strategy 2020-2040 which elaborates three different scenarios: reference (business as usual), moderate transition and green (strong decarbonisation) scenarios. In the moderate transition and green scenarios in the Strategy, phase out of the PEK Bitola lignite-fired power plant in 2025 is also recommended.

improving resource efficiency in production and consumption; full and productive employment and decent work for all; eradicating forced and child labour and trafficking; protecting labour rights including those of migrant workers; and increasing access to financial services.

Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work [UDHR art. 23; ICESCR arts. 6, 7, 10; CRPD art. 27; ILO Core Labour Conventions and ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work]

Prohibition of slavery, forced labour, and trafficking of persons [UDHR art. 4; ICCPR art. 8; CEDAW art. 6; CRC arts. 34-36]

Equal rights of women in relation to employment [CEDAW art. 11; ILO Conventions No. 100 and No. 111]

Prohibition of child labour [CRC art. 32; ILO Convention No. 182]

Equal labour rights of migrant workers [CMW art. 25]

percent in 2010.

There was a large gender gap in employment with employment rate for women being 44.7 percent and for men 64.4 percent in 2019. Overall unemployment rate for 15-74 age group fell from 32 percent in 2010 to 20.7 in 2018 [NSDG 8.5.2].

The proportion of informal employment in total non-agricultural employment was 41 percent [for men 51 percent and for women 20.3 percent] and in *total* employment it was 18.6 percent [20.7 percent for men and 15.3 percent for women] [NSDG 8.3.1].

The share of youth (15-29) not in education, employment or training (NEET) was 21.8 percent (2018) – much higher than EU average of 14.3 percent [NSDG 8.6.1.b]. NEET share among Roma was 71 percent (Roma women 81 percent). Taking another age group (15-24 years), youth NEET was 24.1 percent in 2018 marginally lower than 25.5 percent in 2010 [NSDG 8.6.1].

The long-term unemployment rate (defined as unemployment for more than one year) declined from 26.6 percent in 2010 to 15.5 percent in 2018. As many as 56 percent of those unemployed have been unemployed for 4 years or more and 78 percent of those unemployed have been looking for a job for one year or more.

The country has 25.2 commercial bank branches and 62.4 ATMs per 100,000 adults [NSDG 8.10.1].

Even though the country has set targets for recovery on recycling of packaging waste, no data is collected or available.



9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Targets include affordable and equitable access to quality infrastructure; employment generating industrialization; access to financial services and markets; innovation and technology transfer, and increasing access to ICT.

Right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its application [UDHR art. 27; ICESCR art. 15(1)(b)]

Right to access to information [UDHR art. 19; ICCPR art. 19(2)]

The completion of transport corridors is of crucial importance to provide improved communications. In that regard, the road infrastructure has improved with a higher Logistics Performance Index to 81 (2018) from 117 (2014).

Manufacturing accounts for 13.3 percent of the GDP [NSDG 9.2.1] and 16.8 percent of employment in 2018 [NSDG 9.2.2].

R&D expenditure as percentage of GDP is 0.37 percent (2018) which is lower than the EU average of 2 percent [NSDG 9.5.1].

The number of researchers (full time equivalent) per million of population has gone up from 301 to 527 between 2010 and 2018 [NSDG 9.5.2].

Employment in high-tech and knowledge-intensive industries was 30.6 percent in 2018 - up from 27.8 percent in 2010 [NSDG 9.b.1].

Almost 100 percent of the country's territory is covered by a mobile network [NSDG 9.c.1].

Right to adequate housing, including land and resources [UDHR art. 25; ICESCR art. 11]

Equal rights of women to financial credit and rural infrastructure [CEDAW art. 13(b), art. 14(2)]



10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

Targets include promoting higher growth rates for the bottom 40 per cent; promoting social, economic and political inclusion; reducing inequalities in opportunities and outcomes; ensuring social protection for all; securing participation in economic decision making; facilitating migration, and reducing transaction costs for migrant remittances.

Right to equality and non-discrimination [UDHR art. 2; ICESCR art. 2(2); ICCPR arts. 2(1), 26; CERD art. 2(2); CEDAW art. 2; CRC art. 2; CRPD art. 5; CMW art. 7; DRtD art. 8(1)]

Right to participate in public affairs [UDHR art. 21; ICCPR art. 25; CEDAW art. 7; ICERD art. 5; CRPD art. 29; DRtD art. 8(2)]

Right to social security [UDHR art. 22; ICESCR arts. 9-10; CRPD art. 28]

Promotion of conditions for international migration [CMW art. 64]

Right of migrants to transfer their earnings and savings [CMW art. 47(1)]

Gini coefficient (a measure of inequality in income distribution) has decreased from 37 percent in 2013 to 31.9 percent in 2018.

Global HDR 2019 states that in North Macedonia the incomes of bottom 40 percent grew by over 39 percent compared to overall income growth of 22.3 percent between 2007-2017. The growth can be said to be pro-poor.

Some ethnic communities are at the receiving end of social inequalities in the country. A Roma is more likely to be out of school, without identity papers, homeless, unemployed, NEET, living in poverty, without healthcare access, living in cramped houses or stigmatised. Most children on the street are Roma. An ethnic Macedonian earns four times more income than an ethnic Roma.

Gender inequality results in loss of about 16 percent of GDP annually. Manifestations of gender inequality are inadequate participation in the labour force, gender-based violence, and inadequate protection of their rights.

The modern contraceptive prevalence rate among women aged 15-49 years (not in union/married) in seven years increased for only 1.2 per cent, from 12.8 per cent in 2011 to 14.0 in 2018. Among the Roma, this percentage is even lower, 8.6 (in 2018)⁸⁷. Adolescent birth rate in Roma settlements is 114, while the total 21.

Patriarchal norms and stereotypes about the role of women in society, early marriages, gender-discriminatory family obligations to take care of children, the elderly and the sick, limited access to childcare support, lack of relevant education and skills, and limited access to economic resources, ownership and control over land are both manifestations and drivers of gender inequality.

The percentage of women ages 15-49 years discriminated against or harassed within the past 12 months based on a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law was 12.5 percent compared to 17.7 for Roma women [NSDG 10.3.1 -information available only for women in MICS].

Social transfers have helped keep inequality under check. The difference between poverty before and after social transfers is as high as 19 percentage points.

The share of population at-risk-of-poverty defined as those below 50 percent of median income (after social transfers) was 16.9 percent in 2018 – a sharp decline from 21.3 percent in 2010.

The country faces high outmigration of labour force –both skilled and unskilled. Unofficial remittances are estimated to be very high (Euro 300 million, on top of official remittances of US\$ 300 million) indicating that the transaction costs for migrant remittances are high.

⁸⁷ Ibid, page 70



11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Targets include ensuring access to housing, basic services and public transport for all; participatory planning of human settlements; safeguarding cultural and natural heritage; and strengthening resilience to disasters.

Right to adequate housing, including land and resources [UDHR art. 25; ICESCR art. 11]

Right to participate in cultural life [UDHR art. 25; ICESCR art. 15; ICERD arts. 5, 7; CRPD art. 30; CRC art. 31]

Accessibility of transportation, facilities and services particularly of persons with disabilities [CRPD art. 9(1)], children [CRC art. 23], and rural women [CEDAW art. 14(2)]

Protection from natural disasters [CRPD art. 11]

About 60 percent of the population live in cities. About 15 percent of the population live in dwellings with a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundation or rot in window frames of floor [NSDG 11.6.1].

The number of fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants in road accidents was 6.0 (in 2018) – down from 8.0 (2010). For every 100,000 vehicles it was 49.1 [NSDG 11.1.2].

Using Eurostat's definition of overcrowding, the country's overcrowding rate in 2017 was 46.4 percent, down from 55.2 percent in 2010. At the current level, the overcrowding is higher than the overall EU average of 17.1 percent in 2011 but not very different from other EU post-communist states or 12 newest member states (43.1 percent).

Poor air quality is a major issue. The annual mean concentration of particulate matter less than 2.5 microns (PM2.5) in urban areas, during 2006-2016, ranged between 40-50 µg/m³ (twice the nationally fixed limit and four times the WHO limit) while for PM10 it was 64.0 (down from 67.6 in 2010 but still three times the WHO limit) [NSDG 11.6.2]. The figures hide the fact that during winters the PM10 levels can go up to 1000 µg/m³.

The municipal solid waste (MSW) collection rate was in the range of 70–81 percent in the period 2011–2017 without any increasing trend, indicating that a significant part of the population, predominantly in rural areas, still does not have access to waste collection services.

Most municipal waste collected is disposed of at non-compliant landfills, except for Skopje, which means that overall, around 50 percent of the total MSW generated is adequately discharged. Progress in the implementation of regional waste management plans and construction of more sophisticated regional landfills is rather slow.

The proportion of persons victim of physical or sexual harassment at public place by sex, age, disability status and place of occurrence was reported at 5.3 percent compared to 7.0 percent in 2010 [NSDG 11.7.2].

As per WHO Global Health Observatory (World Health Statistics 2017), zero death rate was reported due to natural disasters per 100,000 population during the period 2011–2015. In 2016, due to a devastating flash flood, the country was among the top 10 in the world's most affected by both disaster mortality and damage, with 1.06 deaths per 100,000 population and US\$550 million in damage, and the country with the highest percentage of GDP loss (greater than 5 per cent of GDP).

In line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the country has incorporated the Sendai priorities in the National Platform for Disaster risk Reduction. However, there is overall lack of institutional capacity to implement the commitments under the Sendai Framework.



12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Targets include achieving sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources; improving waste management; promoting sustainable public procurement; ensuring access to information; and building capacity for sustainable development.

Right to health including the right to safe, clean, healthy and sustainable

Of the total of 336 kg per capita waste generated, 24kg was hazardous and 312 kg non-hazards (2016). Both, SSO and the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning collect data using different methodologies – hence a comparison over time is difficult.

North Macedonia is party to the Rotterdam, Basel and Stockholm Conventions and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer. It has fulfilled the requirements for ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, thus enabling it to benefit from international experience and cooperation on environmentally sound management of chemicals and waste materials.

Based on the information collected by each of the Conventions' Secretariats for the first baseline reporting cycle in 2017 (covering the period 2010–2014), the country has been in full compliance with the Montreal Protocol (100 percent), close to full compliance with the Rotterdam Convention (over

environment [UDHR art. 25(1); ICESCR art. 12]

Right to adequate food and the right to safe drinking water [UDHR art. 25(1); ICESCR art. 11]

Right of all peoples to freely dispose of their natural resources [ICCPR, ICESCR art. 1(2)]

92 percent), and moderate compliance (50 percent) with the Stockholm Convention. However, fulfilment of the country's obligations in transmitting information to the Basel Convention is only at 16.7 percent.

North Macedonia, as a Party to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs), has established its [PRTR](#) in order to effectively track releases and transfers of pollutants, support evidence-based decision-making and inform the public accordingly. The country is participating actively in activities under the Protocol. It stated at formal meetings that further capacity building assistance is needed as to enhance its register and support its operation.

Despite the introduction and operation of EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) schemes, separate collection and recycling, the overall recycling rate of non-hazardous MSW (Municipal Solid Waste) in 2017, based on reports of only eight municipalities (Skopje included), remained very low – only 0.9 percent. Separate collection and recycling under the EPR schemes for specific waste streams, such as packaging waste, WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) and WBA (Waste Batteries and Accumulators) have made some progress.

The Government encourages private companies to adopt environmental protection practices under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and has been giving awards for the best CSR practices in five areas including environmental protection. No information is available on companies publishing sustainability reports.

No information is available on sustainable public procurement practices.

Within the National SDG framework, Goal 13 is among the ones where there is acute lack of indicators.

Annual Greenhouse gas emissions decreased from 10.0 MtCO₂-eq. in 1996 to 7.0 MtCO₂ eq in 2017.⁸⁸

GHG emission intensity in energy consumption index 2000=100 was 81.6 in 2014.

As per WHO Global Health Observatory (World Health Statistics 2017) zero death rate was reported due to natural disasters per 100,000 population during the period 2011–2015. In 2016, due to a devastating flash floods, the country was among the top 10 in the world's most affected by both disaster mortality and damage, with 1.06 deaths per 100,000 population and US\$550 million in damage, and the country with the highest percentage of GDP loss (greater than 5 per cent of GDP).

The country does not have a national disaster risk strategy in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 but has incorporated the priorities under the Sendai Framework in the National Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction that was set up post-Hyogo Framework.

At the local level, eight municipalities and the City of Skopje and its municipalities developed and adopted climate change strategies with the assistance and support of international development partners, with the aim to reduce local disaster risks and strengthen resilience to climate-related hazards and natural disasters.

Climate change is not systematically integrated into primary, secondary and tertiary education curricula although some ad hoc cases are reported. The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and local governments, as well as international organizations, UN and CSOs present in the country,



13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Targets include strengthening resilience and adaptation to climate change and natural disasters, including in marginalized communities; country's strategic engagement with the Green Climate Fund.

Right to health including the right to safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment [UDHR art. 25(1); ICESCR art. 12; CRC art. 24; CEDAW art. 12; CMW art. 28]

Right to adequate food & right to safe drinking water [UDHR art. 25(1); ICESCR art. 11]

Right of all peoples to freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources [ICCPR, ICESCR art. 1(2)]

⁸⁸ IEA: <https://www.iea.org/data-and-statistics?country=FYROM&fuel=CO2%20emissions&indicator=Total%20CO2%20emissions>

have all been active in initiatives and campaigns to raise awareness and advance citizens' education on climate change and responsible choices in everyday life.

The institutional, systemic and individual capacities to tackle climate change are still relatively limited in the country.

Activities implemented under the country's first grant from the Green Climate Fund Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme in 2019, and the approval of a second readiness project with UN support, are considered key stepping stones for the successful implementation of the NDCs and NDC goals and to overall achievement of the objective of the UNFCCC and SDG 13.



15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Targets include the sustainable management of freshwater, mountain ecosystems and forests; combatting desertification; halting biodiversity loss; combatting poaching and trafficking of protected species.

Right to health including the right to safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment [UDHR art. 25(1); ICESCR art. 12; CRC art. 24; CEDAW art. 12; CMW art. 28]
Right to adequate food & right to safe drinking water [UDHR art. 25(1); ICESCR art. 11]

Right of all peoples to freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources [ICCPR, ICESCR art. 1(2)]



16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Targets include reducing all

Forest area as a proportion of total land area increased from 37.4 percent in 2010 to 39.2 percent in 2018. Consistent and reliable data is hard to come by, often due to definitional problems such as the need to distinguish forests from other wooded land⁸⁹ [NSDG 15.1.1].

A detailed remote sensing survey was carried out with UN support in 2019, using high-resolution satellite imagery to generate information on land use and changes. Findings show that forests (43 percent) and other wooded lands (16.8) make up more than half of the country's territory. A National Forest Monitoring System is lacking as a basis for providing up-to-date and reliable information on the status and changes of forests for evidence based decision-making and viable policy formulation.

The level of wood harvesting is stable and relatively low (about 1.1 million m³ in 2017, including estimation for illegal harvesting). In North Macedonia, about 85 percent of the removed wood is used as a fuelwood, which can be partly explained by a relatively high share of rural population (about 37 percent) and their subsistence needs.

It is estimated that the degraded forests account for 4 percent of total forest land. However, a future National Forest Inventory will provide more reliable and accurate information on degraded forest.

The full national red lists on reptiles and amphibians are pending adoption by the Government.

Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population was 1.2 in 2018 (down from 2.1 in 2010) [NSDG 16.1.1]. Proportion of victims of violence in the past 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms was a low 5.3 percent.⁹⁰ [NSDG 16.3.1].

The percentage of children aged 1-14 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past one

⁸⁹ More information about forest resources of North Macedonia and their use can be found at: https://w3.unece.org/TM15/Source_Data.html (pan-European reporting) or at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-az351e.pdf> (global reporting). Both studies were compiled for 2015 reporting cycle, the new 2020 data is expected in June – October 2020.

⁹⁰ SSO and MICS. Another good source is <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/413237> (for Regional Report) and <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/419264> (for North Macedonia).

forms of violence; ending violence against women and trafficking of children; promoting rule of law and justice for all; reducing illicit financial and arms flows, corruption and bribery; developing effective institutions; equal participation in decision making at all levels; equal representation and meaningful inclusion of women in security and defence; legal identity for all.

Right to life, liberty and security of the person [UDHR art. 3; ICCPR arts. 6(1), 9(1); ICPED art. 1] including freedom from torture [UDHR art. 5; ICCPR art. 7; CAT art. 2; CRC art. 37(a)]

Protection of children from all forms of violence, abuse or exploitation [CRC arts. 19, 37(a)], including trafficking (CRC arts. 34-36; CRC-OP1)]

Right to access to justice and due process [UDHR arts. 8, 10; ICCPR arts. 2(3), 14-15; CEDAW art. 2(c)]

Right to legal personality [UDHR art. 6; ICCPR art. 16; CRPD art. 12] □ Right to participate in public affairs [UDHR art. 21; ICCPR art. 25]

Right to access to information [UDHR art. 19; ICCPR art. 19(1)]

month was 73.1 percent compared with 81.8 percent for Roma children [NSDG 16.2.1].

Percentage of children aged 1-14 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past one month was 73.1 percent compared with 81.8 percent for Roma children [NSDG 16.2.1].

The Corruption Perception Index [0=most corrupt, 100=least corrupt] deteriorated from a score of 45.0 in 2014 to 35.0 in 2019. The ranking deteriorated from 42 (2015) to 66 (2019) [NSDG 16.5.2].

The Freedom House Index (2019) gives the country a score of 59/100 (one place higher than last year) and classifies the country as 'partially free'.

The score under overall World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index (2018), a composite index of 8 dimensions), was 0.54. The dimension on 'order and security' gets the highest score (0.79) and 'criminal justice', 'absence of corruption' and 'constraints on government powers' each the lowest (0.47). As per the Balkan Barometer, perceived independence of the justice system was 30 percent (2019).

Almost 100 percent of births are registered with civil authority for general population and 98 percent for Roma [NSDG 16.9.1].

There are still persons who are at the risk of statelessness at a total of 586 (by UNHCR estimates) of whom 292 are undocumented. In addition, there are still 281 Kosovo (UNSC 1244) refugees, whose legal status has been subject to recurring review in the past 20 years, hampering success of integration. The government has taken a pledge to resolve the issue of Kosovo refugees at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019.

Women are underrepresented in security and defence sector, especially in decision making positions. The National Action Plan of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 lacks costing and efficient implementation.

The Aarhus Centre that provides a platform to engage citizens, governments and the private sector in a dialogue on environmental challenges can serve as a bridge between public authorities, the members of the public and business operators in addressing environmental matters and dissemination environmental information to the public.



17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Targets include strengthening domestic and international resources; debt sustainability; technology transfer and capacity building; promoting trade; enhancing policy and institutional coherence; respecting countries' policy space; promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships; measurements for progress, disaggregated data.

Total Government revenue as a proportion of GDP declined from 32.9 percent in 2010 to 29.1 percent in 2019. Both tax and non-tax revenues have been on decline [NSDG 17.1.1].

Government debt as percentage of GDP increased significantly from 24.1 percent in 2010 to 40.2 percent in 2019.

FDI inflows rose sharply from US\$ 205 million in 2017 to US\$ 737 million in 2018. At this level, it represented about 6 percent of GDP. FDI stock in 2018 was US\$ 5.96 billion [NSDG 17.3.1].

Thanks to the country's open economy policy, trade accounts for 90 percent of GDP. The country is a member of WTO since 2003 and joined CEFTA in 2006.

Proportion of individuals (aged 15-74) using the Internet increased from 51.9 percent (2010) to 83.4 percent (2019) [NSDG 17.8.1].

Right of all peoples to self-determination [ICCPR, ICESCR art. 1(1); DRtD art. 1(1)]	Remittances transferred through formal channels are estimated at around 2.5 percent of GDP but if unofficial transfers are also included the estimate goes up to about 5-6 percent of GDP.
Right of all peoples to development, & international cooperation [UDHR art. 28; ICESCR art. 2(1); CRC art. 4; CRPD art. 32(1); DRtD arts. 3-5]	The country has a high Statistical Capacity Score of 86.7 (compared to Europe and Central Asia average of 77.9), yet the country has not had a Population Census since 2002 and no national indicators to measure SDG progress.
Right of everyone to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its application, including international cooperation in the scientific field [UDHR art. 27(1); ICESCR art. 15(1)]	Coherence among policy documents is assessed to be medium. Policy documents are adopted with delays and there is no evidence that they are used for decision-making. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), a tool of coherent integration of environmental and green economy aspects, is often bypassed by sectoral documents (ECE: Third EPR)
Right to privacy [UDHR art. 12; ICCPR art. 17], including respect for human rights and ethical principles in the collection and use of statistics [CRPD art. 31(1)]	

2.3 Interlinkages amongst the three dimensions of sustainable development

The natural and human capital are two key determinants of sustainable development. With climate change and associated extreme weather events and degradation and unsustainable use of natural resources on the one hand and demographic changes that would result in decline of population and shortage of skilled workers on the other, the economic growth could soon face roadblocks. This could result in high unemployment and ‘underemployment’ and encourage large-scale emigration in turn resulting in shortage of labour starting a spiral of low growth and low employment. Climate change and environment also have implications on human health and productivity and in turn economic growth. Climate change and related extreme weather events have become more frequent and intense with cross-sectoral impact. Agriculture, water, health and infrastructure are particularly affected with implications for livelihoods, expenditure on disaster response and social sector expenditure.

It is therefore necessary that the trade-offs between economic and environmental dimensions are recognised and a balanced approach adopted. The environmental disasters are becoming more common than before and have cross-boundary implications. Hence, regional cooperation in sustainable development and management of natural resources and climate impact acquires greater importance.

The social dimensions are equally important in determining the sustainable development outcomes. Lack of social cohesion, inter-ethnic tensions, regional conflicts, political instability and ineffective functioning of the governance institutions can seriously jeopardise development outcomes. More positively, if the three dimensions above – economic, social and environmental – work in synergy, the impact could be transformational.

The three dimensions are further reinforced by social norms. To the extent that the social norms inform policy making, there is a fear that the policies and their implementation will leave out many population groups. Though it is hard to document, the long-term policy on integration of refugees in North Macedonia appears to have been held up because of a likely backlash from the society who may not be ready to accept the foreigners. On some other issues, like LGBTI, the need to comply with the EU standards have prompted the government to enact a more progressive legislation.

One of the key principles of sustainable development is building resilience. This is of utmost importance given the small size of the economy and its vulnerability to external shocks. The government is taking major steps to reform the economy and social sectors and is looking at climate change and recent pandemic as an opportunity to build resilience.

3 *Leave no one behind*

The person in my story is married, father of two. He was employed in a private company as a craftsman with 10 years of work experience. His wife had a higher education, but even after 10 years of graduation she failed to find a job. His parents had previously moved to Germany, rented a house and were already employed. They helped him financially. They decided to also move to Germany after obtaining a Bulgarian passport and finding a secure job with the help of his parents. The family is now very happy, first, because they are all in the same place, and then satisfied with the peace, security, salary and educational conditions for their children offered in Germany.

- Respondent, female, 35-44, from the capital, People perception survey

The approach to leaving no one behind⁹¹ is the core of the sustainable development agenda that recognises the primacy of people in development efforts. It not only entails reaching the poorest of the poor but also seeks to combat discrimination and inequalities. This approach is grounded in the UN's normative standards, including the principles of equality and non-discrimination that are the foundational principles of the UN Charter. Leaving no one behind means moving beyond income and looking at non-income inequalities and discriminations (often multiple and intersecting); moving beyond averages and ensuring progress for all population groups at disaggregated level; and moving beyond today and addressing a whole new generation of inequalities triggered by climate change and technological transformations.

Removing inequalities is important for its own sake and pursuit of human rights. This is also important in view of the contribution a more inclusive society makes to sustainable development. The latest Human Development Report 2019 makes a compelling case against inequalities in human development and emphasises that as long as inequalities persist, full achievement of SDGs is not possible. It reports that in Europe, the top 1 percent and the bottom 40 percent captured 13 percent of growth each, over 1980-2017. HDR however notes significant progress North Macedonia has made where the income growth of bottom 40% was 39.1% compared to average income growth of 22.3% over 2007-2017.

The CCA first identifies four interlinked drivers of inequalities and how the interplay of these drivers - reinforced by patriarchy, social norms and values, negative stereotypes and prejudices - leave certain population groups behind. This is then followed by identification of population groups that are left behind or are at risk of being left behind. Conversely, if appropriate policies are put in place and action is taken on the ground to consciously promote inclusive growth, and just governance system, the same drivers can become virtuous drivers of positive change.

Identifying those left behind or at risk of being left behind is a challenging task due to the lack of reliable and disaggregated data. The country has not had a population census since 2002. Hence getting any reliable and latest demographic data and trends is difficult. Some excluded groups who live illegally remain uncounted. A good starting point to understanding the groups that are left behind or are at risk of being left behind is the analysis of major human rights issues. These issues are raised by Human Rights Mechanisms including submissions by the state and non-state actors and recommendations by the UN Human Rights Council. The four drivers are:

1. the structure and performance of economy,
2. the governance institutions,
3. the social infrastructure; and

⁹¹ Leaving No One Behind – A UNSDG Operational Guide for UN Country Teams, UNSDG, March 2019 and Human Development Report 2019, UNDP

4. climate change and natural resource management.

These drivers are reinforced by social norms, patriarchy, negative stereotypes and prejudices which are at the root of exclusion.

3.1 Economic structure and performance

The country has made significant economic progress over the past 20 years. Yet, the country faces many challenges that impede more inclusive and sustainable development. Growth rates have been lower than those of the peers, poverty rates are high at over 20 percent and the economy is characterised by high, though decreasing, unemployment and high inactivity. The country has been able to attract foreign investment, however the backward linkages with domestic firms have been weak. For one, the domestic firms are predominantly small, in low-productivity sectors, not competitive in terms of quality, with low capacity to adopt new technology and more focused on small domestic markets. Gradual move by foreign firms from services to technology-intensive sectors (e.g. automobile parts) further leaves out domestic firms. The FDI policy has created enclaves with little links with domestic industry thus resulting in poor technology transfer, little value addition and upgrading of domestic firms. State aid focus on FDIs has recently changed with the Programme for Economic Growth that makes no difference between the FDI and domestic companies, with separate stream that prioritize small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Accounting for 72 percent of employment and 63 percent of value addition SMEs are the backbone of the economy and need to be strengthened and made more competitive.

The agricultural sector employs 22 percent of the workforce, of which 38 percent women, and contributes around 7 percent to GDP. It is largely sustained by subsidies that may be creating distortions and acting as a disincentive to efficiency and investment. Investment in capital-intensive agriculture using modern technologies can promote sustainable use of resources, make agriculture export-oriented, enhance farm level productivity and create new kind of jobs in rural areas. The export potential of this sector, and thus potential to create more jobs, remains largely untapped. The extremely unfavourable agricultural land structure and the small and fragmented land holdings are seriously hampering modernization of agricultural production, development of more productive and competitive farms and provide more productive employment to the vulnerable groups.

There is also a high proportion of informal economy, as noted earlier, that acts as a drag on the economy and an obstacle to growth and conducive business environment. Informal workers, whether wage workers or self-employed, are among the groups most at risk of losing their jobs and incomes in case of a disaster or an economic or public health shock.

Unemployment levels are much higher for youth, persons with disabilities, women, ethnic communities, as well as migrant workers, who are overrepresented in the informal economy and experience exacerbation of their vulnerability due to external shocks. Most of those unemployed have been so for a long duration – almost 80 percent have been in search of a job for over one year. The quality of employment in the private sector also remains a key problem for youth. Over 27.6 percent of employed youth work in an occupation which does not match their education. When a broader definition of the so called “underemployment” is considered among youth (that is, the person works fewer than 35 hours a week but wants to work more, is overqualified, expressed insecurity on the workplace, draws salary that is below reserve wage) and youth employed on temporary basis or with no written contract the percentage goes up to as high as 57.1 percent.⁹²

In the absence of jobs at home, and as a coping mechanism, there is high emigration from the country causing enormous loss of human power. Unless the economy is made more robust, inclusive and sustainable the country is at risk of losing more of its young workforce to emigration. Simultaneous action

⁹² Petreski, B. & J. Davalos & I. Vchkov & D. Tumanoska & T. Kochovska, (2019) Analysis of youth underemployment in North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Finance Think Policy Studies 2019-03/22, Finance Think - Economic Research and Policy Institute.

is also required to improve women's labour force participation and to reduce inactivity levels. It is untenable that on the one hand the country faces labour shortage and on the other it does not adequately promote participation of women in the labour force. There is a need to create a more conducive environment for women to participate in economic activities – including making the labour market more flexible for part-time work, strengthening childcare facilities among others. A selective approach to immigration of persons with skills can also be explored.

EU accession process offers an opportunity to gain from open trade and further integration with the larger European market, attract private investment and boost exports. The country's strategic geographic location is also a major asset given the large untapped export potential of its agriculture and services sectors.⁹³

In sum, insufficient growth and lopsided FDI policies with little domestic spillovers led to growth dichotomy where most jobs were created in low-productivity domestic sectors while value addition was in high-tech export sectors. This co-existed with the low productivity agriculture sector. Given the pre-existing labour market disadvantages they faced – in terms of lack of relevant education and skills, and social norms - some population groups (women, youth, ethnic communities, persons with disabilities, informal workers/ seasonal labour) were left out and could not benefit from growth. For this driver of exclusion to become one of inclusive and sustainable growth, and to bring about positive change, policies need to be put in place to forge better linkages between FDI and domestic firms by upgrading domestic firms, invest in human capital by providing market-appropriate education and vocational skills, improve women's labour force participation to address shortage of labour force and adopt policies that proactively create opportunities for groups at risk of being excluded. The ongoing work on the Smart Specialization Strategy that outlines measures for diversification and technological upgrading would also contribute to improvement in this sector.

3.2 Governance institutions

It is not just the economic structure and performance that leave out some population groups; but also, the manner in which governance institutions function results in multiple discriminations and injustices that preclude the most vulnerable from being part of the country's growth story. Governing institutions often reinforce or perpetuate the inequities in the economic structure through corruption, lack of justice, partisan public administration and enabling voicelessness. Even though the country is bringing about positive changes, North Macedonia does not score very well in terms of political stability, rule of law, voice and accountability⁹⁴ and corruption.⁹⁵ The country's global ranking against key governance indicators may be seen in [Annex 2](#).

Promoting the rule of law and ensuring equal access to justice is fraught with several challenges such as lack of trust in the judiciary due to perceived traditional lack of judicial independence, corruption, and non-merit-based recruitment of judges. The Ombudsman is an independent body to protect human rights of citizens where they are violated by the state. However, lack of parliamentary scrutiny of its functioning, inadequate financial and human resources, and non-compliance with standards of the Paris Principles make this institution somewhat weak in defending the rights of citizens or acting as a countervailing force to the executive.

⁹³ Seizing a Brighter Future for All: FYR Macedonia Systematic Country Diagnostic, World Bank, November 2018.

⁹⁴ Worldwide Governance Indicators: <https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/Home/Reports>

⁹⁵ Corruption Perception Index, 2019: Transparency International (<https://www.transparency.org/cpi2015#results-table>).

My father moved abroad (*country is deleted purposefully*) last summer. Here, my whole family has experienced a great injustice inflicted by the politicians. They owned a family business for twenty years, until five years ago when, politicians threatened them shamelessly asking for part of the land and the products. After my father refused to join a political party and give half of the land to the officials, the company and the factory began to collapse.

I could write at least ten pages with the details. My father and my whole family had a hard time, and after a while they decided to leave our country. I also plan to leave. I hope and believe that sometimes the injustice inflicted upon us, if not judicially, will be humanly satisfied, and that every individual will live to bear the consequences of what they have done. Thank you for giving me the opportunity, even for a minute, to feel that what happens here is important to someone.

- Respondent, female, 20-24, Urban area

Note: the story was cut to ensure that respondent's identity cannot be discovered, however, the substance of the story has not been altered)

North Macedonia ranked 106th out of 175 countries, according to the 2019 Transparency International Corruption Perception Index, slipping 13 places behind compared to previous year⁹⁶ The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) expressed concerns of “the pervasive practice of bribery for the provision of goods and services”⁹⁷ The U.S. State Department Bureau for⁹⁸ In their 2019 report, Freedom House wrote⁹⁹ “Pervasive corruption in government, institutions and society at large has a negative impact on the enjoyment of human rights. This as well as insufficient social cohesion is tantamount to breach of trust between the state and its citizens”. The vulnerable sections of society have no resources to pay bribes for goods and services or ability to wade through the quagmire of bureaucracy.

Likewise, weak governance has disproportionate impact on marginalized communities who often do not have equal access to justice, free legal representation, or equal treatment by law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and judges. The people at-risk of social exclusion, such as Roma, refugees, stateless, LGBTI, people with disabilities and the poor are the most vulnerable to weaknesses in the justice system. Roma, for example, have a disproportionate number of incarcerations. It is pertinent to highlight that there is no effective national free legal aid system for the marginalized groups, such as Roma who have to rely on NGOs for legal assistance. The assistance provided by the NGOs is largely dependent on donor funding.

Institutional gap exists also in the area of migration management. The current Migration Policy covers the period from 2015 to 2020; development of the new Policy would be an opportunity to address the issue of migration in a holistic and future oriented manner, looking at it as a potential for sustainable development. One of the key sectoral strategies is pending since 2015, the Strategy for Integration of Refugees and Foreigners, leaving a huge gap at the policy level and the stakeholders are left on their own in terms of designing sustainable programmes for social inclusion of these groups.

Women and children also face a disparate burden of weak institutions of governance. There is inadequate recognition of gender-based violence and addressing it through judicial recourse is not common, due to gender norms in the society. While there is a draft GBV law, it has yet to be enacted. The GBV cases are presently covered under the law on domestic violence, and related sections in criminal and civil codes. Harmful practices, such as early marriages continue to impede education, access to labour market and thus realization of full potential of girls. Refugee women and girls do not have access to referral centres for victims of sexual violence.

⁹⁶ <https://www.transparency.org/country/MKD>

⁹⁷ *ibid.* p. 11.

⁹⁸ North Macedonia 2019 Human Rights Report, United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour, p. 22. It wrote: “The commission also acknowledged, however, prevalent corruption in many areas remained a concern”

⁹⁹ Freedom House Report 2019 North Macedonia Country Report, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/north-macedonia>

The Government has made significant progress in identifying entry points and strengthening the capacities for mainstreaming gender perspective into policy making and budgeting processes. Specifically, the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, obliges public institutions to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men and to integrate gender perspective into their policies, strategies and budgets through specific measures to reduce gender inequality. With the adoption of the first Government Strategy for introducing Gender Responsive Budgeting (2012-2017), important steps have been made towards improving the budgeting processes from a gender perspective. The Strategy led to important changes in the budget plans for central (2013) and local (2019) level budget users, adoption of specific Government methodology for implementation of GRB and including gender-specific provisions in the Government Strategic Planning Methodology. Even though the country still uses line budgeting system, these changes enabled central budget users to report on budgetary allocations for gender equality priorities and initiatives through the gender budget statements prepared and submitted to Ministry of Finance along with the annual budget requests. To date, 17 institutions at central level (14-line ministries/3 state institutions) have piloted the Government Methodology on GRB and included gender specific objectives in their sectoral programmes and budgets.

Trafficking of women and girls for sex and forced labour occurs and victims include both the citizens and foreigners transiting through the country. According to the Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP Report, US Department of State, June 2019): “Women and girls in North Macedonia are subjected to sex trafficking and forced labour within the country in restaurants, bars, and nightclubs. Foreign victims subjected to sex trafficking in North Macedonia typically originate from Eastern Europe and the Balkans, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo (UNSC1244), Romania, Serbia, and Ukraine. Citizens of North Macedonia and foreign victims transiting North Macedonia are subjected to sex trafficking and forced labour in construction and agricultural sectors in Southern, Central, and Western Europe. Children, primarily Roma, are subjected to forced begging and sex trafficking through forced marriages. Migrants and refugees traveling or being smuggled through North Macedonia are vulnerable to trafficking, particularly women and unaccompanied minors. Traffickers frequently bribe police and labour inspectors, and police have been investigated and convicted for complicity in human trafficking”.¹⁰⁰ Even though the country does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, it is making efforts to investigate, prosecute and convict traffickers including complicit officials.

Violence against children at home by their parents or other adult members of the family is also common and nearly 70 percent of children aged 2-14 were subject to such violence.¹⁰¹ In pursuance to the implementation of the Deinstitutionalisation Strategy 2018-2027, the number of children in institutions fell from 182 in 2017 to 43 in 2019. However, detention and correctional facilities for children do not meet international standards. It is worth noting that a National Strategy to prevent and protect children from violence was developed, for the period 2020 - 2025, as part of the country's efforts to strengthen the institutional response to violence against children.¹⁰² One in every five asylum-seekers that came to North Macedonia in 2015 was a child. While some reform of asylum and migration law, policy and services are ongoing, the country still seems unprepared for a similar influx of migrant children, should it occur in the near future.¹⁰³

Domestic violence against the older persons is present (albeit, there are no precise data on the incidence) in North Macedonia with serious consequences on the mental and physical health, dignity, quality of life, and general well-being of the older persons.¹⁰⁴ They are more vulnerable in times of a disaster, external economic or public health emergency.

In terms of freedoms, the Freedom House classifies the country as “Partly Free”. Media is active, and press freedom as per World Press Freedom index has improved significantly,¹⁰⁵ but journalists continue to face economic pressures that lead to clientelism and/or self-censorship. There have been cases of hate speech and xenophobia on social media against vulnerable groups, including women and girls from ethnic communities while judiciary has been slow to follow-up on these cases.

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-trafficking-in-persons-report-2/north-macedonia/>

¹⁰¹ <https://www.unicef.org/northmacedonia/reports/prevention-identification-reporting-referral-and-protection-cases-violence-against-children>

¹⁰² More information available here: http://mtsp.gov.mk/januari-2020-ns_article-sekoe-dete-ima-pravo-na-bezbedno-i-srekino-detstvo-vladata-usvoi-nacionalna-strategija-i-akciski-pla.nspix

¹⁰³ An analysis of the situation of women and children in the Republic of North Macedonia 2019 (SitAn), UNICEF, October 2019

¹⁰⁴ Domestic violence over the elderly with special emphasis on the Republic of Macedonia, by Marjan Gaberov, International Journal of Research in Social Sciences, Vol 7, Issue 8, August 2017.

¹⁰⁵ See Annex-2

The local governance in the country represents an unfinished agenda. While the legal framework for decentralisation and devolution of powers and responsibilities is in place, the means for the municipalities to discharge their functions effectively, efficiently and in an inclusive manner are often not there. As a result, municipalities, especially the rural ones, are unable to provide quality public services to local population. Though eventually it calls for improved fiscal decentralisation, both through central transfers and powers to raise their own funds, in the immediate period their capacity for local planning, budgeting and monitoring should be strengthened as also capacity to forge innovative public private partnerships. Equally important is to ensure equity in provision of services by improving design and delivery to ensure that the vulnerable groups (like people with disabilities, older persons, women and children, ethnic communities) do not suffer on account of unfinished and incoherent decentralisation.

Social cohesion in North Macedonia is both, a goal in itself and has an instrumental value as it promotes sustainable and inclusive development. The concept of social cohesion is not just limited to ethnic and religious harmony in the country but goes beyond that. Considerable progress has been made in promoting peaceful inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations over the years, particularly since signing the OFA. The governments are also trying to build an open, democratic society based on rule of law. Toxic nationalistic narratives often used during elections have been reversed. Yet, significant disparities among ethnicities remain in development outcomes, particularly regarding the Roma community, which can threaten social cohesion.

Social cohesion is also about social norms, practices and attitudes towards women entering the labour market; attitude towards LGBTI; and people with disabilities among others. Adoption of laws and policies to protect women's rights and enhanced awareness about the inclusion of people with disabilities in the society, including through deinstitutionalization, are steps in the direction to promote social cohesion. Besides equitable representation in administrative jobs, balanced regional development, cross-ethnic jobs in the private sector are also important for social cohesion. North Macedonia is a multi-cultural country and hence trust among various social groups is critical for sustainable growth. Presence of refugees and asylum-seekers as well as the return of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) can also introduce new fault lines in the society and disturb social cohesion for which their peaceful integration and assimilation is vital.

All in all, governance institutions continue to be less effective in promoting greater inclusion and social cohesion in the society. An analysis of the stakeholder submissions to the UN Human Rights Council would amply bring out the challenges that persist. The law on disabilities still has derogatory terms; cases of hate crimes against ethnic communities, LGBTI, journalists are not effectively investigated or prosecuted; the hate speech in media and internet goes unpunished; domestic violence still goes underreported and under punished with little protection to the victims; and legal aid by and large not available to the marginalized groups. High levels of corruption and partisan public administration makes it worse for the vulnerable groups.

What will turn governance into a driver of positive change is the implementation of the priority reforms in judiciary and administration to ensure de – facto independence and professionalization based on merits, including an unprecedented and results-oriented fight against corruption; making administration accountable to citizens; and giving greater voice to media and citizens. Social cohesion will be a positive outcome in the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious Macedonian society if the governance institutions function in an impartial and just manner. This would also contribute to more inclusive and sustainable development.

3.3 Social infrastructure

While the country has done well in terms of improvement in life expectancy and decline in maternal and infant mortality, systemic changes are needed to sustain the declining trend. There is rise, though, in non-communicable diseases, which account for about 85 percent of all deaths (30-70 years) in the country. Access and quality of healthcare remain a challenge. This will have serious impact on the resources and on poorest population groups seeking healthcare services. More than one-third of health services are paid for out of pocket which will create social discrepancies and be catastrophic for the very poor. Given the high and rising population of the older persons in the country, their health remains a matter of concern. The EU

2019 progress report recommends further improvement in access to healthcare services by the Roma community. The health delivery model focuses on speciality hospitals over primary health centres, equipment over skills (there is gross underutilisation of equipment), and curative over preventive health care. This is neither efficient nor equitable and may increase the cost of healthcare resulting in greater exclusion. Despite increase in salaries and improved retention policy, the medical staff is leaving the country in large numbers.

Healthcare should not be perceived as a service but as an economic sector. It is key for economic growth and contributes to the growth of every other economic sector. It is also an important employer actively creating jobs within the sector itself as also in the rest of the economy. It is an investment with high multiplier effects. Nearly half of the SDG targets are linked to health or determinants of health outcomes like poverty, education, gender equality, employment, environment among others. As per a WHO study, one Euro invested in health leads to an increase of Euro 2.36 in GDP in North Macedonia.¹⁰⁶ The wages in the healthcare sector grew by 35.51 percent in the past 10 years significantly more than wages in the rest of the economy which grew by 24 percent.¹⁰⁷

The high burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) would also have economic cost in terms of premature deaths, loss of efficiency, government healthcare expenditure, disability payments, increased demand for social care and welfare support etc. Reduced income and early retirement due to NCDs can push households into poverty. But at the same time the cost of addressing this is small: change in lifestyles, health education at schools, reducing obesity, reduced intake of salt, alcohol and tobacco can yield high economic benefits besides contributing to healthcare. The focus should increasingly be on staying healthy and not healthcare.

The country has achieved near universal enrolment for both men and women. The quality of education remains a concern as it does not prepare young people for the knowledge economy. Contemporary Technical and Vocational Education and training (TVET) remains in a developing stage. Skills training is not aligned with market and industry needs and does not improve youth employability. Overall, the link between the labour market and education curricula is weak. Preschool enrolment has been low among the children from poor households. It also shows rural-urban differences. Children with disabilities and other vulnerabilities, and Roma children, are more likely to be out of school.

The country's social protection system faces inefficiencies in execution and problems of targeting. Increasing attention is being paid to active labour market interventions. New Law on Social Protection promises to carry out major reforms to better target social protection schemes and enhance fiscal space. Among others, this will also have a pension scheme for people above 64 years of age who are not covered by any other income support scheme. Youth Guarantee Scheme for youth not in education, employment or training (NEET) is a step in the positive direction. After the latest reforms in the social protection system in 2019, people with disabilities the rural population, Roma community and children are better covered ¹⁰⁸.

The outcomes for health, education and social protection are not commensurate with the expenditure and do not promote equity. As analysed above, the country spends 6.5 percent of GDP on health, 4 percent on education, and the rest on social protection. However, a large chunk of social protection expenditure goes towards pensions (11 percent of GDP). The expenditure on education is in fact on the decline further worsening the inequalities in access to educational opportunities between rural and

My friend had an immobile child and lived on the top floor of the building. Even though she worked in the Department for urbanism in the Municipality, they failed to provide adaptation to the building and the possibility of easier access. She first went to Germany on her own, got a job, and a year later the whole family left. There, they have all necessary conditions for her child, health and social insurance, and both parents are employed.

- Respondent, female, 55 and older, urban area, smaller town

¹⁰⁶ The Health Sector in North Macedonia – Analysis of the Impact on the National Economy, WHO European Office for Investment for Health and Development, November 2019

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

¹⁰⁸ Voluntary National Review (VNR), May 2020

urban, rich and poor and for Roma, and persons with disabilities.

Due to the insufficient and further declining allocations, many schools lack basic resources. Reports indicate that one-third of schools require major repairs and satellite and multiple-shift schools are particularly prone to infrastructure problems. Teaching quality also suffers. Teachers in North Macedonia undertake professional development less than their peers in the region and more than half of all students lack basic skills in reading and maths.

As mentioned earlier the equity outcomes are most glaring at pre-school level with the enrolment being the lowest among students from a lower socio-economic background. Similar inequities are seen at secondary school level. Roma students are more likely to lose out on educational attainments at all levels. There is need to improve enrolment and retention of Roma students (some of whom may not have identity documents) and persons with disabilities in the education at various levels. Roma students are overrepresented in special schools and special classes. Often, they are likely to go to Roma majority schools (or classes). This must be addressed to promote inclusive and integrated education.

Roma and persons with disabilities are more likely to be excluded from the healthcare facilities. Most Roma do not have access to health insurance. The social protection system likewise does not adequately cover the persons with disabilities, nor does it consider disability-related additional costs. For effective implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the government has set up a National Coordination Body and is taking steps to protect and promote right to life, health, education, employment and non-discrimination. All the above call for a more targeted and efficient approach to social sectors that would result in more inclusive outcomes.

Expenditure on health, education and social protection is an investment in human capital. It makes a significant contribution to keeping poverty in check. To make it a driver of positive outcomes and to avoid a situation where it becomes fiscally unsustainable, the government should make this public expenditure more efficient, inclusive and targeted keeping also in mind that it does not result in inactivity or act as a disincentive to work. A more market-linked, contributory pension system may be explored rather than a totally state-funded one. Given the rising life expectancy, retirement age increase could also be explored. Strengthening active labour market policies, including business and life skills, will also result in greater integration of jobseekers with the market needs.

3.4 Climate change, environmental protection and natural resource management

The country is significantly exposed to climate change and its consequences. Climate change has serious impact on agriculture, water resources, forestry, human health, tourism and cultural heritage. The key risks of climate change include land degradation, food insecurity, water deficit, droughts, floods, mudslide, erosion, forest fires, heatwaves, infrastructure damages, impacts on fauna and flora, including loss of biodiversity, economic and human losses, among others. Climate change related disasters have already occurred with human losses and high infrastructure damages, as well as financial costs. The poor in North Macedonia and those dependent on agriculture are particularly vulnerable to extreme weather events.

Waste management is another environmental concern. There is still 80 percent of the municipal waste being disposed of in 54 non-compliant municipal landfills with high risks to soil quality, quality of ground and surface waters and GHG emissions, and human health. There are numerous illegal dumpsites in the urban and rural areas of the country (especially near rivers) as a result of low knowledge of the people about health risks of improper waste disposal and still low access to waste collection services in rural areas making the rural population vulnerable. The management of medical waste, hospital and plastic waste are issues of concern especially during pandemics, such as the Covid-19.

To upgrade and modernize the waste management sector, local self-government units (LSGUs) are considering adopting cost-reflective user fee policies for waste collection and disposal tariffs. In addition, potential economies of scale from regionalization of waste management have yet to be exploited. Bill

collection rates at the household level are in general quite low. Measures to ensure higher rates of waste service fee bill collection are lacking.

Extremely high air pollution in recent years (especially in winter) is causing serious health impacts. Increased number of health problems (respiratory diseases, cardiovascular diseases in some cases with fatal consequences) as a result of air pollution caused by residential wood heating, public electricity and heat production and industry sector, transport, agriculture and waste burning have become a serious issue bringing in sharp focus environment-health nexus. Uncontrolled burning of waste from wood processing facilities, textile, leather, tires, plastic, paper by poor households for heating purposes highlights the need for providing equitable access to clean energy. The share of households with primary reliance on clean energy for cooking, space heating and lighting (all three) was 38.2 percent in 2018 and for Roma households much lower at 11.7 percent.¹⁰⁹

It is estimated that every year air pollution generates losses equivalent to 3.2 percent of GDP.¹¹⁰ Another study estimates 1199 deaths or 1.8 million years of life lost, Euro 260-697 million of economic losses and significantly increased cases of cardiovascular and respiratory ailments, some needing hospitalizations, in Skopje in 2012 only.¹¹¹ Reliable data are lacking to assess the impact of air pollution on human health, especially vulnerable groups and the environment, establish cause-and-effect relationships and design appropriate actions to mitigate negative impacts.

The country has enormous opportunities for climate change mitigation through implementation of energy efficiency measures (in industries, public buildings, households), increasing the share of renewables in energy mix, tapping the potential for use of new technologies, creation of green jobs, and pursuing low carbon development pathways. The new energy strategy till 2040, described in section 1.7, is thus a step in the right direction.

Ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation is also a challenge. A self-assessment on equitable access to water and sanitation carried out in 2015¹¹² in the municipalities of Skopje and Veles and the district of Kumanovo with a combined population of over 700,000 people (about a third of the country's population) highlighted some equity gaps with regards to geographical disparities and access by vulnerable and marginalized groups. At national level, access to improved sanitation is only 83 per cent in rural areas compared to 99 per cent in urban areas. In addition, only 26 per cent of Roma people living in Skopje, mostly in poor informal settlements, have access to water and only 16 per cent have access to sanitation in their homes. A continuous supply of safe water, and sanitation systems that are operational, including under challenging climate conditions, are therefore required for the entire population including the most vulnerable.

Irrigation structures are old and in a state of disrepair resulting in huge water losses in irrigation. Non-collection of water fees does not allow the local authorities to undertake regular repair and maintenance. Drinking water networks likewise are in urgent need of rehabilitation. Soil erosion affects 96.5 percent of the total territory and affects soil productivity with consequences for agricultural production and food security. Biodiversity provides livelihoods, enhances food and nutrition food security, and enables access to water and health. The poor have a direct stake in the conservation of biodiversity. There is however continuous loss of biodiversity in North Macedonia in the background of lack of effective policy and implementation and coordination mechanism with serious impact on the poor.

Small farmers, dependent as they are on climate-sensitive natural resources, particularly bear the burden of climate change and environmental degradation as they struggle to cope with weather fluctuations across the country affecting water availability; high temperatures disrupting farmers' efforts to raise viable crops; and declining crop yields as these organisms struggle to survive in conditions they haven't adapted to. Extreme weather events destroy crops before farmers can harvest them, causing revenue loss and rural distress. Farmers who do not have other income sources are particularly vulnerable. For the general population, the cost of food will increase. The negative impact of climate change on health, and resurgence

¹⁰⁹ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2018-2019, SSO-UNFPA-UNICEF, page

¹¹⁰ World Bank Diagnostics, 2018

¹¹¹ Health Impacts and Economic Costs of air pollution in the metropolitan area of Skopje, Sanchez Gerardo et al, 2012

¹¹² The self-assessment on equitable access to water and sanitation was carried out under the framework of the Protocol on Water and Health and coordinated by the Institute of Public Health and the NGO Journalists for Human Rights, with support from UNECE. Country report available at: https://www.unece.org/env/water/pwh_work/equitable_access.html

of infections, may increase the cost of healthcare with disastrous consequences for the poor, pregnant women, children and the older persons. For the country, the mitigation and adaptation costs will rise and impose a heavy financial burden on the government. Promoting individual and collective behavioural change towards sustainable use of resources to mitigate the impact and promoting adaptation to sustainable practices is equally important. Helping farmers with climate-resistant technology and finance will protect agriculture as a source of employment to 20 percent of labour force. Agricultural insurance, as a risk transfer tool, can greatly help farmers access finance, thus could be an area to explore along with other disaster risk reduction and management tools and approaches in the agriculture sector.¹¹³

Women bear disproportionately higher burden and risk of climate change than men. This is both a reflection of pre-existing gender inequalities in the society as well as a contributory factor in exacerbating these inequalities. Women's responsibilities about management of food, fuel, water, energy, cooking and heating are much higher and considering the high share of women in the population of poor make them vulnerable to rise in costs due to disasters or extreme weather events. Women's lack of control over resources (including access to climate related information), inadequate participation in decision making, and insufficient recognition of their local knowledge and ability to innovate act as impediments to building resilience in lives and livelihoods.

In the Macedonian context, climate change related extreme weather events (droughts and flooding) have increased the already high burden of women's unpaid, family farm labour. Given that around 40 percent of agricultural workforce are women, with responsibility to till the land but limited access to land and other resources, the impact on them is high and non-availability of drought- and flood-resistant seeds prevents them from making long-term crop planning. Women have high representation in the tourism sector in North Macedonia. Climate change and disasters adversely affect tourism, especially snow-based activities during warm winters, and results in loss of employment for women in hospitality industry. Women's own health (who spend more time indoors) and increased burden of arranging safe water, and care for children and elderly are other vulnerabilities women face due to climate change. Disasters (including pandemics as the recent evidence shows) also exacerbate gender-based violence. Improved involvement of women in climate change planning and environmental governance can make sustainable development pathways more robust, contribute to more inclusive and participatory governance, and build resilience.

Gender and Climate Change Action Plan has been developed as part of the 2 Biannual Update Report for the UNFCCC, and the UNFCCC Gender and Climate Change Focal Point from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (MLSP) has been appointed. Moreover, a new Unit has been established in MLSP to support the collection relevant gender disaggregated data, and field data relevant to gender and climate change which will be taken into consideration while developing new gender and climate change strategies, particularly the Gender Equality Strategy. The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning is also ensuring incorporation of gender aspects into the new National Strategy on Climate Action (under development).

3.5 *Social norms, values and behaviour*

At the root of exclusion is a set of deep-seated social norms, prejudices and negative stereotypes that are pervasive and even have an influence on policymaking in the country. Gender stereotypes about the role of women in society have kept women from participating fully in the labour market. This situation is incongruous when viewed in the context of large-scale outmigration of young skilled and unskilled workers leaving behind a shortage of labour. The gender stereotypes also result in violation of women's rights. Among the most prominent are early marriages, and the limited ability for women and girls to make choices for their reproductive health; their body; timing, spacing and number of pregnancies. The social conditioning leads to women not reporting domestic violence cases much less trying to seek help. Women from ethnic communities and women with disabilities are many times more vulnerable to gender-based violence and thus unable to realise their full potential.

¹¹³ FAO 2018. Comprehensive analysis of the disaster risk reduction and management system for the agriculture sector. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Available at: www.fao.org/3/I8363EN/i8363en.pdf

Corruption and bribery are likewise tolerated and accepted by society as a norm. This could take different forms, from a more blatant large-scale corruption and abuse of power to more subtle forms of corruption like giving gifts to public officials such as by patients to doctors and by parents to teachers. These forms of corruption have become embedded in society as a tradition and hence society shows greater tolerance. This raises expectations of public officials and contributes to exclusion of those who cannot afford to bring such gifts. Looking at it from human rights perspective, corruption has negative impact on human rights as it might violate the right to health and right to education such as in two examples above.

Knowledge, attitudes and norms are among the most significant barriers to the realisation of children's rights in North Macedonia. Children are not a high priority group within the wider society and there is no strong children's lobby among NGOs, academia or the media. As a result, demand for positive change for children is muted and there is insufficient pressure on duty-bearers to meet their responsibilities towards children. Social norms in relation to children are neither rights-based nor necessarily child-focused. Traditional attitudes towards gender roles and a passive acceptance of violence towards women and children enable an unacceptably high prevalence of violence in homes, schools and institutions. Lack of comprehensive sex education in schools additionally deepens the existing social norms on issues such as gender, values, relationships, reproductive health and rights.

My friend took postgraduate studies in the Netherlands in preparations to work for international organizations. Her goal was to work around the world, and she did not plan to return. After several engagements in the region and a pregnancy, she returned to North Macedonia believing that the medical staff here is fit for this challenge. For her two pregnancies she received services at a higher level and much more accessible than the services offered in Western Europe and America, where her husband comes from. Therefore, they decided to stay in MKD during the early childhoods of their children.

Now that their children have come of age at which they start noticing all social interactions and inconsistencies, as parents, they consider it is their responsibility to transfer their children to another sociological context in which they will acquire habits for building true civil values. They are considering leaving this country where there is politicized decision-making for every segment of society, and there has never been a place in state services and institutions for them.

- Respondent, female, 35-44, from the capital

The refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers also bear the brunt of xenophobic attitude of host society and overall lack of respect for diversity. This, and lack of social interaction with refugees, may be the reasons why the strategy for integration of refugees has not been adopted yet.

Institutionalisation of persons with disabilities is not in line with international norms and standards of a civilised society. The Deinstitutionalisation Strategy 2018-2027 is therefore a step in the right direction. Use

Social stigma exerts pressure on families to maintain children with disability at home and holds back their integration into mainstream schooling. Children themselves are not really considered rights holders; rather they tend to be perceived as recipients of care and protection and their views are seldom sought. Consequently, programmes are seldom planned or delivered in either a child-focused or rights-based way, which inevitably reduces their efficiency, relevance and cost effectiveness.

Negative attitude towards Roma community manifests in hate speech in media and internet. Lack of investigation and prosecution of the perpetrators further perpetuates this discriminatory attitude and behaviour towards Roma. This also affects their service-seeking behaviour and results in much poorer health and education outcomes for this community.

Notwithstanding the forthcoming amendment to law on discrimination that includes LGBTI persons, more to comply with the EU standards, the societal behaviour towards sexual minorities is anything but positive. Societal prejudice, hate speech, discrimination and widespread intolerance are still prevalent. Hate crimes and hate speech against LGBTI, and the civil society actors working to defend their rights, have not been effectively investigated or prosecuted.¹¹⁴

The refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers also bear the brunt of xenophobic attitude of host society and overall lack of respect for diversity. This, and lack of social interaction with refugees, may be the reasons why the strategy for integration of refugees has not been adopted yet.

¹¹⁴ EU Progress Report 2019

of derogatory terms in the law on disabilities is a grim reminder of the past and does not sit well with a liberal, modern society. Furthermore, while there has been a growing support for inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools, still only 24 percent of the general public support full inclusion while 33 percent support children attending mainstream schools, however they believe they should attend separate, special classes¹¹⁵. It is well-known that persons in institutions, notably children and girls, are vulnerable to forced labour and violence, including sexual violence. The country must continue to promote and finish the started process of deinstitutionalisation and community-based or independent living with support should be considered as options for persons with disabilities and the process of inclusive education; both requiring the establishment and strengthening community-based services to support families and efforts to shift norms and attitudes towards disability.

Understanding the norms that govern a society can provide clues to the underlying causes of violence and how it can be prevented. More specifically, acceptance of violent child discipline practices and acceptance of domestic violence contribute to persisting violence against women and violence against children. For example, a large proportion (59 percent) of the parents/caregivers believe that it is justified for a parent to hit a child in at least one of the given circumstances i.e. steals, smokes, drinks alcohol or take drugs, child talks back to parents or has bad grade¹¹⁶. Over 73 percent of children (1-14 years) received violent discipline method in 2018. This percentage was higher at 81.8 for the Roma children.¹¹⁷

Individual and social attitudes and behaviour do not just perpetuate discrimination in the society, they also influence other walks of life. Attitude towards nature and how responsibly the society uses natural resources, and if it is contributing to or mitigating air pollution, is a part of the same value system. Individual behaviour like burning of biomass of various kinds in rural areas continues unabated while the country is battling with air pollution.

The factors above are both, root causes of vulnerability and cross-cutting issues. While change in social norms and values is a long-term process, various actions in the short- and medium-term can influence the individual and societal behaviour. Besides action on other fronts, societal transformation for more responsible individual and community approach is needed to accelerate achievement of SDGs.

¹¹⁵ https://www.unicef.org/northmacedonia/media/3181/file/MK_2018_DisabilityKapReport_ENG.pdf

¹¹⁶ <https://www.unicef.org/northmacedonia/reports/protection-children-violence-fundamental-right-every-child>

¹¹⁷ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2018-2019, SSO-UNFPA-UNICEF, May 2020, pages 232-234

4 LNOB: The five-factor framework

This section examines the population groups that are left behind or are at risk of being left behind and why. People may be left behind because:

1. They are **discriminated against** based on who they are, their identity or status, gender, age, sex, sexual identity, ethnicity, religious beliefs, health status, or disability. International human rights mechanisms provide evidence on groups that are discriminated against.
2. They are **geographically isolated**. Risk of exclusion due to location is a real one. Lack of transport and Internet, inability of the administrative machinery to reach far-flung areas often results in exclusion of people living in remote areas.
3. They are **vulnerable to shocks**. Some areas or people may face setbacks due to these shocks more than others. These shocks could be disasters, social conflict, cross-border tensions, violence or economic shocks.
4. They are **adversely impacted by governance** structures, laws, policies, institutions, budgets, taxes and traditional practises limiting their ability to engage in decision-making. They may also face shrunken democratic space.
5. They **belong to a given socio-economic status** facing multidimensional poverty, extreme poverty or inequality.

At the intersection of the above five factors which contribute to people being left behind, there is a confluence of reinforcing sources of deprivation and inequality. Governance structures and policy development at times reinforce these factors due to the lack of political power / influence of those affected. Also, the severity of exclusion goes up when there are overlapping vulnerabilities.

Based on the above, CCA identifies the following vulnerable groups along with the immediate, underlying and root causes for their exclusion. The groups identified as left behind or at risk of being left behind are elaborated below.

4.1 Youth NEET

North Macedonia's population in 15-29 age group is around 20 percent. It is estimated that 31.2 percent of this population is not in education, training or employment (NEET). This is much higher than the OECD average of 13.9 percent. Among Roma in the country, nearly 71 percent of Roma youth (81 percent Roma women) are likely to be in the NEET group.

Unemployment is the worst form of exclusion and violates the right to adequate standard of living and social protection. In North Macedonia it had reached a peak of 37.3 percent in 2005. While it is beginning to decline (17.4 percent at the end of 2019), and more jobs are being created, the quality of employment remains a major concern as mentioned above. Long spells of unemployment can affect the physical and mental health of the youth and this is also a social risk. The link between education and the labour market has been tenuous. The educational system has invested in higher levels of degrees but not in skills that the market needs.

As a result of high unemployment or "underemployment", many Macedonian citizens choose to leave the country in search of better opportunities. Doctors and other highly skilled professionals are particularly prone to leaving the country with serious consequences for the country's workforce.

There are challenges beyond education, skills and employment that the youth face. Youth health is an important issue. Promoting healthy behaviour by educating them about reproductive health care, NCDs, sexual health, HIV and substance abuse is important. There is a need to provide space to youth for their voices to be heard and participate in decision-making.

Youth is often perceived by the society either as victims or perpetrators. To mainstream youth, especially the vulnerable youth groups, in national development and to make them change agents and equal stakeholders, the government of North Macedonia adopted a National Youth Strategy (2016-2025) with the active participation of young people and representatives of relevant youth institutions. The Strategy recognises the socio-cultural diversity of youth and promotes active participation of every young person to become an active citizen and equal participant in all social processes including implementation and monitoring of policies and decisions that affect them.

The immediate causes for the above situation are lack of relevant education and vocational skills that would prepare youth for their later life; the underlying causes include insufficient and ineffective policy, legal and institutional framework for youth and insufficient economic growth to absorb labour; the root causes are social attitudes towards youth, especially on gender, among different ethnic groups and youth at-risk.

4.2 Vulnerable women and girls

Inclusion of women in economic, political and social life not only enhances their own well-being and thus has intrinsic value; this also has instrumental value and contributes to better development outcomes. The World Bank estimated that about 16 percent of GDP is lost annually due to gender differences. The key challenges women and girls in the country face are: (a) inadequate participation in the labour force; (b) under-representation of women from ethnic communities in political and administrative system;¹¹⁸ and (c) gender-based violence and inadequate protection of their rights.

There are many factors that prevent women from participating in the country's economic life and are violative of rights to equality and non-discrimination. These include: (a) patriarchal norms and stereotypes about the role of women in society (early marriages, early pregnancies); (b) gender-discriminatory family obligations to take care of children, the older persons and the sick;¹¹⁹ (c) limited access to affordable private and state-funded childcare support; (d) lack of relevant education and skills adversely affecting women's employability especially after a long spell of inactivity and absence from labour market; (e) exploitation of women by employers in wage payment or violation of other labour rights, and (f) limited access to economic resources, ownership and control over land.

As a result, women's labour force participation rate in 2019 was only 54.8 percent compared to 77.3 percent for men. Also, only 44.7 percent women in the labour force were employed compared to 64.4 percent men.¹²⁰ Labour markets are gender biased and follow gender stereotypes-based division of labour. There is also gender pay gaps in informal sectors such as the garment industry where women represent 81 percent of workers.¹²¹ SILC data show that the unadjusted gender wage gap in North Macedonia increased from 15.3 percent in 2010 to 17.2 percent in 2015, similar to the unadjusted wage gap of the EU-28 at 16.3 percent in 2015.¹²² In the public sector, where women represent 50 percent of the workforce, there is no difference in salaries between women and men. Unpaid domestic work done by women is many times more than what is done by men.¹²³ There are also gender gaps in ownership of property and assets with only 28 percent

¹¹⁸ As of March 2020, of the 48 women Members of Parliament there are only 6 ethnic Albanian MPs, rest are ethnic Macedonians.

¹¹⁹ According to UN Women (2018), 61% of women spend from 20-30 hours per week working around the house, regardless if women are employed, unemployed or inactive. Mapping of Social Vulnerabilities and Exclusion at Local Level Using a Gender Lens – A Report, Republic of North Macedonia, UN Women, 2018

¹²⁰ http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/2020/2.1.20.06_mk.pdf#EndFragment

¹²¹ CEDAW Concluding Observations on the Sixth Periodic Report of the FYR of Macedonia, November 2018.

¹²² <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/986351530094208973/pdf/MKD-Gender-Disparities-in-Labor-Market-Final-revised.pdf>

¹²³ <https://www.flickr.com/photos/140581571@N07/47599306172/in/album-72157665075700682/>

women owning property and in rural areas even less.¹²⁴ This makes them economically vulnerable. Discrimination in the labour market mimics the gender discriminatory practices within the household.

Gender discrimination in labour market only gets worse when other vulnerabilities are overlaid. Women from ethnic communities, Roma women, are particularly likely to be out of labour market, unemployed or in precarious employment and face discrimination in labour market. They are also more likely to be married early, not go to school, and be marginalised in social, economic and political spheres.

Even though women's representation in parliament is 38.3 percent (2016 elections),¹²⁵ thanks to the gender quota, this does not help women from ethnic communities whose representation in parliament and local-level decision-making remains low. There are only 7 percent women mayors in the country as per CEDAW 6th Report and 24 percent women in managerial positions according to ILOSTAT.¹²⁶ Women, particularly from ethnic communities, rural women and migrant and asylum-seeking refugee women, are vulnerable to gender-based discrimination and violence. Social attitudes condoning domestic violence as "family affair" further worsens women's situation. In North Macedonia, 82 percent of women reported sexual / intimate partner violence.¹²⁷ No more than 10 percent of victims of domestic violence sought any help.¹²⁸

The reproductive health has made progress but there are still areas of concern. The adolescent birth rate has gone up from 13 (in 2011) to 21 (2018) per 1,000 women among 15-19 years age group. Among Roma women, the rate was 114 per 1,000 women in 2018 according to the MICS Survey.¹²⁹ Early marriage is another area of concern. Ten percent of women, and 45.7 percent Roma women, married before the age of 18.¹³⁰ The country lacks intersectoral protocols for cooperation to prevent girls from entering into early marriage and to support those who have already married. Furthermore, social norms and traditional values significantly influence the fate of a young girl, thus impeding her reproductive rights.

The modern contraceptive prevalence rate among women aged 15-49 years (not in union/married) in seven years increased by only 1.2 percentage points, from 12.8 per cent in 2011 to 14.0 in 2018. Among the Roma, this percentage is even lower, 8.6 (in 2018).¹³¹ Supply of and demand for modern contraceptives is low due to (a) poor quality of family planning services, with insufficient numbers of trained service providers and uneven distribution among urban and rural areas; (b) prejudices against contraception among medical practitioners and the general population; (c) lack of sexuality education, poor awareness of its benefits, cultural barriers, stigma and discrimination, especially for the Roma and other marginalized groups; and (d) high market prices and inadequate free-of-charge contraceptives for socially marginalized groups. Women and girls who can make choices and control their reproductive lives are better able to get quality education, find decent work, and make free and informed decisions in all spheres of life.

Although both maternal mortality and infant mortality have declined, accessibility and quality of emergency obstetrics and neonatal care is limited due to poor referral system and insufficient number and capacity of health care providers. Despite antenatal care being free of charge, regulations are unclear, and some women are charged for the services. It is indicated that the quality of care for mothers and infants is often suboptimal and that some improvements are needed to achieve a standard level of care, whereas in some cases significant improvements are needed to ensure a standard level of care.¹³²

North Macedonia ranks 36 out of 189 countries in the Human Development Report's gender-inequality index with a gender-development index value of 0.95. In the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report, the country ranks well above average on educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment, while below average on economic participation and opportunity. North Macedonia ranks 37

¹²⁴ USAID North Macedonia Gender Analysis Report-July 2019. <https://banyanglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/USAID-North-Macedonia-Gender-Analysis-Report.pdf>

¹²⁵ <http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

¹²⁶ Cited in OSCE-led Survey on Violence against Women in "Well-being and Safety of Women, 2019" <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/413237>

¹²⁷ Closing the Gap – An Overview of UNDP Results in gender Equality in Europe and CIS, 2017.

¹²⁸ Ibid

¹²⁹ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), 2018-2019, SSO-UNFPA-UNICEF, May 2020, pages 61-62

¹³⁰ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2018-2019, SSO-UNFPA-UNICEF, May 2020, page 249

¹³¹ Ibid, page 70

¹³² Evaluation of the Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care Availability, Use and Quality in Macedonia – UNFPA Report 2018

(out of 167 countries) in the National Geographic's Women, Peace and Security Index which is a composite index and measures inclusion, security and justice.¹³³

The root causes for gender inequality lie in the social norms. Patriarchal attitudes, stereotypes about women's role in society, linking women rights with family values all contribute to women's low participation in the labour force and domestic violence they face. The immediate causes are lack of childcare facilities and opportunities to acquire skills after being out of the labour market for some time. Underlying causes are lack of policy and legal framework to promote gender equality and weak implementation of gender laws.

Gender-based violence is widespread in North Macedonia – 54% of women stated that they experienced psychological, physical or sexual violence since the age of 15 by a partner or non-partner, according to the recent multi-partner study on violence against women, led by OSCE¹³⁴. Patterns of discrimination against women and girls, is a human rights violation and a life-threatening condition, of which gender-based violence is most prevalent.

Vulnerable populations such as ethnic communities, poor women and girls, disabled women and girls, and older women have a higher risk of gender-based violence.

Although the country has been extremely supportive of gender-based violence in the last few years, the multi sectorial prevention and response requires further strengthening.

Women are often projected as victims and in their reproductive role. Women as change agents and as entrepreneurs and producers do not get much attention. Women as entrepreneurs in North Macedonia have fairly level playing field in terms of legal framework for men and women. WB 2020 Women, Business and Law Index gives the country a score of 85 which places it below all the Western Balkan countries except Montenegro. The three dimensions where the country loses out are pay, pensions and parenthood where laws are gender discriminatory. If women's agency can address these dimensions the country will be at par with other Western Balkans countries. Women's parliamentary Club and Women's Lobby have helped position gender equality and women's empowerment on top of development agenda.

Women are also playing an active role in conflict-prevention and peace building under the National Action Plan (NAP prepared to implement the UNSC Resolution 1325. The Strategic framework of the second 1325 NAP has been drafted in consultation with the relevant ministries, civil society and international community (NATO, OSCE, UK Embassy). For first time it is mentioned that the document will be costed.

The country has taken many legislative and policy measures in the past to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. These include adoption of (1) first National Strategy on Gender Equality (2013-2020); (2) Government Strategy for introducing Gender Responsive Budgeting (2012-2017); (3) the second National Strategy for protection and prevention of Domestic Violence (2012-2015) and (4) National Strategy on Equality and Non-Discrimination (2016-2020).

4.3 Roma community

Roma face considerably more challenges in North Macedonia than the other ethnic communities. Roma are more likely to be without basic identification documents, without completed primary education, homeless or live in substandard conditions, unemployed or NEET, and living below the poverty line. Almost 95 percent of children on the street are Roma children.¹³⁵ Roma additionally face prejudices and stigma and are victims of hate speech and anti-Roma attitudes. National statistics are not published by ethnicity hence they are

¹³³ <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/2019/10/peril-progress-prosperity-womens-well-being-around-the-world-feature/>

¹³⁴ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (2019). OSCE-led Survey on Violence Against Women – North Macedonia Report (OSCE Official Website). Retrieved from OSCE-led Survey on Violence Against Women: North Macedonia - Results Report

¹³⁵ Violence against Children in the Child Protection System, by Stephen James Minton, Elena Dimushevska, Sanela Skrijelj, Vera Dimitrievska, April 2018

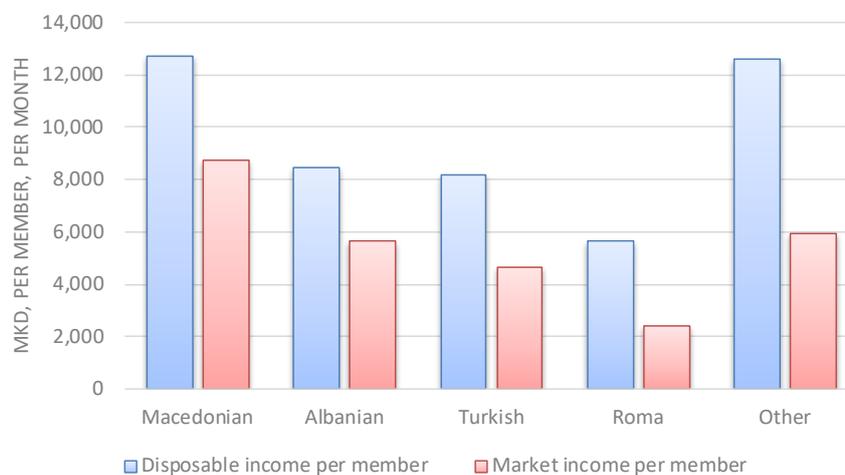
more likely to be not counted for government assistance and remain excluded. However, there are other robust sources depicting the Roma situation.

The nationally representative 2017 Quality of Life Survey¹³⁶ allows us to understand the correlation between ethnicity and living conditions of households. Ethnic Roma households make up more than 10 percent of the poorest quintile, which is more than three times their share in the total population. Figure below suggests that Roma earn the lowest average income among all ethnicities in the country: their disposable income is only 45 percent that of ethnic Macedonians, while the market income (which excludes social transfers) is only 27 percent. This also suggests that Roma are more frequently social assistance beneficiaries than other ethnic communities.

Roma face significant labour-market disadvantages. A recent study¹³⁷ finds that the NEET rate of Roma in 2017 has been 73.6 percent compared to 32.8 percent of non-Roma. Employment rate of Roma in the same year was 22 percent compared with 40 percent of non-Roma. The study also provides evidence of Roma employment stagnating amid the overall improvements in the labour-market conditions in the country. Unemployment rate among Roma has been an astonishing 49 percent against the national average of about 19 percent in 2017. The labour-market position of Roma women is even further aggravated: only 13 percent of them have been in employment, while 58 percent of active Roma women have been unemployed.

Explanation for such position of Roma may be sought in the huge disparities in educational outcomes and access to services overall. For example, less than 15 percent of Roma enrol in pre-school education (compared to 29 percent of non-Roma) and declining since 2011. Roma also significantly lag in their enrolment in primary education – by 20 percentage points – despite it being compulsory. A recent Report on the social mapping of Roma¹³⁸ identifies financial difficulties and distance to school as the most common reasons for Roma children not attending school. Only about 8 percent of Roma households reported cases of discrimination of their children in the educational system. But segregation remains high with 40 percent marginalized Roma students attending majority Roma schools.¹³⁹

Figure 5: Household income by ethnicity



Source: 2017 Quality of Life Survey

The indicators on the access to health services are likewise not encouraging. It is estimated that Roma children under 5 years of age have three times higher likelihood of lagged cognitive and mental development than their non-Roma counterparts. Roma have 10 percent lower life expectancy than the overall population

¹³⁶ <http://www.financethink.mk/models/survey-on-quality-of-life-in-macedonia-2017/>

¹³⁷ <http://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/library/roma/the-position-of-roma-women-and-men-in-the-labour-markets-of-west.html>.

¹³⁸ Тематска евалуација на ЕУ поддршката за ромските заедници и социјално мапирање на Ромите: Извештај за социјалното мапирање. Скопје. AECOM, 2019

¹³⁹ 2018 Annual Report, National Commission for fight against human trafficking and illegal migration, p.33

while infant mortality at 13.1 is higher than that for the general population which is 10.3. Children from this ethnic group are three times more stunted than non-Roma children. Overall access to healthcare services and health outcomes of Roma are much worse than that of non-Roma which is not surprising considering that 80 percent of Roma do not have health insurance.¹⁴⁰ They are more likely to not know that everyone in North Macedonia has the right to basic health insurance without compensation.

About 44 percent of the Roma population lives in dwellings smaller than 50m² which results in overcrowding considering that on average one household has 5 members. Most Roma live in dwellings over which they have no legal right. The overall living conditions are poor and are manifested in health and education outcomes and gender equality. Most of the Roma households live in houses that are damp (53 percent), lack lighting (15 percent), have inadequate housing (6 percent), without electricity (3 percent), and no access up to asphalt road (12 percent). In terms of community infrastructure, 18 percent of Roma households do not have access to a sewage system, 30 percent do not have a toilet in the house, 20 percent do not have a toilet with a bath and about 10 percent do not have potable water inside the house. In 2015, it was estimated that only 26 per cent of Roma people living in Skopje, mostly in poor informal settlements, have access to water and only 16 per cent have access to sanitation in their homes¹⁴¹. These conditions are closely linked to the health status outcomes. Roma children, especially girls, marry early and many are also subjected to forced begging and sex trafficking through forced marriages.¹⁴² The overall socio-economic status of the Roma community is violative of their rights as rights-holders to food, health, education, and social protection; right to equality and non-discrimination; the child rights under CRC among others.

The root causes for unequal development outcomes for Roma are the negative stereotypes of which they are victims, additionally coupled with traditional socio-cultural attitudes of the Roma. Immediate causes are insufficient access to health, housing, education and social protection. Underlying causes include lack of culturally sensitive policy, legal and institutional framework and inadequate data about their socio-economic status.

The implementation of the Roma Inclusion Strategy (2014-2020) and corresponding action plans for education, employment, housing, gender, and health require further action. In the absence of unbiased disaggregated data collection, it is difficult to verify the status and level of discrimination Roma people face. The National Action Plans (NAPs) corresponding to the Roma Strategy were not adopted until April 2016. There is no systematic measurement of progress as no well-defined set of indicators exists. The indicators are vaguely defined and not measurable. The National Coordinating Body for Implementation of the Roma Strategy (NCB) does not prepare annual evaluation reports much less share with wider public as it was mandated to do. NAPs are budgetary in nature and not outcome based. These weaknesses are further compounded by lack of data and national and sub-national levels.¹⁴³ The official Report on Roma Integration (2018) contains very little disaggregated data or any useful information. For most indicators data is shown as “not available”.¹⁴⁴ North Macedonia in partnership with European governments has politically committed to improve the socio-economic status and social inclusion of Roma, bringing together governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and Roma civil society, to accelerate the progress towards improving the welfare of Roma and to initiate such progress in a transparent and measurable way.

Notwithstanding the weaknesses above, the Romani civil society has played an active role in the Roma integration. About 40 Roma organisations gathered around the platform “My voice, my responsibility” and identified the priorities for the Roma Strategy. A progress report on the decade of Roma inclusion (2005-2015) notes that the Romani civil society has actively contributed to the implementation and monitoring of relevant initiatives and mediated in communication between national and local authorities on the one hand and local Romani communities on the other.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid

¹⁴¹ In 2015, under the framework of the Protocol on Water and Health, North Macedonia carried out a self-assessment on equitable access to water and sanitation : https://www.unece.org/env/water/pwh_work/equitable_access.html

¹⁴² (<https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-trafficking-in-persons-report-2/north-macedonia/>)

¹⁴³ Shadow Report – Implementation of the Roma Strategy in the Republic of North Macedonia in the years 2016 and 2017.

¹⁴⁴ Report on the Annual Implementation of the Public Policies for the Roma Integration in the Republic of North Macedonia, Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2018

4.4 Children

As in the case of women, children are more likely to be excluded or at risk of being excluded if they face overlapping vulnerabilities, exploitation / abuse. Children in large families with three or more children, children from Roma community, children with disabilities, children from households living in poverty, children in institutions and correctional homes, children in conflict with law, drug abusing children, and children trafficked for sex or labour are more vulnerable to exclusion.

Child poverty rate in North Macedonia (0-17) was 29.3 percent in 2018 increasing from 28.6 percent in 2016. Over the same period, the percentage of severely materially deprived children increased from 31.4 percent to 34.4 percent. At-risk-of-poverty rate was 50.2 percent in households with two adults and 3+ children, and 6.1 percent among single-person households (65 years or older). For comparison, the poverty rate in households without children is 12.7 percent. Overall, 9.4 percent of all children in North Macedonia suffered from risk compounding (income poverty, material deprivation and living in jobless households), being nearly fourfold than in the EU-28.

Social protection for children has been inadequate whereby, until recently, the amount and coverage of child allowances have been quite limited and the targeting inefficient. With the reform of the social assistance system of June 2019, the child-allowance coverage significantly expanded, as well with the introduction of new (or significantly reformed) benefits, as is the educational allowance. On the other hand, the third-child allowance was restricted to poor households. In parallel, waiver for the kindergarten fee has been introduced for single parents.

However, the root causes for the persistent child poverty may well be sought in the service support system, whereby lack, affordability and stereotypes (preference for family members childcare) related to kindergartens push a large share of parents, particularly mothers, into labour-market inactivity due to childcare. Only 9 percent of the 0-3-year old children have been enrolled in formal childcare. Participation in pre-primary education is even lower across minority groups. Over half of ethnic Macedonian children (53.9 percent) attended pre-primary education, compared to 14.1 percent ethnic Albanian children. The share of other ethnicities (including Roma) was 9.8 percent.¹⁴⁵ Wealth is another major determinant with only 7.4 percent of the children from the poorest quintile attending pre-primary school compared with 67.4 percent in the richest quintile. Also, percentage of children in early childhood education in urban areas is much higher (46.6 percent) than in rural areas (19.9 percent).¹⁴⁶ Kindergartens in North Macedonia are still with insufficient capacity (especially in rural areas) which leads to overcrowding, very high child-staff ratios and waiting lists.¹⁴⁷

Social services for segments of the child population go beyond kindergartens. For instance, children with disabilities need community-based services on the local level that provide family support, respite and additional care. In addition, families with children with disabilities lack a human rights-based assessment on the additional needs and services that children need in order to successfully integrate in society. The law on primary and secondary education now guarantees inclusive education.

To support vulnerable children, and to promote their deinstitutionalization,¹⁴⁸ there is a need to strengthen the Centres for Social Work (CSWs), social service workforce, community-based services, and childcare facilities by the state (foster care, etc). There are regional and urban/rural disparities between CSWs, and although most CSWs social care teams include social workers, psychologists, educators and lawyers, not all these roles are available in every CSW. Resources and facilities are not evenly distributed, and some

¹⁴⁵ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018-2019, SSO-UNFPA-UNICEF, May 2020. At the national level, 36.8 percent children (age 36-59 months) were in early childhood education.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ World Bank (2015) Why should we care about care? The role of childcare and eldercare in Former Yugoslav Republic of North Macedonia. Washington D.C.: The World Bank.

¹⁴⁸ The National Strategy on Deinstitutionalization (2018-2027) aims to ensure that no child under 18 years of age will be institutionalized.

municipalities are better resourced than others. There are regional disparities in professionals' understanding of child abuse and in their commitment to reporting, or acting on, incidents of violence.

Children and youth are rarely engaged to inform policies that affect their basic needs of poverty reduction, access to health care, education and protection, but are often used in the political campaigns. In order to develop a genuine human rights culture, children and youth should be encouraged to participate in local decision-making and policy making on matters that affect them the most. This situation has been addressed with the enactment of the first law on youth participation and youth policies in January 2020, governing forms of youth organizations and decision-making at central and local level. The legal framework for the rights of the child largely complies with international standards. However, the implementation of legislation should be reinforced, and stakeholders should make the best interest of the child a guiding principle.¹⁴⁹

The CERD have identified homelessness among Roma children as an issue of concern, as well as an increase of children addicted to drugs¹⁵⁰, especially among the Roma community, and the dropout rates of Roma women and girls.¹⁵¹ CEDAW identified the risk of statelessness among Roma children which *de facto* excludes them from education, health care and employment and heightens their risk of experiencing sexual violence, trafficking and exploitation. Lack of sufficient knowledge on sexual and reproductive health, particularly among young people; inadequate and out-dated sex education at school; and limited access to modern contraception, particularly among women and girls, make the young persons more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and serious health risks.

Incarcerated youth and children are also vulnerable to mistreatment. To that end, the CCPR urged the state to “take measures to eliminate all forms of institutional and *de facto* discrimination against children, particularly children who are members of minority communities and children who are held in correctional institutions.”¹⁵² The Sub-Committee on Prevention of Torture advised to “Introduce alternatives to detention for juveniles” and to “immediately halt the inappropriate psychoactive medication for juveniles and replace the medication with balanced daily activities.”¹⁵³

Additionally, “2018 saw an increase in child trafficking and a study found that 8 out of 10 children in the country faced violence. Despite measures taken to improve inter-agency cooperation, coordination in preventing and responding to violence is limited. The Ombudsman’s Office confirmed 66 violations of child rights in 2018. The Law on Juvenile Justice is being implemented but access to justice and legal representation should be improved. There were no improvements in the material conditions and availability of education for detained children.”¹⁵⁴

The immediate causes for some children being excluded or being at risk include lack of care and socio-psychological support facilities; the underlying causes include the old model of sending children at-risk to institutions which is harmful, ineffective and an unethical solution that violates human rights; and the root causes are ethnicity, poverty, and social attitudes.

Children’s agency can work through the civil society. Unfortunately, civil society in North Macedonia is still quite restricted, despite recent progress, and there are few child centred CSOs that would lobby for child rights. A National Commission on the Rights of the Child was set up in 2005 but it is not sufficiently active and there are limited possibilities for children to participate in the Commission’s work. A vibrant child-centred civil society is a pre-requisite for the full realisation of the rights of the child.

¹⁴⁹ North Macedonia 2019 Report, European Commission, 29 May 2019, p. 30.

¹⁵⁰ To address the increase of children addicted to drugs, UNODC implements a school-based social emotional learning intervention that targets young adolescents through a series of continuous and structured programme sessions in the course of two academic years.

¹⁵¹ North Macedonia 2019 Report, European Commission, 29 May 2019, p. 53.

¹⁵² *ibid.* p. 54.

¹⁵³ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *ibid.* Even though detained children, juvenile inmates are legally entitled to education under the Strategy of Education (2018-2025) and the Laws on primary and secondary education.

4.5 Persons with disabilities

According to SSO 2015 data, there are 24,355 persons with disabilities in North Macedonia, users of social welfare rights, out of which 4,235 are minors with disabilities.¹⁵⁵ In the absence of disaggregated data collection, it is difficult to know the precise numbers. It appears that there is a weak system of disability assessment and numbers might be an underestimate. Persons with disabilities face problems in accessing public buildings, public transport and are often discriminated in education and employment. Social attitudes towards them, especially towards persons with mental disabilities, may also be the basis for exclusion and stigma. Young people with disabilities are more likely to be in NEET category than general population. Women with disabilities have limited access to health services, especially sexual and reproductive health due to discriminatory attitude towards their reproductive rights by their families, health personnel, and communities; lack of physical access to services, and lack of awareness about their rights. Women and girls with disabilities are also more deprived of reproductive rights and more vulnerable than other women to violence and/or sexual abuse.

With the introduction of personal and educational assistants, there has been better societal integration of persons with disabilities. Though there is improved labour-market integration of persons with disabilities, a need for additional vocational training, vocational rehabilitation and skills acquisition has been reported to increase their labour-market competitiveness.¹⁵⁶ The key source of inequalities for persons with disabilities remains discrimination and stereotypes. On average, over a quarter of respondents of a survey in three regions reported disability as a basis for discrimination.¹⁵⁷ Majority of the respondents (ranging from 63 percent to 91 percent) from the same survey also reported that they did not receive social services provided by the Municipality. There is also a need to recognize that many persons with disabilities continue to live in institutions – these are likely to be persons with mental disabilities, or from poor families or single / homeless persons.

The immediate causes for exclusion are lack of access to public spaces, inadequate infrastructure, care and support, and higher disability related costs. The underlying causes include lower employability, residential approach to care, low coverage of social protection, lack of professional social workers and ineffective policy environment. The root causes are social attitudes, stereotypes, stigma, and medical approach to disability assessment.

My brother is a person with special needs, i.e. he has 99% blindness. He was born with a minor damage of his eyesight, but over the years the disease has progressed, and he is now completely blind. Unfortunately, he did not find a solution in medicine and came to terms with the fact that he will spend his life blind. Through the associations of the blind he met his current wife who is also blind, and they both have a completely healthy child with no vision problems. Because his wife is from Skopje, and because of the greater opportunities for employment there, they moved to live with her parents. The help they receive from her parents is daily and invaluable. She managed to get a job, but my brother remains unemployed. They live off the salary of his wife and the disability benefits they receive from the state. They are satisfied with their life in Skopje and do not plan to return to Negotino.

- Respondent (Male, 45-54, urban area), People perception Survey

The country is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and has adopted a National Strategy on Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2010-2018. The national coordination and

¹⁵⁵ <http://www.stat.gov.mk/OblastOpsto.aspx?id=3>

¹⁵⁶ Истражување помеѓу лица со попреченост во три региони во Македонија. Скопје: УНДП. (UNDP, 2017) [Research Among Persons with Disabilities in Three Regions of Macedonia, UNDP-GfK, 2017]

¹⁵⁷ Ibid

monitoring bodies for implementing the CRPD have also been established.¹⁵⁸ In September, the new government will table before the Parliament the 2019 Law on Prevention and Protection from Discrimination, which was repealed by the Constitutional Court in May 2020. However, the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities noted that this strategy has not been fully implemented particularly in the area of support services that are necessary to ensure that persons with disabilities can live independently.¹⁵⁹ The EC 2019 report further adds that there is need to revise all legislation to incorporate all forms of discrimination on grounds of disability, including multiple intersecting discrimination, such as access to information; inclusive education; access to habitation and rehabilitation services; free health care and treatment; social protection; and, suffrage rights.¹⁶⁰

The CRPD also urged policymakers to regularly consult civil society, ensuring organizations of persons with disabilities are meaningfully involved in the design, evaluation of laws, policies, action plans, timelines and budgets and that their views are considered prior to adopting decisions related to them.¹⁶¹

In May 2019, the country adopted a new Law on Social Protection. In the context of persons with disabilities, one of the most important changes brought about by the new law is the disentanglement of various disability benefits and the creation of a single disability allowance that also covers persons with moderate and severe intellectual disability. Equally important are legislative changes related to social services for people with disabilities e.g. personal assistance, home assistance and care services as noted earlier.¹⁶²

Persons with disabilities are actively advocating for the implementation of the CRPD provisions as members on the National Coordinating Body established in May 2018. The EU accession agenda is also encouraging the country to facilitate a more active role for the persons with disabilities. A youth leader with disabilities and a former IOM staff member is trying to make people aware of the multiple barriers to full accessibility and inclusion faced by persons with disabilities. Recently, she participated in an awareness-raising campaign – spending a day with a Member of Parliament and showing what it takes to be an active person with disabilities in North Macedonia.¹⁶³

4.6 Refugees, migrants, asylum seekers, internally displaced and stateless persons

During 2015-2016, the country faced an unprecedented influx of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers – many of them using North Macedonia as a transit route to move to EU countries further north. At the peak of influx, between mid-2015 and March 2016, when the Western Balkans route was closed for regularized onward movement, 800,000 persons are estimated to have crossed the country. Most of them came from the Middle East and North Africa.¹⁶⁴ This imposed a huge burden on the country's resources in terms of managing the arrivals, registering them, opening help centres, processing their requests for asylum or refugee status, among others. As the migrant crisis deepened, the Western Balkans route was officially closed in the Spring of 2016.

To weather the crisis, UN in North Macedonia provided significant support to help meet basic humanitarian needs: in helping to design, build, equip and staff the transit centres in Gevgelija and Tabanovce; in providing essential protection to people on the move; in enhancing healthcare available to refugees and migrants; in providing food, drinking water, winterized shelter and psycho-social support in child-friendly spaces; and in distributing “dignity kits” and tending to the reproductive health needs of women. The UN

¹⁵⁸ The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy is the focal point for persons with disabilities in the executive, while the cross-party informal parliamentary group for persons with disabilities, supported by Polio Plus, meets to raise awareness and inform policy decisions. The caucus could convene more to raise the aforementioned issues raised by the EU and UN bodies.

¹⁵⁹ UN Resident Coordinator's Office in the Republic of North Macedonia: Most Recent Observations and Recommendations by the UN Human Rights Mechanisms (July 2019), p. 6.

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.* p.57

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*

¹⁶² An analysis of the situation of women and children in the Republic of North Macedonia 2019, UNICEF

¹⁶³ <https://rovienna.iom.int/story/inspirational-colleague>

¹⁶⁴ According to UNHCR, 90% of asylum seekers come from the world's top 10 refugee-producing countries, with the majority coming from Syria (49%), followed by Afghanistan (21%), Iraq (8%), Eritrea (4%), Pakistan (2%), Nigeria (2%), Somalia (2%), as well as Sudan, Gambia and Mali. <http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php>

continued providing support in the protection of migrants and refugees, as well as in the strengthening of the protection sensitive migration management and asylum system.

In 2015, the country was unprepared to manage the volume of people. Reception centres for foreigners, were ill-equipped only being established to fulfil EU visa liberalisation requirements. As of end of April 2020, 63 people are currently in the Vizbegovo Reception Centre for asylum seekers where they have access to key services. To address gender-based violence, a referral process is in place for alleged victims. There is no legal aid or any form of state-run legal assistance for asylum-seekers or refugees¹⁶⁵ who are overly reliant on civil society funded by the donors and international organizations for such services.¹⁶⁶ Although the asylum-seekers are entitled to access the labour market after a stay of nine months, they cannot effectively do so as they do not have the PIN which is necessary to access the labour market.

North Macedonia is also a country of asylum and hosts refugees. The approach of the state authorities is key to ensure humane treatment with well-resourced facilities and case management process. The Human Rights Council called for an end to detention and refoulement of migrants and asylum-seekers, and to consider alternatives to detention, particularly unaccompanied minors. Developing a migrant policy to integrate and reverse the trends requires a change in approach from the authorities.

North Macedonia has signed the 1961 Convention on Reduction of Statelessness which is making some progress.¹⁶⁷ The number of those considered stateless is based on the 2018 public call inviting undocumented people to “register.” Based on these findings. Some 670 persons responded to the call. According to UNHCR and its civil society partner Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA), there are 292 persons with unregistered citizenship and 275 with undetermined Macedonian citizenship.¹⁶⁸ Among the stateless and at risk of becoming stateless are many Roma persons who are not in possession of relevant documents.”¹⁶⁹

Stateless persons are vulnerable to harassment by the law enforcement agencies and host community. They face discrimination and poor living conditions. Beginning 2020, the new Law was adopted, a “*Lex specialis*” solution, providing temporary registration for the unregistered persons,¹⁷⁰ affording those affected access to diplomas, formal education, health insurance, social insurance, and pension.

There are still 281 Kosovo (UNSC1244) refugees in North Macedonia, all being of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian ethnicities. They have been in the country for 20 years, under international protection and with their legal status subject to recurring review. As the noted practice provides little room for durable solutions for Kosovo refugees, thus hampering the integration prospects, the government has taken a pledge to resolve the issue of Kosovo refugees at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019.

Among the immediate causes for the vulnerability of the group of persons described above are lack of documentation; heavy reliance on civil society for legal aid; poor access to shelters, health, education and employment; vulnerability of women and children to exploitation; and harassment by law enforcement agencies. The underlying causes include lack of human-rights sensitive migrant policy and insufficient resources to bear the additional burden of influx. The root causes are xenophobia and high levels of prejudices against such people who are “different”.

¹⁶⁵ Technically, free legal aid mechanism is established, and free legal aid is guaranteed through the Law on Free Legal Aid. In practice, however, the mechanism proved not to be accessible to asylum seekers and the persons granted international protection.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ <https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2020/1/5e143fb14/north-macedonia-accedes-key-statelessness-treaty.html>

¹⁶⁸ UNHCR records

¹⁶⁹ Statelessness, UNHCR Representation in Skopje, 1 October 2019, p. 1.

¹⁷⁰ <https://akademik.mk/objaven-predlog-zakonot-za-litsata-bez-reguliran-graganski-status/>

4.7 LGBTI

My best friend went to a work & travel programme in the United States and stayed there. He identifies himself as a homosexual and does not want to live in a country that actively discriminates him. He currently lives in his own apartment and has a job. He has no plans to return.

- Respondent (gender non-binary, 20-24, from smaller town)

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community has in recent past seen greater protection and inclusion with an amendment to the law on anti-discrimination to include the LGBTI community, forming of an LGBTI issue-based caucus in the National Assembly and the first pride parade in the country (June 2019). As acknowledged by the EC, “LGBTI persons are better protected following amendments to the Criminal Code and adoption of the Law on Prevention and Protection from Discrimination. Sexual orientation and gender identity are grounds for protection in both. The positive attitude from the political leadership and advocacy by the LGBTI inter-party group of 13 MPs continued.”¹⁷¹

However, challenges remain. The EC assessed that “societal prejudice, hate speech, discrimination and widespread intolerance are prevalent against LGBTI persons. Incitement to homophobic / trans phobic hatred and violence needs to be more effectively prevented and prosecuted.”¹⁷² redouble efforts to fight against discrimination for reasons of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or for any other reason”¹⁷³ and “by prosecuting hate crimes, in particular against LGBTI communities.”¹⁷⁴ The CESCR advised to “eradicate negative stereotypes about and stigmatization of LGBTI persons, including through revision of textbooks and awareness-raising campaigns for the public, healthcare providers, social workers and law enforcement and other public officials.” and “ensure prompt, impartial and effective investigation and prosecution of cases of violence against LGBTI persons.”¹⁷⁵

The EC noted in 2019, “no final convictions have been issued for the 2012, 2013 and 2014 attacks on the LGBTI support centre. Further efforts are needed on tackling and collecting data on hate crimes and hate speech based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The legal framework does not allow for the official recognition of same-sex couples. Transgender persons’ access to healthcare remains limited.”¹⁷⁶

The immediate causes for exclusion and vulnerability are lack of access to facilities, care and support. The underlying causes are ineffective implementation of laws and policies - not yet fully aligned to international norms and standards. Persistent vulnerability to violence based on sexual identity / orientation and arbitrary arrest / detention and no accountability of law enforcement agencies who act with impunity. The root causes are the negative attitudes and stereotypes about sexual identity and orientation.

Active engagement by human rights defenders, civil society, government ministries, parliamentary committees and issue caucuses, the judiciary and the media are vital to change public perception and ensure equal access and protection under the law. Inter-party parliamentary group of 13 MPs is working to advance the rights of LGBTI persons who are gradually finding their voice. EU accession is another trigger for the country to protect the rights of LGBTI persons and promote their agency. Positive attitude of political leadership is further reflected in the annual conference of the LGBTI Equal Rights Association that was held in Skopje in 2018 and attended, among others, by the ministers in the region.

¹⁷¹ North Macedonia 2019 Report, European Commission, 29 May 2019, p. 31.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ UN Resident Coordinator’s Office in the Republic of North Macedonia: Most Recent Observations and Recommendations by the UN Human Rights Mechanisms (July 2019), p.16

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 68.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ North Macedonia 2019 Report, European Commission, 29 May 2019, p. 31.

4.8 People living in rural areas and small farmers

Geographic location of people can also leave some population groups behind or enhance the risk of being left behind. People in rural areas are more likely to be poor than those in urban areas. Rural poverty is estimated at 30 percent compared with 17 percent in urban areas.¹⁷⁷ This gap has not narrowed down over the years. Similarly, employed are less frequently found in rural areas, as opposed to self-employed, reflecting the frequency of the self-employed in agriculture. Poverty and exclusion are more likely to be associated with rural than to urban areas in North Macedonia.

Gender differences are highly evident in rural areas. Women living in rural areas and especially in agricultural households tend to be the most disempowered in the context of ownership of assets, inputs in decision making and access to resources. Further, only 4 percent of the women in agricultural households are owners of property / house while 12 percent of women own agricultural land.¹⁷⁸

Differences exist at the level of planning regions. As per the SSO publication *Regions of the Republic of Macedonia (2017)*, the Northeast region fares worst, followed by the Southwest one. For example, the unemployment rate in the former in 2016 was 42.2 percent, triple the one of the best-faring Northeast region (14.1 percent). The jobs in the Northeast are yet of low quality and / or positioned in sectors with low productivity (textiles, agriculture etc.). Also, 30.1 percent of households in the Northeast region have been recipients of some form of social assistance, double the national average. The share of preschool age children attending kindergarten was only 7.7 percent in the Northeast in 2016, against 33.9 percent for Skopje. (The national average was 23.6 percent).¹⁷⁹

The social regional disparities reflect the economic power of the regions, in terms of their contribution to GDP. Long years of concentration of economic, political, cultural and other activities in Skopje led to soaring of its share in GDP to 43.1 percent, as compared to a share of only 5 percent of the Northeast region. While this may reflect the size of the regions, still the per capita GDP of the Skopje region has been 2.5 times the one of the Northeast in 2017. The FDI policy, relying on attracting foreign factories settlement in TIDZ, which were created across the entire country helped the alleviation of regional disparities, though this happened along a fairly mass internal migration from the inner parts toward Skopje, as well as outward migration, which devastated many cities which were faring quite well in the old Yugoslav times. Yet, in such circumstances, large FDIs settling in the TIDZs of Prilep, Bitola, Kavadarci, Veles, Ohrid, consumed large share of the idle labour force; in some cases, they even opted for “importing” labour force from the other cities. While positive regional effects of such policy have been offset with other developments, they are yet expected to accrue in terms of employment rates and average wages.

The farm structure in the country is dominated by smallholders and family farms which are responsible for the bulk of the agricultural production. As per a study, 89 percent of all farms are smaller than 3 ha, with the average farm size being 1.6 ha.¹⁸⁰ Smallholders are the most vulnerable group in terms of falling into poverty. Due to the unfavourable farm structures, the agricultural productivity and competitiveness is low when compared to EU member countries. In addition, there is ample international evidence that the ever-increasing international competition has a disproportionate adverse impact on smallholders' livelihoods.

Over the past decade, North Macedonia's smallholders are rapidly squeezed out from the internal market. It appears that the farmers' markets have already lost the most affluent urban consumers who prefer the more diverse choices offered by the supermarkets. In the absence of functional farmers' associations and/or cooperatives in North Macedonia, smallholders are facing major hurdles in their quest to penetrate supermarkets' supply chains. Similar hurdles exist with smallholders' access to the export-oriented food packaging and processing industry.

¹⁷⁷ Seizing a Brighter Future for All: FYR Macedonia Systematic Country Diagnostic, World Bank, November 2018.

¹⁷⁸ Measuring women's empowerment in Agriculture with Survey-Based and Experimental Economics Method, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food – Skopje, University St.Cyril and Methodius –Skopje, 2019

¹⁷⁹ <http://www.stat.gov.mk/Publikacii/RegioniteVoRM2017.pdf>

¹⁸⁰ FAO: “Smallholders and Family Farms in the Republic of North Macedonia”

Applied agricultural research and extension – a public good – which could have helped farmers raise productivity, is severely underfunded. This is also a major constraint to enhancing smallholders' competitiveness and limits their ability to adapt to climate change.

Yet small farms can achieve high levels of productivity and income – through improved organization, intensified and sustainable production, and integration into agri-food chains. With appropriate support, family farms can be a model for achieving more inclusive sustainable growth, ensuring food security and mitigating rural poverty. By their sheer number, smallholders should warrant specific attention in the aspiration to “leave no one behind” in the efforts to achieve the SDGs.

The immediate causes for vulnerability of people in rural areas and small farmers are insufficient access to livelihood opportunities and, in case of small farmers, opportunities to diversify the household income through non-farm activities in rural areas. Underlying causes include lack of climate-resilient policies and programmes that would prevent natural hazards. The root causes are an urban-centric growth model that deflects attention from rural growth. Households with mixed income both from agriculture and other sources show that agriculture is the sector that is providing resilience. Particular attention should be paid to diversification of rural incomes and strengthening of economic resilience of small farm holders.

Small farmers, including women farmers, are championing innovative methods and using their local knowledge to promote resilience in the face of climate change and extreme events.

4.9 Older persons

North Macedonia is ageing fast. The share of population over 65 increased from 8 percent in 1994 to nearly 14 percent in 2018 and is projected to grow as life expectancy improves. By 2035, 1 out of 5 citizens will be 65 years or older. With the biological advantage women have in terms of longevity, there will be more women than men in this age group. According to UN demographic projections, the support ratio – the number of workers (persons aged 20 to 64) divided by the number of retirees (persons aged 65 or over) – is projected to decline from 4.4 in 2020 to 2.2 by 2050.¹⁸¹ With declining birth rates and large-scale emigration, the country will have a large number of older persons. This will have implications notably in terms of fiscal burden of pension payments, healthcare funding and slower economic growth due to fewer people working. These pressures on the economy and society will likely make older persons a vulnerable group. The older persons with overlapping vulnerabilities are more at risk of being excluded. Thus, an older Roma woman living alone with disabilities and no source of income or health insurance or social protection is more at risk.

But ageing can also bring opportunities. This is the right time for taking steps to improve women's labour participation which has been low due to the time women have to spend at home in childcare and older persons care. With expanded childcare and community-living for the older persons, women can improve their economic empowerment. Conditions must also be created for them to take up part-time, temporary or seasonal jobs to be able to earn wages while also attend to the needs of the older persons and children in the family. There is also high degree of inactivity – around 36 percent - in persons in 55-64 age group. For this age group, it appears to be too early to retire and many in this group can, and should, still work. Obstacles to their participation / re-entry in labour force should be addressed including reskilling in digital technology. This will help them supplement their income to fund consumption (besides pensions, assets).

The older persons with pre-existing health conditions are most vulnerable to an epidemic or pandemic, as also other external shocks, economic or natural. With limited healthcare facilities, the vulnerable older persons are likely to get less attention than the young working age population. The older persons are most vulnerable due to social isolation, lack of healthcare (especially high out-of-pocket expenses due to rising drug prices), lack of access to emotional support, stigma and discrimination. These issues can be addressed through strengthened social protection, healthcare and professional social work support. The fiscal burden may force the government to revisit the current pension scheme with a view to rationalise the same.

¹⁸¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). Probabilistic Population Projections based on the World Population Prospects 2019: <http://population.un.org/wpp/>

Pensions can be better targeted and pegged at a level so that it does not encourage inactivity. The government can also consider raising the retirement age and making it same for women and men. The current retirement age (64 for men, 62 for women) is not consistent with rising life expectancies.

The immediate causes for exclusion of older persons are lack of economic security, healthcare, social protection, social work, old age homes, and community living. The underlying causes include inadequate policy, legal and institutional framework and the root causes are out migration of young and change in societal values. As the rights holders, the older persons are equally entitled to access adequate standard of living, health, and social protection and live a life of dignity without discrimination.

4.10 Empowerment of vulnerable people and groups and accountability mechanisms

The LNOB analysis implies that most vulnerable and marginalized people and groups in the society are not fully aware of their fundamental rights, much less capable of seeking legal and other remedies for human rights violations. The capacity of their representative organizations is also weak, except for trade unions representing workers' socio-economic rights, who traditionally have broad constituencies and stable funding. It is the government and other duty bearers that have the responsibility to be proactive in empowering the rights holders, especially those left behind, and enable them to exercise and claim their rights.

Free legal aid has a central place in strengthening the capacity of right-holders to claim their rights and access justice. North Macedonia's legal and institutional framework for free legal aid is in place, but is fragmented and not fully functional.¹⁶⁶ There are two parallel regimes making distinction between criminal versus civil and administrative proceedings related to civil, social, economic, refugee rights, which also have distinct financial resources. In the criminal justice system, the defendant's right to a lawyer for more serious crimes, granted by the Criminal Procedure Code, is well enforced, contrary to the so-called 'right of poor people' which is inconsistently applied by the courts. In practice, this deprives many people from the right to a fair trial given the high poverty rate in the country.

On the other hand, the right to free legal aid in civil and administrative proceedings is governed by the Law on Free Legal Aid. North Macedonia's budget allocations for free legal aid per capita is lowest among Council of Europe's member states and is significantly below the European average of EUR 6.96 and median value of EUR 2.19.¹⁶⁷ The new law entered into force in October 2019 thus making any assessment of its implementation premature. The process of drafting and implementation has been supported by the Council of Europe. The law provides for both primary legal aid (information and initial counselling) by regional Ministry of Justice officials, CSOs and legal clinics, and secondary legal aid provided by lawyers authorized for legal representation before courts and administrative agencies. For the first time, CSOs accredited to provide free legal aid will receive funding from the Ministry of Justice, a positive step towards ensuring sustainability and effectiveness. A national body for implementation of the law, chaired by the Minister of Justice, was created to coordinate the implementation of the law and compliance to international norms and standards.

Civil society plays a constructive role in empowering and protecting rights-holders or constituencies and policy, legal and institutional reforms for improvement of human rights. According to the Central Registry of North Macedonia, in 2018 there were 14,291 registered CSOs. Many internal and external assessments¹⁶⁸ show that CSOs have improved their capacities, governance practices, transparency, accountability, and sustainability. The 2018 Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index (CSOSI), rated Macedonian CSOs with 3.8 overall score on a scale from 1.0-7.0. The assessment was based on the following key components: legal environment (3.9), organizational capacity (3.7), financial viability (4.2), advocacy (3.4), service provision (3.6), sectoral infrastructure (3.1) and public image (4.5).¹⁶⁹

The civil society is vibrant and diverse. It contrasts strong professional organizations with high level of expertise, on one side and rather weak grass-roots organizations and representative organizations, such as those representing people with disabilities, ethnic communities, on the other. While their financial viability continues to be secured through foreign funding, CSOs have increasingly received public funding and

corporate support. A positive trend has been an increasing number of informal CSOs networks and coalitions focused on themes such as justice, human rights, non-discrimination, anti-corruption, poverty reduction, and environment. These networks, leveraging the expertise and capacity of their members, have become vocal agents for change and development outcomes. The research demonstrates that CSOs have made the highest impact on promoting civic participation, advocacy and empowering and providing services and support to right holders.¹⁷⁰

Many CSOs provide free legal aid and other types of support and assistance to rights-holders to access justice and claim and exercise their rights. They include, but are not limited to, people who live in poverty, undocumented, stateless, refugees, asylum seekers, victims of discrimination and violence, people in institutions, etc. Through public-private partnership arrangements with government, some CSOs provide human rights education and information, social services and legal aid to socially disadvantaged and vulnerable people, for example Roma Information Centres that provide legal assistance to Roma people.

CSOs are increasingly consulted and actively engaged in government-led working groups on a variety of policies, strategies, and laws, especially those related to human rights, equality and non-discrimination, social protection, decentralization. CSOs have also contributed to human rights debates and initiated the creation of two Inter-Party Coalitions on Gender Equality and LGBTI. Individually or collectively, CSOs engage with international and national human rights mechanisms, thanks to UNOHCHR capacity building efforts.

National human rights accountability mechanisms - the realization and protection of human rights depends on effective, transparent and accessible accountability mechanisms. North Macedonia has a complex architecture of national human rights accountability mechanisms that can hold government officials and other duty bearers to account for abuses of authority and violations of human rights.

The **judiciary** is central independent mechanism that provides legal redress for human rights violations, by imposing penalties on duty bearers for failure to meet their human rights obligations. There are 27 first-instance civil and criminal courts, four appellate courts and Supreme Court, as the last resort, and two administrative courts. The Constitutional Court, as a guardian of constitutionality and legal certainty, is not part of the regular judiciary. Access to justice is granted to all individuals, without any discrimination on grounds prohibited by international law, who can directly or through their legal representative invoke violations of their civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. Free legal aid is available, as explained above. The judicial efficiency and independence have slightly improved, as a result of reforms and legislative changes in the process of appointment and promotion of judges as per Council of Europe' Venice Commission recommendations. Last year, it had 100% clearance rate, however public trust is still low.¹⁷¹ Legal redress for violations of social and economic rights is secured through administrative complaints and civil litigations. The enforcement of judicial decisions is vested with bailiffs criticized for very high fees that jeopardises the full enjoyment of rights. Social and economic rights are promoted and protected also by several Trade Unions and their participation in tri-partite dialogue with the State and Business Associations.

Apart from the judiciary, an array of other accountability institutions and mechanisms exist, such as Ombudsman, Commission for Protection from Discrimination, Anti-Corruption Commission, State Audit Bureau, Parliamentary Standing Human Rights Committee, national mechanisms for coordination, monitoring and oversight of compliance with international human rights normative framework. as well as the business sector.

The **Ombudsman**, established by the Constitution in 1997, as Human Rights Institution is mandated to monitor and handle complaints for human rights violations and discrimination in the public sector. The Ombudsman is appointed by the Parliament for eight-year renewable mandate and has nine deputies tasked with specific thematic areas. The six regional offices aim to strengthen its outreach across the country. The mandate of the institution has been extended over time by primary and secondary legislation to include human rights promotion, education and awareness raising, research, advancing the government and specifically protecting the rights of children and people with disabilities. Its opinions and recommendation are not binding, but generally respected. The Ombudsman also serves as national preventive mechanism, independent monitoring mechanism under CRPD and its Optional Protocol, civic oversight powers of police and prison guards, and national rapporteur on trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants. This wide range of responsibilities are supported by 80 staff members, whereas financial resources come from the national budget. Since 2011, the Ombudsman has been awarded B-status by the Global Alliance of

National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI). It is increasingly engaged with UN and Council of Europe human rights mechanisms. Despite legislative and institutional improvements made, the institution still faces challenges in practical implementation of its mandate in line with Paris principle and ensuring pluralism and diversity, transparency, functional and financial independence, and sufficient expertise in emerging areas.¹⁷²

Commission for Protection against Discrimination (CPAD) was established by law in 2010 to handle discrimination grievances in both private and public sphere. Many legal and institutional deficiencies have limited its capacities to be effective equality body. The seven commissioners, with a five-year mandate, were appointed from the rank of civil servants on part-time basis, who had no technical secretariat and sufficient resources. The list of prohibited grounds, at that time was non-compliant. The advocacy and civil participation resulted in a new law in 2019, which recognized sexual orientation and gender identity for the first time as grounds of discrimination in line with international human rights standards and the third UPR cycle concluding observations. Due to technical voting reasons, the law was repealed in May 2020. Appointment of the new commissioners have not even started. The legal void has deprived people to avail to this complaint mechanism in cases of discrimination. A comparative study on effectiveness of NHRI and other equality bodies, the Ombudsman generally scored much higher with 4.81 against CPAD with 2.80, based on four domains scores: 1) Independence and Ability to Work without Pressure (Ombudsperson 1.30, CPAD 1.00); 2) Availability of Resources and Capacities (Ombudsperson 1.20, CPAD 0.30); 3) Information, Accessibility and Cooperation with Other Relevant Actors (Ombudsman 0.90, CPAD 0.55); 4) Mandate and Powers (Ombudsperson 1.31, CPAD 0.95)¹⁷³

Parliamentary Standing Human Rights Committee, composed of 14 members and deputy members of Parliament, mandated to review human rights issues and developments. The Committee gained traction after strong criticism from CSOs about its inactivity in the aftermath of illegal wiretappings in 2016. In the last three years, it holds public hearing on restrictions of the freedom to movement and discrimination of Roma on border crossings, 2018 EU Progress Report in respect of human rights, and situation in penitentiary institutions, attended by ministers, international organization, CSOs and academia. Its opinions reflect on policy and legislation making. The government “**Inter-Sectorial Body on Human Rights**” performs the function of national mechanism for reporting and follow up on State compliance with international human rights treaties (NMRF). Chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, it consists of state secretaries and/or directors from 18 government ministries and state agencies, who sit in *ex-officio* capacity. NMRF has a technical level Expert Working Group comprised of senior professionals from all participating offices tasked with the actual implementation and reporting. The NMRF capacity has substantially increased as a result of UNOHCHR support. It contributes to regular engagement of State with and reporting to international human rights mechanisms.

There are other two important government implementation mechanisms both chaired by the Minister of Labor and Social Policy: i) **national coordination body for protection from discrimination** and ii) **national body for implementation of CRPD**. These implementation mechanisms have advanced human rights knowledge and capacities and demonstrated results, especially in raising awareness and understanding of the concept and forms of discrimination and entitlements of rights-holders, as well as in policy development and promoting social-human rights-based approach to disability. In 2018, the Ombudsman, as NHRI, was designated to perform the CRPD monitoring functions together with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations (OPDs), which remained incomplete and non-functional.

As a member of the UN and the Council of Europe, North Macedonia is part of and interacts with **international human rights accountability mechanisms**, which include Human Rights Council and human rights treaty bodies/committees, regional human rights courts such as European Court of Human Rights and other mechanisms that have a judicial or quasi-judicial role and allow individuals to lodge individual complaints. The treaty bodies also have a broader oversight function, where CSOs submit alternative reports in parallel to the State periodic reports.

5 Commitments under international norms and standards

Following the country's independence (1991) and the Prespa Agreement (2018), Euro Atlantic integration has been the galvanizing and unifying path for North Macedonia. This aspiration has been rooted in international and European commitments to democratic pluralism, rule of law, inclusion, and free-market economy. The Washington-based National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) identified a set of UN, EU, Council of Europe, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) key documents for European countries to enhance their liberal democratic capacities which may be seen at **Annex-1**. The Annex also lists the human rights, environmental and labour (ILO) treaties that North Macedonia has acceded to / ratified and also the ones the country has not acceded to or ratified.¹⁸²

The Government maintains regular dialogue with the UN Charter and treaty-based bodies, including Universal Periodic Review and special procedures of the UN Human Rights Council. It files periodic progress reports on ratified UN core human rights treaties and agreements. The latest round of UPR reporting was during the Third Cycle (Thirty-second Session of the Human Rights Council – January-February 2019) under which the government submitted to the UPR Working Group its National Report and stakeholders and UN made their own submissions. The country also regularly submits CEDAW report – the latest one being the Sixth Periodic Report on which the Concluding Observations with recommendations were made available in November 2018 which are under implementation. Visible steps around human rights have been taken under UN treaties as also to comply with EU norms and standards. In October 2018, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities released the Concluding Observations with Recommendations.

Human rights defenders play a pivotal role in monitoring, reporting and protecting society's most vulnerable. The Ombudsman in North Macedonia is an independent institution, appointed by the Parliament to protect the human rights of citizens and groups where they were violated by the state. The Ombudsman monitors, produces research, processes complaints, advises state institutions, cooperates with civil society, provides human rights training and education, reports to international human rights bodies, and organizes awareness raising activities.¹⁸³ According to the Ombudsman, the most critical issue in 2018 was the judicial system which needs to be strengthened in the protection of citizens' rights. The greatest distrust in the system of government by the public is in the judiciary.¹⁸⁴ To ensure that the Ombudsman and other human rights defenders can effectively do their work unabated, it is important to comply with the UN Paris Principles (1993).¹⁸⁵ The new Law on the Ombudsman was adopted in February 2018 that added new competencies to the work. However, challenges remain due to the political appointments which could lead to self-censorship and less ardent advocacy if not supporting partisan positions. Follow-up to parliamentary review and oversight of the Ombudsman findings is scant and would increase transparency and accountability around perceived human rights abuses. When more independent, including financially, the Ombudsman could also play a more active role providing witness testimony and supporting legal complaints against the state.¹⁸⁶

The country has ratified nearly all relevant global and regional environmental agreements. However, some challenges remain in terms of effective implementation and compliance with the obligations under multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) in the country, especially recently ratified agreements. MEAs bring with them a variety of obligations in the fields of environmental legislation, enforcement, monitoring and reporting, with some requiring highly specialized expertise and effective intersectoral cooperation. Since each MEA also has its own national reporting mechanisms and its own institutional arrangements based on meetings of parties (MOPs) or conferences of the parties (COPs), the cumulative technical and

¹⁸² Among the treaties not acceded to or ratified by North Macedonia are the ones that deal with Forced Disappearance and Migrants.

¹⁸³ European Network of National Human Rights Institutions <http://ennhri.org/our-members/north-macedonia/>

¹⁸⁴ <http://ombudsman.mk/upload/Godisni%20izvestai/GI-2017/GI-2018.pdf>

¹⁸⁵ These principles include a broad mandate, autonomy from the government, independence, pluralistic selection, and adequate resources and powers to investigate.

¹⁸⁶ <http://ombudsman.mk/upload/Godisni%20izvestai/GI-2017/GI-2018.pdf>

administrative burden is considerable. The country faces special challenges in responding to these competing demands.

The ratification of several more MEAs since 2011, such as the Paris Agreement, the Water Convention and the Protocol on SEA, is evidence of the political importance that the Government attributes to be an engaged participant in international cooperation in the environmental domain. The adoption of environmental legislation in the country is often driven by the aspiration for EU membership. Adequate participation in international negotiations, and full implementation of and compliance with MEAs, remain challenging, due in part to understaffing and limited financial resources in the ministry responsible for environmental issues. Furthermore, the lack of monitoring data affects timely reporting and the quality of national reports. CSOs are not given any role in such reporting, nor do they participate in the development of the country's position for international meetings. No efficient coordination structure among relevant state institutions charged with the implementation of these obligations is established. There are also difficulties with the harmonization of obligations under the high number of ratified MEAs.

For example, North Macedonia is a Party to the UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (since September 1997) and its eight protocols.¹⁸⁷

North Macedonia is also a Party to the UNECE Convention on Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents Convention which helps protect people and the environment against industrial accidents by preventing such accidents as far as possible, reducing their frequency and severity and mitigating their effects. However, the country has not yet fulfilled the main requirements under the Convention, such as the identification of hazardous activities falling under the scope of the Convention and their notification to neighbouring/riparian countries.

The country acceded to the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) ratified on 22 July 1999 and ratified its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers on 2 November 2010.

Country's efforts should be scaled up, as indicated in 2017 Aarhus Convention and the Protocol on PRTRs national implementation report¹⁸⁸ and studies on access to justice.¹⁸⁹ The country has yet to join a number of MEAs, such as the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Protocol on Water and Health and the Nagoya Protocol, and to ratify several amendments to a few MEAs, such as the Aarhus and Espoo Conventions.

The Government adopted national commitments for achieving the goals of the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) by 2030.

¹⁸⁷ The 1985 Protocol on the Reduction of Sulphur Emissions or their Transboundary Fluxes by at least 30 per cent (1985 Sulphur Protocol), 1988 Protocol concerning the Control of Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) or their Transboundary Fluxes (Protocol on NOx), 1991 Protocol concerning the Control of Emissions of Volatile Organic Compounds or their Transboundary Fluxes, 1994 Protocol on Further Reduction of Sulphur Emissions (since March 2010), 1998 Protocol on Heavy Metals, 1998 Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) (since November 2010) and 1999 Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone (Gothenburg Protocol) (since June 2014)

¹⁸⁸ See <https://aarhusclearinghouse.unece.org/national-reports>

¹⁸⁹ See respective studies for Serbia from www.unece.org/env/pp/tfaj/analytical_studies.html

6 *Cross-boundary, regional and sub-regional perspectives*

North Macedonia is situated in a sub-region where politics continue to remain largely influenced by ethnic or nationalist narratives often entrenched in divisive political agendas. The UN system recently identified the lack of progress on reconciliation, and an underlying trust deficit within and between states, as among the key threats to stability and prosperity in the region.

Some war crimes cases are still pending with the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT) and with local courts in the region, which warn of the destabilizing effect produced by the denial of war crimes and glorification of war criminals. Disconcerting human rights challenges persist, such as attacks on journalists, discrimination against minorities as well as against the over 300,000 IDPs still reported. Rule of law issues persist, and corruption is high – scoring between 35 and 47 according to the 2019 Transparency International Corruption Perception Index. Although the number of migrants and refugees has been decreasing significantly since the 2015/16 refugee crisis, they continue to use the Balkan route where they are often met with hostility and poor protection.

Almost all Western Balkan states are experiencing population decline due to falling birth rates and increased emigration. Young people are leaving because of high levels of unemployment, one of lowest female labour force participation, and an overall lack of future perspective. It is estimated that close to one third of the resident population lives outside the region. Education systems contribute to perpetuate ethnic-nationalist narratives, being often ethnically segregated, based on differentiated curricula with separate interpretations of history.

The region is increasingly susceptible to the consequences of climate change, including frequent heatwaves, higher summer temperatures, declining rainfall, and an increasing risk of wildfires. Weather-related shocks put pressure on the Balkan's mostly rain-fed agriculture and forestry sector, affecting in turn the countries' GDP and peoples' very own livelihoods. Researchers predict increased flood risks, particularly along the Danube, Sava and Tisza rivers. Additionally, water availability levels affect the functionality of hydropower plants, putting at risk the region's electricity supplies.

The Western Balkans' energy industry, mostly represented by heavily subsidized coal-fired power plants, relies on outdated infrastructure with low energy efficiency and little cross-border trade. Contaminated hotspots and air pollution remain a concern, as they threaten the health of people and put pressure on already strained economies. Regional cooperation aimed at a joint strategy for climate change mitigation and adaptation is still scarce, despite the common dependency on climate-sensitive natural resources.

Against the above regional backdrop, North Macedonia maintains good relations in the region, especially with other enlargement countries, and participates actively in regional initiatives. North Macedonia's political settlements with Greece and Bulgaria are exemplary in demonstrating that diplomacy and prevention can work. Although internally politically sensitive, the Prespa Agreement ended "one of the oldest disputes in the region,"¹⁹⁰ setting an example of how reforms and reconciliation can pay off, both for neighbouring countries and beyond.

Also, the Treaty of Friendship with Bulgaria establishes a framework for building stronger cooperation between the two countries and overcoming historical and identity differences which are extremely sensitive and may influence EU accession in the future.

In general, overall relations between Western Balkan countries remain fragile, with a stalemate in the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, a number of open issues including border differences challenging bilateral relations, legacy of the past conflicts, lack of transitional justice, ethno-nationalist and divisive

¹⁹⁰ North Macedonia 2019 Report, European Commission, 29 May 2019, p. 5.

rhetoric, and deficiencies in reconciliation continuing to diminish trust within and between countries and to hinder full-fledged regional cooperation.

A number of diplomatic initiatives launched over the past years have supported progress in regional cooperation, including the Berlin process led by EU member states, with the accompanying EU connectivity agenda and the EU Western Balkans engagement strategy, as well as the summit-level Brdo-Brijuni process meetings of Western Balkan leaders (led by Croatia and Slovenia), and others. As a result, leaders have set up a number of regional structures promoting regional connectivity and understanding, including through the Regional Cooperation Council (based in Sarajevo and established in 2008), the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (based in Tirana and established in 2016), and others. A sub-regional initiative led by the prime-ministers of North Macedonia and Albania and the president of Serbia, symbolically titled as “Mini-Schengen”, is to facilitate the implementation of the Regional Economic Area introduced within the Berlin process. The initiative however still lacks full buy-in from the rest of the regional leaders.

The Western Balkan economies are already closely integrated with the EU; the EU is their largest trade partner, their largest source of incoming foreign investment and other financial flows, including remittances. The EU is also the main destination for outward migration. Monetary and financial systems are strongly dependent on the Euro. With a recession period predicted for Europe beyond 2020, this will thus impact the Western Balkans as well.

In the context of international trade, high impact animal diseases, such as African swine fever (ASF) and Lumpy skin disease (LSD) are threatening North Macedonia and its neighbours. ASF has been reported in Bulgaria, Serbia and recently in Greece, thus seriously threatening North Macedonia and its neighbours. If introduced, ASF may rapidly spread throughout due to the continuous and dense wild boar population and the highly prevalent backyard sector. LSD is likely to re-emerge in previously affected countries in Southern Europe including North Macedonia. Other transboundary animal diseases, such as foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) or peste des petits ruminants (PPR), also pose a threat, although less imminent in this sub-region.¹⁹¹ The veterinary services, with no previous experience, are faced with serious challenges due to lack of preparedness. Regional approaches to tackle the threats before they become larger crises are paramount for effective control and prevention and are cost effective.

6.1 *Peace, stability and security*

Safeguarding peace, stability and security in the Western Balkans remains an international priority. Integration with EU, as an overall driver for transformation, should promote this. Greece, Slovenia, Croatia, and Bulgaria are already EU member states; Serbia and Montenegro further along in the negotiation process; Albania and North Macedonia are recommended as the next Western Balkans countries to start the negotiation process; and Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo (UNSC 1244) may eventually join at a later stage. North Macedonia also cooperates within the region in order to further enhance the implementation of the international treaties in the fields of drugs, crime and terrorism as well as to comply with and contribute to the EU accession process.¹⁹² The country also contributes to implementation of the regional roadmap to combating illicit firearms trafficking.¹⁹³ Furthermore, North Macedonia is an active and valued participant in the internationally initiated project to tackle the threats of all aspects of Organised Crime, Illicit Finance and Corruption in the Western Balkan region - the ‘Berlin Process’. According to Europol’s latest report in 2019, one of the main threats to the jurisdiction of South Eastern Europe is the return home of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs). It is estimated that around 1000 persons from South Eastern Europe have travelled to Syria and Iraq between 2012 and 2016 (women and children constituted almost 35 percent of this group), and about 300 have already returned. In South Eastern Europe, Kosovo under

¹⁹¹ FAO. 2020. Forecasting threats to the food chain affecting food security in countries and regions. Food Chain Crisis Early Warning Bulletin. No. 36, July–September 2020. Rome. Available at: www.fao.org/3/cb0160en/cb0160en.pdf

¹⁹² Within UNODC Regional Programme for South Eastern Europe (2016-2019).

¹⁹³ Regional Roadmap was adopted on 10 July 2018 by the Heads of State at the EU-Western Balkans Summit in London. The Roadmap specifically targets small arms and light weapons but is rather wide in scope that goes beyond illicit trafficking - <http://www.seesac.org/f/docs/publications-salw-control-roadmap/Regional-Roadmap-for-a-sustainable-solution-to-the.pdf>

UNSCR 1244, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, and North Macedonia have provided most of the FTFs contingents and are now particularly exposed to the threats posed by returnees.¹⁹⁴

6.2 Euro-Atlantic integration

The goal of Euro Atlantic integration is considered the driving force behind economic transformation and stability of the region, the Western Balkans remains at a crossroads between global geopolitical forces. After the adoption of a new accession methodology on 5 February 2020, the European Commission published updated progress reports on Albania and North Macedonia, on 2 March concluding that both countries had made tangible progress and reiterated its recommendation to open the accession talks. On 26 March 2020 the European Council decided to open accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia. The members states are currently reviewing the negotiation framework, which is the final step before organising the first intergovernmental negotiation conference.

After the entry into force of the Prespa agreement and the adoption of requested constitutional changes, NATO initiated an accession process for North Macedonia. On 27 March 2020, the country became the 30th member of NATO after all Allies completed the ratification process.

While North Macedonia's political and economic relations are predominantly focused on EU and US, some cooperation with the Eastern continent is also evident within the frameworks of China's 17+1 and the Belt and Road Initiative, as well as the strong economic ties with Turkey.

6.3 Transboundary water protection

The country acceded to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes in 2015 but it is not party to the Protocol on Water and Health. The country is participating in bilateral cooperation on environmental protection with an emphasis on cooperation with neighbouring countries and receiving technical and other assistance from donor countries. The driving force relevant for bilateral cooperation regarding transboundary waters is the WFD (Water Framework Directive), as well as the Water Convention. The cooperation (bilateral and trilateral) is primarily focused on the integrated management and conservation of transboundary natural resources and ecosystems, such as transboundary lakes shared with neighbouring countries, i.e. Lake Ohrid (shared with Albania), Lake Prespa (with Albania and Greece) and Lake Dojran (with Greece), and the extended Drin River Basin (shared with Albania, Montenegro, Kosovo UNSC1244).

Key challenges in cross-border cooperation still exist in relation to transboundary waters, including with Greece on the management of the Vardar River and with Albania and Montenegro in respect of the Drin River. Over the last decade, numerous projects have been carried out in this region, some of high importance and some small and with local benefits. To promote joint management of the extended transboundary Drin River Basin the country signed the Drin Memorandum of Understanding in Tirana on 25 November 2011 and endorsed the Strategic Action Program for the Drin basin on 24 April 2020 together with other four basin riparian. North Macedonia's cooperation with Albania (dam operators and the

¹⁹⁴ UNODC has been pursuing its project on "Strengthening the Legal Regime against FTFs in the Middle East, North Africa and South Eastern Europe" to address the FTF phenomenon and undertook national and regional workshops on challenges relating to the FTF threat in the South Eastern Europe, including North Macedonia. Also, a Manual for Judicial training institutes in South Eastern Europe on Foreign Terrorist Fighters was released in December 2017, developed on the basis of UNSC Resolution 2178 together with other relevant international and regional legal instruments. The Manual requires state to ensure that they have in place laws that permit the prosecution of FTF and to enhance international, regional and sub-regional cooperation to prevent and suppress the phenomenon of FTF. Also see https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/tesat_2019_final.pdf In 2019, an updated edition of the Manual was released not only in English but also in local languages, including Macedonian: https://www.unodc.org/documents/southeasterneurope/FTF_SEE_Manual_2019_version_05_Nov_2019_MK.pdf (p. 44)

authorities) is crucial for protection of waters in the Drin Basin, including from floods and low flows. An analysis involving modelling of both the energy system and the water flow (hydrology) is to be undertaken in 2020, including impact of future trends (such as climate change and the power system development).

River basin management plans (RBMPs) for Lake Prespa and the Bregalnica River have been developed, while RBMPs for the Strumica and Vardar River Basins have been drafted. None of the RBMPs so far developed has been adopted by the Government and none of them has been subject to SEA.

6.4 Transboundary cooperation on biodiversity conservation

Significant steps in the transboundary context have been made in the Ohrid-Prespa Region through the initiative for establishment of the Ohrid-Prespa Transboundary Biosphere Reserve. This initiative is based on the existing trilateral agreement on Prespa Park and bilateral agreement signed between the Governments of North Macedonia and Albania in 2004. The Ohrid–Prespa Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (TBR) has been added to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, following its designation as a site by the International Coordinating Council of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme.

Cross-border cooperation for nature protection among North Macedonia, Albania and Greece has been promoted within the establishment of Prespa-Ohrid Nature Trust (PONT), supported by KfW Development Bank and the MAVA Foundation. PONT's mission is to provide long-term financing for the conservation and sustainable management of biological diversity, natural processes and ecosystem services in Lake Prespa and its wider area for the benefit of the natural environment and people in the region.

Lepenec River waters are shared by the country with Kosovo UNSC1244. A joint initiative implemented by Regional Environmental Centre (REC) aims to strengthen the environmental governance of both countries. The countries also share the understanding that cooperation on issues of common interest, such as management of shared natural resources where they also share the responsibility for their wise, sensible and sustainable use is essential for their good bilateral cooperation.

6.5 Regional cooperation in migration management

Migration management is the area which should be prioritized for cross-border cooperation, not only within the Western Balkans, but also between the countries and the EU. Establishing protection-sensitive migration management systems, open for timely and adequate profiling and referral of the most vulnerable and those in need of international protection has been recognized as one of the key challenges. This should be coupled with the effective return and readmission arrangements of those not in need of protection, which arrangements should include procedural and human rights safeguards. Such a system would be fit to address the challenges related to irregular movements, including trafficking in human beings, physical assaults, extortion of money and numerous health risks.

6.6 Regional cooperation in disaster risk management

North Macedonia is a member of the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South Eastern Europe (DPPI-SEE), based in Skopje that aims to address disaster risk reduction and preparedness measures at a sub-regional scale, facilitating cross-border cooperation. A solid engagement in the organization will contribute to a stronger focus on trans-boundary disasters and further strengthen relations among countries.

7 Financing landscape and opportunities

Without a formulated National Development Strategy in place, it is very difficult to succinctly portray the financing landscape of SDGs in North Macedonia. The volume of financial flows currently serving the SDGs is difficult to establish and figures are therefore less readily available. SDGs have not been costed, as the SDGs targets and indicators have not been fully nationalized; so it is not clear how much is needed to achieve SDGs by 2030. In the absence of a national set of indicators, it is also not possible to trace financing to a specific SDG indicator and calculate the percentage of expenditure that is linked to SDGs in contrast to other development expenditure. The discussion in subsequent sections relates to overall development finance which is potentially available for SDGs. It may be noted that SDG finance does not exhaust development finance as there might be other development expenditure not covered by the national SDG targets.

With the above limitations in mind, in this section, we have sought to assess public and private financial flows based on available data to try and clarify their scope and nature. Specific SDGs were set in development areas for which public intervention is critical, including ending poverty (SDG1) and hunger (SDG2), improving health (SDG3) and education (SDG4), achieving gender equality (SDG5), reducing inequality (SDG10), and enhancing infrastructure (SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11). Apparently, the largest need for investment financing in developing economies resides with infrastructure).¹⁹⁵ Multiple sources of finance that are available for SDGs are presented in the following table:

Table 3: Source of SDG financing

	<i>Public</i>	<i>Private</i>
Domestic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax revenues • Non-tax revenues • Government borrowing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic savings • Domestic credit • National NGOs
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official development assistance grants and loans • Other official flows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International financial markets/ Portfolio investment • Foreign direct investment • Remittances • International NGOs

Overall, the annual development finance envelope (including any resources, both domestic and international to finance SDGs achievement) in North Macedonia is assessed at EUR 5.2 billion. It is evident that much of the financing for SDGs (out of this envelope) must come from domestic resources; external sources can only play a supplemental role even though foreign direct investment in North Macedonia is a major source of funds.

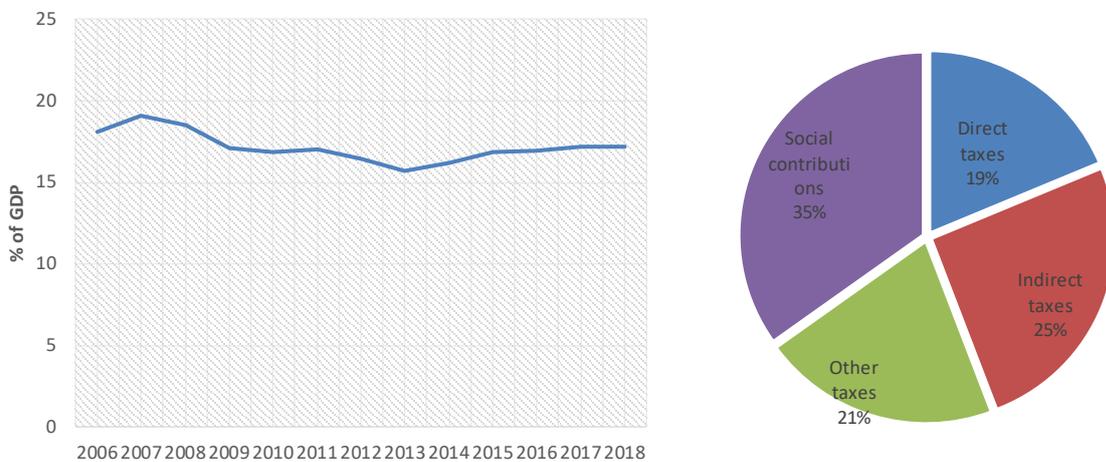
In addition, the process of planning and policy making is done almost independently from the budgeting process resulting in strategies and programmes which leads to policy incoherence and impedes the long-term investment planning and aligning financial support with the national long-term goals. The limited of connection between the planning and budgeting processes could impede implementation of the Agenda 2030. The ongoing Public Financial Management (PFM) reform, and in particular the introduction of the programme-based budgeting, considered a top priority on the country's EU Accession Agenda, provides an excellent opportunity to streamline the SDGs in the budget planning and monitoring process.

¹⁹⁵ Report of the Interagency Task Force on Financing for Development. Financing for Development: Progress and Prospects 2018. New York. www.un.org/sites/developmentfinance.un.org/files/Report_IATF_2018.pdf.

7.1 Public domestic sources of financing

Government revenues in North Macedonia amount to about Euro 3 billion, of which Euro 1.8 billion represent tax revenues, while Euro 0.9 billion social contributions revenues. However, the potential to increase finance for SDGs is insufficient in the public revenues as the share of taxes in GDP has been stagnant over years (**Figure 6**). This is the result of a combination of factors like: large exemptions to support the FDI attraction policy, low effective tax rates on income, inefficiency in expanding the tax base and inefficient tax collections. IMF has been continuously articulating the need for consolidation of the tax base and increases in particular taxes (e.g. property tax) as vehicles to increase tax revenue and reduce the pressure on borrowing. The share of direct taxes is only 19 percent in total tax collections.¹⁹⁶ The low (total) tax to GDP ratio (29.2 percent) indicates that there is scope for increasing this ratio further.

Figure 6: Tax revenues as percent of GDP (left) and shares in 2018 (right)



Source: World Development Indicators and state budget

Expansion of existing tax base and improving tax collections, followed by potential increase in taxes for particular segments of the population, could form the basis of tax-policy in near-term path. The direct tax regime is already regressive in nature and any further personal tax exemptions would further build inequalities in the taxation system.

Public finance efficiency and effectiveness is under scrutiny within the “Public Finance Management” (PFM) Reform Programme. The current one (2018-2021) has only been partially successful. Key areas with limited progress include measures to improve fiscal framework, planning and budgeting, and budget execution. These are: implementation of formulation, adoption and further development of the macroeconomic model, adoption of new/revised organic budget law, preparation of the debt management strategy as separate document and effective public-private partnership and concessions system. On top of their basic aim, upgraded programme-based budget approach and improved project information may serve structural solutions for the under-execution of capital expenditures.

¹⁹⁶ <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2019/11/17/mcs111819-republic-of-north-macedonia-staff-concluding-statement-of-the-2019-article-iv-mission> Access date: 22 November 2019

7.2 Private domestic and mixed financing

In terms of domestic financial resources, commercial banks are one of the important sources. Outstanding loans in GDP accounted for 48.8 percent in 2018, being above EUR 5 billion and secured by a stable financing from the large and growing deposit base. The interest rates have been constantly declining: for example, the average active interest rate fell from 6.8 percent in 2015 to 5.2 percent in 2019, providing further room to easing credit conditions. However, non-economic circumstances, such as political instability, insufficient rule of law, and widespread corruption, frequently led firms and banks to refrain from significant investment. Hence, business loan growth has consistently been lagging the consumer loan growth (five-year averages of 3.9 percent versus 10.4 percent) yet securing about Euro 350 million of new loans per year. Despite some government-subsidized SME schemes provided through the Development Bank of North Macedonia, bank financing remains with limited access to entrepreneurs and SMEs, as banks still pursue conservative lending policies, while SMEs and entrepreneurs, especially the young ones, lack collateral and there is widespread perception of inability to repay loans.¹⁹⁷ A rough estimate of the non-bank financing from other financial institutions stands at about 27.5 million EUR in 2018, but unlikely includes some new forms of financing (e.g. seed funding). While financial envelope for seed funding of innovation and start-ups significantly increased lately, it remains hindered, despite recent advances, mainly driven by external sources. The European Investment Bank supports several venture capital funds. Notable progress has been made by the Innovation and Tech Development Fund, which now provides grant, loan and co-share finance of innovation, spin-offs and scale-ups. Hence, it also supports a type of public-private partnerships (PPP) with mixed success. All such financing is directly attributable to achieving SDGs 8 and 9.

7.3 Development assistance

Given its upper-middle income status, the net official development assistance (ODA) to North Macedonia has been very low and declining from 2.9 percent of GDP in 2006 to 1.2 percent in 2018, yet representing about 140 million EUR. The largest grantors remain the European Union and bilateral donors.

7.4 External private sources: borrowing, CSOs and remittances

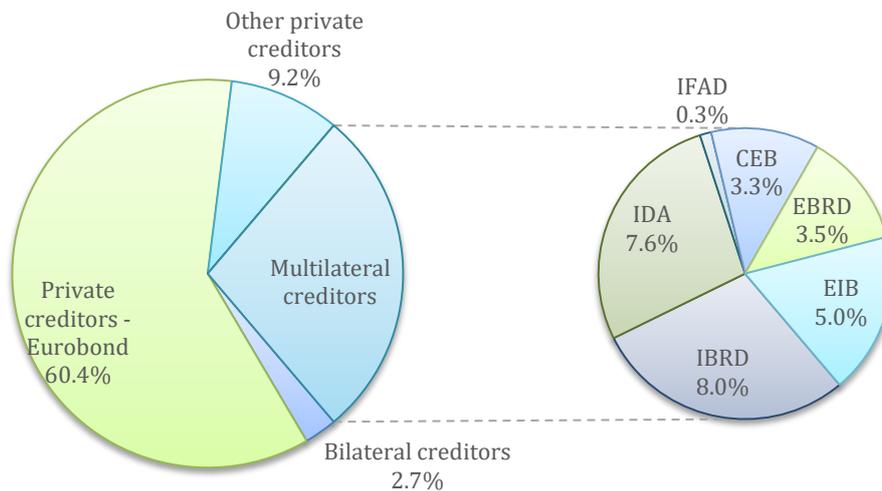
The low shares of tax revenues fuelled public borrowing, which soared from 23 percent of GDP in 2007 to about 47 percent in 2018. With the intention for fiscal consolidation the borrowing requirement reduced to about 300 million EUR per year, of which the composition has been 60:40 in favour of international borrowing. Concessional loans have been minimized with the large repurchase of debt in 2007; afterwards, the commercial borrowing has been dominant (**Figure 7**).

North Macedonia issued a Eurobond on several occasions. Yet, for the major part of such borrowing, the specific purpose was not declared but funds were rather used for general financing of the budget deficit which left the space for non-prioritized and low-return investment. Nevertheless, considerable part of the public borrowing has been related to particular projects like road infrastructure (loans from the World Bank – IBRD and IDA, EBRD and ExIm Bank China for building new and reconstruction of existing roads), railroads (EBRD loan and a grant from WBIF), gasification (loan from Deutsche Bank, Erste Group and EIB), municipal services (World Bank loan), social services (World Bank loan), water supply and sewage disposal (KfW, EIB loans), concessional loans for SMEs (EBRD loan through Macedonian development bank) and

¹⁹⁷ FYROM Assessment of financing needs of SMEs in the Western Balkans countries. European Investment Bank: Luxembourg. EIB, 2016

others. All these contributed to enhancing infrastructure (SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11) and supporting growth and employment (SDG 8), though the proper size of investment needs in North Macedonia has not been assessed rigorously.

Figure 7: Structure of external public borrowing (2018)



Source: Ministry of Finance

Part of the development assistance is channelled through the civic organizations. Some of them play an important role in informing policies and/or delivering services in key SDG areas, such as, employment, health, education and social services. In some municipalities, particular social services remain to be delivered by local NGOs, as Municipalities are yet facing technical and funding difficulties in design and delivery. There is no clear-cut data on the total amount of NGO funding (also related to the turning focus of donors towards public institutions), but the impact of the work of the NGO sector has been important in the last couple of years.

Remittances by migrants are an important source of SDG finance in the external private category. This is dealt with in greater detail in section 7.6 below.

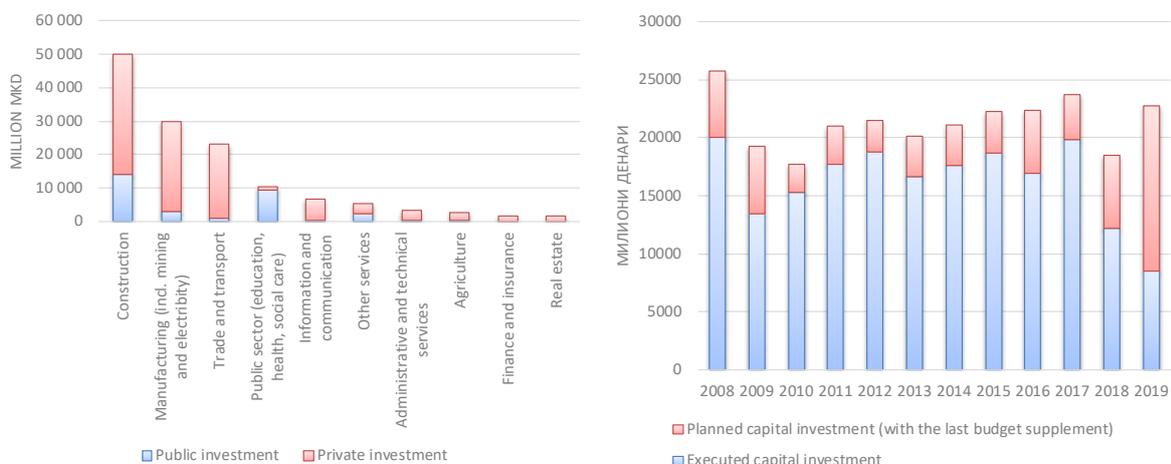
7.5 Investment

Overall, investment has been constantly growing in North Macedonia, from 17.8 percent of GDP in the 1990s, over 21.8 percent in 2000s to 29.8 percent in 2010s. The achieved level in 2010s is quite satisfactory, given growth rates of above 5 percent certainly require investment-to-GDP ratio of over 25 percent. However, such growth rates were not delivered, at least not in a systematic way. Part of the reason is certainly the low starting level inherited from the ex-socialist times, as well the capital disinvestment present during the early transition periods. In newer times, however, the reason may be the wrong prioritization of investment, particularly of public ones. A Public Investment Strategy, which may well be correlated with SDG financing, is not set, rendering the proper assessment of public investment efficiency and multiplier effects hardly possible.

Figure 8 (left) shows that the largest investments in North Macedonia in 2017 have been in construction, followed by manufacturing, and trade and transport, the dominant part of which were private, corroborating the period of intensified greenfield FDIs. The average FDIs inflows increased to 5.5 percent of GDP over 2000s compared to 3.6 percent over 2010s, expanding the financial envelope of the capital account of the

country and reaching Euro 614 million in 2018, of which Euro 31 million have been an inter-company foreign debt. A part of investment in construction has been financed through government’s capital expenditures, suggesting that infrastructure in the broadest sense of the word became the spotlight of investment. However, the focus on infrastructure turned only in mid-2010, marking the end of a forgone period of low-return low-efficient investment and orientation towards road, railway, electricity, soft and other infrastructure. Yet, ambitions of the government always exceeded the implementing capacities, as realization of state capital investment has been falling behind the plans (**Figure 8**, fight) In the absence of a detailed analysis, it is not possible to comment on the reasons for systematic under execution of investment which is a pervasive problem. This delivered a quality of infrastructure 11th place among 17 countries in the Central and Southeast Europe.¹⁹⁸ The financing of the state investment is linked to SDGs 8, 9 and 11.

Figure 8: Investment by sector and ownership, 2017 (left) and public capital investment (right)



Source: SSO and state budget

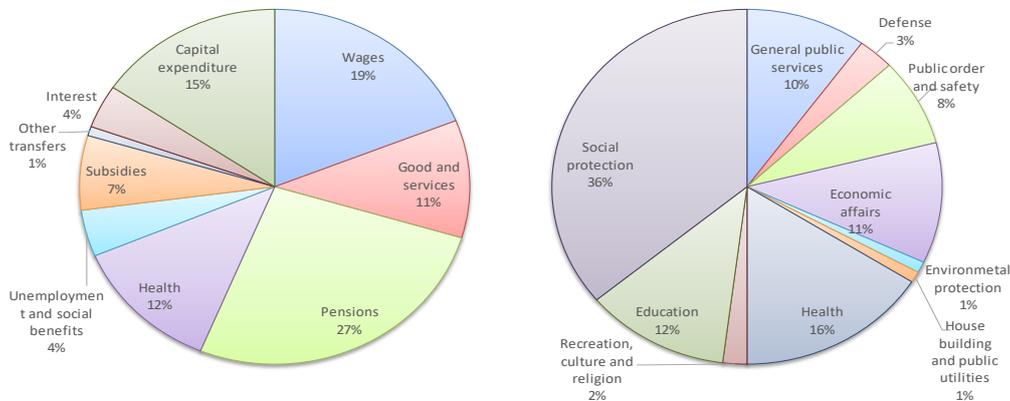
North Macedonia should improve efficiency of spending. It scores lower than peer countries on the Public Sector Performance (PSP) index, which measures seven performance areas. Its similarly low score on the Public Sector Efficiency (PSE) index suggests that its spending does not maximize public sector performance¹⁹⁹.

Figure 9 presents spending by economic items and functions of the government, clearly mapping out that the largest shares are consumed by one segment of the population – pensioners. The shares on social assistance, education, health and environment are comparatively significantly lower. About 11 percent in 2017 has been secured for economic affairs, an item which presently finances the financial support of investment made by companies (Plan for Economic Growth 2018-2021), hence contributing to SDG 8.

¹⁹⁸ <https://libek.org.rs/uploads/files/1453127700.IDm55OER8XxvKUOw.pdf>

¹⁹⁹ Republic of North Macedonia Public Finance Review: Sowing the Seeds of a Sustainable Future. Washington DC: The World Bank, 2019

Figure 9: General government expenditure by economic classification (left), and by functional classification(right), 2017



Source: Ministry of Finance

7.6 Critical area for intervention: ending poverty and hunger

The financing of the poverty reduction in North Macedonia has been somewhat unorthodox. The largest effect on poverty reduction is derived from pensions, which represent about 10-11 percent of GDP (Euro 1 billion), 27 percent of the budget (**Figure 9** left) and are heavily (nearly 50 percent) financed by the general budget rather than through pension contributions. The perils are further pronounced given the ageing of population and reluctance of government to increase the retirement age. Public wages are also significant and particularly inefficient given the oversized public sector, as result of politically motivated public administration management. This leaves only little resources to combat poverty among the other vulnerable groups, including children. Until recently, the spending on social assistance programs has been very low, about 1.2 percent of GDP (Euro 139 million). Though a comprehensive social reform in 2019 provided for some increase (to 1.4 percent) and better targeting, ensuring that social assistance is indeed received by the poorest and helps them to escape absolute poverty with increased employment opportunities. The reform included significantly expanded child allowances, which is the key for alleviating child poverty, while abolishing the third child allowance for well-off households, hence sparing funds for other vulnerable segments (though, this program has a phase-out of 10 years).

In parallel, the reform of social services – toward more focused, inclusive and diversified services - should enhance poverty and exclusion outcomes through a non-monetary component. The problem is that for social assistance to help recipients escape relative poverty, it needs to be very high, which is not sustainable from a financing and labour-market point of view. However, a social assistance centred around the employability and employment of those capable to work and around providing for a multi-social-service environment for those who are incapable to work will significantly improve poverty and exclusion-related outcomes. Therefore, financing of social protection, potentially with heightened prudence related to pension financing, is urgently needed.

Other programmes with periodic needs for financing helped alleviating poverty among working part of the population. Though this was not an urgent issue (as about 8 percent of those in work are considered poor), yet, the increases of the minimum wage and subsidizing certain increases in salaries helped this population get higher on the income ladder. For example, some public funds to support the minimum wage increase were planned in 2018, but remained mainly unused; presently, about 0.3 percent of GDP are earmarked for supporting wage growth over 2020. This may also positively affect the working poor, although this measure is not exclusively concentrated on working poor. This financing directly or indirectly contributed to SDG 1 and 2.

On the opposite side of the passive social measures are the active employment measures. The country spends only 0.16 percent of GDP on active labour-market policies, which is comparatively low. Some of them have been supported by international donors, though the support has been gradually phased out.

In general, in the social sphere, the financing provided from the international donors has been quite consistent; examples include the World Bank's Social Services Improvement Project; Municipal Services Improvement Project; soon-to-start similar project on pension finance, then a multitude of grant schemes administered through the IPA II, which funded specific projects and services directly, as well through the non-governmental sector. However, there is no consistent database on the total amount of such financing.

Finally, the government spends 2.4 percent of GDP on subsidies, of which a large share goes to agriculture. On paper, they are set to increase agricultural production, but in reality, they have fairly strong anti-poverty component. Given the latter is unofficial, the strength of the programme in poverty alleviation has not been measured, so the efficiency of the public spending cannot be precisely assessed. However, the programme has been identified with other problems which mainly boil down to not generating clear connection between the money spent and the intended outcomes in terms of agricultural productivity²⁰⁰ which is yet an indirect indication about the potentially poor capacity of the programme to strengthen sustainability of agricultural households' incomes. Funding of employment and agricultural measures contributed to SDGs 1 and 8.

There is one non-state factor heavily used to alleviate poverty – international remittances. According to the Balance of Payments data, these amount to about US\$ 300 million annually, but this a conservative estimate mainly based on formal transfer channels. However, estimates based on surveys²⁰¹ points to an amount of 5-6 percent of GDP, which also corroborates the IMF finding of additional remittances channelled through informal means.²⁰² Remittances have similar poverty-reducing effect as social assistance, as more than 90 percent of remittances are used for everyday consumption.²⁰³ As per another estimate by IMF, 74.1 percent of remittances were used for consumption, 13.7 percent for savings, 8.8 percent for home construction and 5.7 percent for house maintenance.²⁰⁴

Financing of social protection system, support provided for wages, active labour market programmes, agricultural subsidies and foreign remittances worked to reduce income disparities on the market, hence contributing to SDG 10.

7.7 Critical area for intervention: education and health

North Macedonia faces a declining share of education expenditure in GDP (Figure 10 left). This partially reflects the declining number of pupils and students (determined by demographic trends), but is confronted with increasing number of teachers and worsening outcomes²⁰⁵. This potentially suggests that even declining spending is inefficient and cannot deliver SDG-related outcomes. With fiscal decentralization, Municipalities are responsible for the administering of the current education spending and large disparities appear there, as larger municipalities take advantage of the economies of scale and hence improve efficiency²⁰⁶.

²⁰⁰ How is public money spent? Cost-benefit analysis of selected public policies in Macedonia. Skopje: Finance Think, 2016

²⁰¹ Remittances and Development in the Western Balkans: The cases of Macedonia, Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina, edited by Petreski, M. & Jovanovic, B. Scholars' Press, 2013

²⁰² Remittances and Economic Development in FYR Macedonia. IMF Country Report No. 14/232, 2014

²⁰³ Do Remittances Reduce Poverty and Inequality in the Western Balkans? Evidence from Macedonia? By Petreski, M. and Jovanovic, B. in: Dahinden, J., Efendic, A. and Zbinden, M. (eds.) Diversity of Migration in South East Europe. Fribourg, RRPP Joint Volume, 2016, p.85-109.

²⁰⁴ IMF Country Report No 14/232 –Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, July 2014 (special issue on Remittances and Development in FYRM).

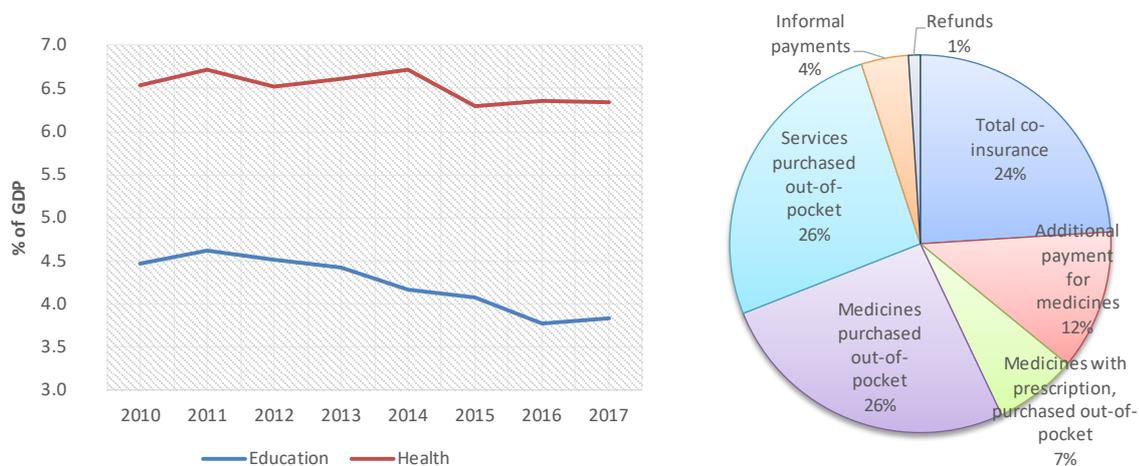
²⁰⁵ Analysis of the public spending on education and on social protection of children in the country by Petreski, B. and Petreski, M., Finance Think Policy Study No. 20, 2018

²⁰⁶ Republic of North Macedonia Public Finance Review: Sowing the Seeds of a Sustainable Future. Washington DC: The World Bank, 2019

Historically low levels of education spending, and the absence of any explicit national mechanism to target additional resources to disadvantaged schools or students, have resulted in many schools lacking basic resources. Reports indicate that one-third of schools require major repairs (World Bank, (n.d.)) and satellite and multiple-shift schools are particularly prone to infrastructure problems. While the large share of multiple shift schools partly reflects the need to provide multilingual education, in many cases, especially in urban areas, it also reflects inadequate capital spending. Overall, North Macedonia allocates a very small share of its total expenditure to capital expenses in education (5.2 percent) (World Bank, (n.d.)), compared to 9 percent on average across OECD countries (OECD, 2017)". Yet, many donor projects, channelled through the central budget or externally, are in place to improve educational outcomes; notable case is the World Bank's Skills Development and Innovation Support Project.

North Macedonia's total health expenditures gradually declined between 2010 and 2017 from 6.5 percent to 6.3 percent of GDP (Figure 10, left), and out-of-pocket spending is very high, estimated at 36.7 percent in 2014. The structure of the latter, displayed in Figure 10 (right) suggests that more than half is spent on services and medicines paid fully out of the pocket, while non-negligible 4 percent is yet used to informally reward or bribe medical workers. Despite 90 percent social insurance coverage, and related success in decreasing prices of drugs, extending social and health benefits to older persons, pregnant woman and some categories of diseases, the out-of-pocket expenditures have been on the rise with minimal improvements in related health outcomes. Deteriorations have been noted in capital spending on health: between 2012 and 2016, it declined consistently from 9.5 percent to 3.9 percent of public health spending.²⁰⁷

Figure 10: General government expenditure on education and health (left) and out-of-pocket health expenditure 2015 (right)



Source: World Development Indicators and Parnardzieva-Zmejkova and Dimkovski (2018).

On the other hand, a recent WHO study (2019) showed that every euro²⁰⁸ spent on health in North Macedonia yields 2.36 euros in GDP, hence representing a high multiplier effect. It is pertinent to note that health is a centrally managed and financed sector and the municipalities do not have allocated funds in their budgets for health. The establishment of the Health Sectoral Working Group with the support of the Secretariat for European Affairs, the Delegation of the European Union and the UN, provides a potential for future support of the health sector including through EU IPA 3 funding.

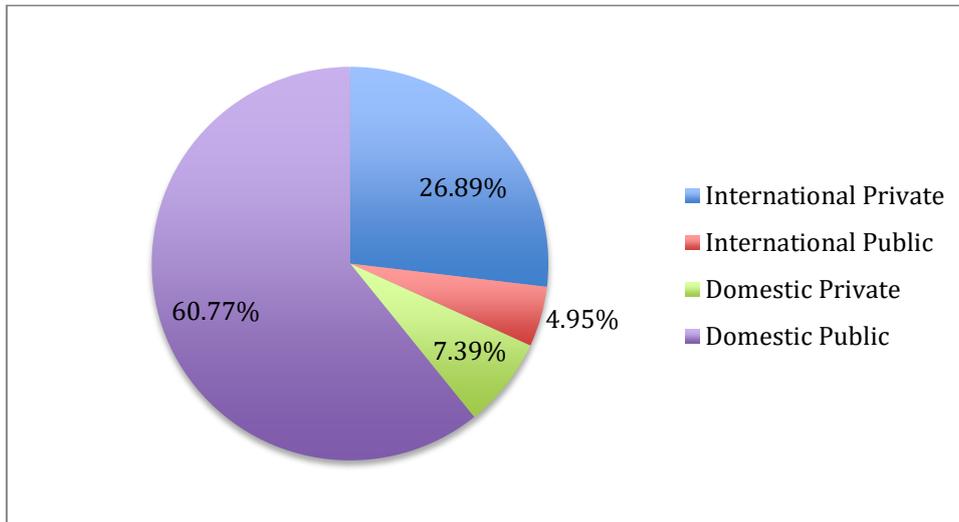
Overall, the annual development finance envelope in North Macedonia is assessed at Euro 5.2 billion. **Figure 11** disaggregates the financing by two axes: public-private and domestic-foreign. Of the total financial envelope, 61 percent is secured through domestic public sources, including public revenues, domestic public borrowing and public-private partnerships. International private financing is of second importance,

²⁰⁷ Ibid

²⁰⁸ The Health Sector in North Macedonia: Analysis of the Impact on the National Economy. Skopje: WHO, 2019

representing 27 percent of the financial envelope and being composed of FDIs, commercial borrowing abroad and international remittances. Domestic private financing represents 7 percent, composed of bank credits and non-bank financing. Finally, international public financing is of least importance, with only 5 percent share, and comprising international government borrowing and ODA.

Figure 11: Development finance landscape in North Macedonia (million EUR, 2018)



Source: Ministry of Finance, National Bank of North Macedonia, Ministry of Economy, World Development Indicators

8 Multi-dimensional risk analysis

This section analyses multidimensional risks that could impact the country's development trajectory potentially hindering national efforts to achieve SDGs, reduce inequalities and exclusion, and meet the country's obligations under international human rights laws. Table below presents an assessment of the risks using the UN-established 12-factor multidimensional risk analysis. By its nature, any risk analysis is relevant at a time when it is conducted and may change over time. Hence, risk analysis should be updated regularly, and the first one in few months to reflect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, following the ongoing sectoral assessments completion.

The key risks, as can be discerned from the table, are the political instability associated with past political clashes and ensuing elections; weak democratic institutions with low public trust in them; high unemployment and its manifestations (high emigration, youth unrest); inter-ethnic relations that could pose a risk to peace and stability, social cohesion and regional cooperation; and climate change and environmental risks (including natural hazards).

As the country is embarking on the EU accession process, monitoring and managing these risks would be important. Major reforms are needed, as envisaged by EU, and must be carried out in a consultative manner and not backtracked due to demands of interest groups. Democratic institutions must be further strengthened, including ensuring judicial independence, to instil public confidence. Corruption cases must be speedily tried. Membership of NATO will help the country manage its security risks and attract more FDIs. The government must pay attention to risks to environmental resources and disasters. These risks can be devastating, affecting not only economic growth but also human lives.

Table 4: Multi-dimensional Risk Assessment

#	Risk factors	Assessment / affected SDGs / indicators to be tracked	Impact	Likelihood	Early warning indicators
1	Political Stability	<p>Frequent elections and inability to achieve consensus on strategic development priorities</p> <p>Insufficient institutional setup reinforces corruption, rent-seeking and overall dissatisfaction with life. Corruption in high places may create mistrust between the people and the authorities and failed aspirations may spill over into violence.</p> <p>Inability to effectively implement major reforms, including electoral reform along with potential political instability may delay EU accession.</p> <p>Affected SDGs: All SDGs, especially 1, 8, 16, 17 Affected population groups: Whole population especially youth, human rights activists, civil society, political parties.</p>	High	Medium	<p>Corruption Perception Index</p> <p>Political activities/debates</p> <p>(Non) - Compliance with Political Agreements</p> <p>Increased outmigration</p>
2	Democratic Space/ Civil Society Voice and Participation	<p>Overall public trust in democratic institutions – parliament, judiciary, government – remains low. The country has ratified all major human rights treaties necessary to promote democratic space. However, there are implementation challenges. Civil society and media are active but journalists and LGBTI activists occasionally face pressure and intimidation which are not effectively followed up in the courts.²⁰⁹ Media is polarised along political lines.</p>	High	Medium	<p>Crack down on and harassment of civil society organisations including media, journalists</p> <p>Non-compliance with the articles 3 (8), 6, 7 and 8, and other</p>

²⁰⁹ EU Progress Report 2019 (see section on Intimidation of Journalists), page 27

#	Risk factors	Assessment / affected SDGs / indicators to be tracked	Impact	Likelihood	Early warning indicators
		<p>Freedom House ranks the country as “Partly Free” with an aggregate freedom score of 59/100.²¹⁰</p> <p>Affected SDGs: 16, 17</p> <p>Affected population groups: Youth, Human Rights Activists, NGOs, Media, Bloggers, Academia, Political parties.</p>			<p>relevant provisions of the Aarhus Convention</p>
3	Social cohesion, gender equality and non-discrimination	<p>Social cohesion as risk area is presented by many risk factors: inter-ethnic relations, significant disparities among ethnicities, particularly with regard to Roma; societal inclusion of disabled persons; gender disparities in the labour market; social norms, practices and attitudes towards women entering the labour market; attitude towards LGBTI; gender power dynamics in families that reflect in the society as a whole; unemployed youth and youth not in employment, education or training (NEET); provision of social services per the human rights principles, high inclination to emigrate; desire to get a job in public administration rather than in the private sector; and regional disparities.</p> <p>Presence of refugees and asylum-seekers as well as the return of FTFs can also disturb social cohesion.</p> <p>Affected SDGs: 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 17</p> <p>Affected population groups: Youth, Women, Ethnic, linguistic and sexual minorities, Civil Society.</p>	Low/ Medium	Low/ Medium	<p>Cases of hate speech and hate crimes against Roma, LGBTI</p> <p>Increased share of youth NEET</p> <p>Influx of refugees, tension with FTFs</p> <p>Women’s LFPR</p>
4	Regional and global influences	<p>The signing of the Prespa Agreement and friendship treaty with Bulgaria paved the way for North Macedonia’s accession to EU and NATO, but implementation can pose threats to EU accession and regional cooperation. The country is also taking effective steps to curb illicit drug and human trafficking, terrorism and promoting cross border peace and stability. Increased arrivals of migrants without capacity for governments to process applications is a risk. The country is cooperating with neighbouring countries in transboundary water management.</p> <p>Affected SDGs: 16, 17</p> <p>Affected population groups: Refugees, migrants, asylum seekers, population at the borders</p>	Medium	Medium/ High	<p>Tension with neighbouring countries over trade, water</p> <p>Public narrative in the neighbouring media</p> <p>Delays in EU accession process</p> <p>Violations of regional agreements</p>
5	Internal Security	<p>The risk to internal security primarily comes from the returning foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) and fear of youth radicalisation. Membership of NATO is a major risk mitigating factor.</p> <p>The 2019 Global Terrorism Index ranks North Macedonia at 115/138 countries with a score of 0.301 (very low impact of terrorism).²¹¹</p> <p>Affected SDGs: 16, 17</p> <p>Affected population groups: Youth, communities receiving FTFs.</p>	Low/ Medium	Low	<p>Intelligence reports</p> <p>Global Terrorism Index</p>
6	Justice and rule of law	<p>Judicial independence remains elusive despite some judicial reforms. Lack of timely convictions of</p>	High	High	<p>Disaggregated quantitative data</p>

²¹⁰ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/north-macedonia>

²¹¹ <http://globalterrorismindex.org/>

#	Risk factors	Assessment / affected SDGs / indicators to be tracked	Impact	Likelihood	Early warning indicators
		<p>corruption cases and leaked information have shaken the public confidence in judiciary. Perception that elites are above law. Use of force to extract confessions was noted by UPR. Judicial reforms are in process, but results are yet to be seen on the ground.</p> <p>Rule of Law Index of the World Justice Project ranks the country at 56/126.²¹²</p> <p>Affected SDGs: 16, 17</p> <p>Affected population groups: All rights holders, Human Rights Activists, Civil Society</p>			<p>on access to justice in civil and criminal matters, covering also environmental domain</p> <p>Non-implementation of UPR and CEDAW recommendations</p> <p>Rejection of Ombudsman's reports</p> <p>Non-compliance with article 9 of the Aarhus Convention</p>
7	Economic stability	<p>Economic stability is risk area with many identified risks factors, from insufficient public finance management such as: declining share of tax revenue in total government revenues impacting the quality of provision of social services, high burden of pension budget, substantial subsidies, increasing public debt; to inadequate processes resulting with scarce spill-over effects from FDIs to domestic economy, low productivity and competitiveness; and to high susceptibility of economy to domestic political developments and insufficient governance and rule of law, and widespread corruption.</p> <p>Current model of public support for growth is not sustainable (high burden of wages, pensions, subsidies).</p> <p>Regional differences in economic development, high unemployment, and emigration of labour force undermine growth engine while 'brain drain' slows down the effort to generate higher-paid jobs. Short term and long-term impacts of COVID-19 pose risk to economic stability. Currently ongoing assessments will give better insights of the impact.</p> <p>Affected SDGs: 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9,10, 16, 17</p> <p>Affected population groups: People below poverty line, NEET Youth, pensioners</p>	Medium/ High	Low/ Medium	<p>FDI flows in relation to GDP</p> <p>Outmigration trends</p> <p>Share of domestic firms in total exports</p> <p>Tax revenue share in total revenue</p> <p>Sudden increase in emigration</p>
8	Infrastructure and access to social services	<p>Drinking water supply and water quality are high risk factors. Water quality is deteriorated by discharging untreated waste waters into the rivers and pollution of surface and ground waters.</p> <p>Transport infrastructure plays an important role in economic development. Better railway and intermodal infrastructure will support completeness and efficiency of national economy.</p> <p>Waste management is also important risk area. No access to waste collection system. Conditions for safe waste disposal by municipal disposal sites not fulfilled.</p>	Medium/ High	Medium/ High	<p>Measures of drinking water quality and consumption</p> <p>Logistics Performance Index (LPI) https://lpi.worldbank.org/</p> <p>Measures of surface and ground water quality</p>

²¹² <https://worldjusticeproject.org/our-work/research-and-data/wjp-rule-law-index-2019>

#	Risk factors	Assessment / affected SDGs / indicators to be tracked	Impact	Likelihood	Early warning indicators
		<p>There are regional disparities in access to infrastructure. Irrigation infrastructure is outdated and may affect water use efficiency and hence agricultural production.</p> <p>Insufficient transport infrastructure in particular in the East-West and the railway sector.</p> <p>Uneven distribution, unequal access and poor quality of health services.</p> <p>Affected SDGs: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 16, 11, 17 Affected population groups: People living in Northeast and other remote/rural areas.</p>			World Competitiveness Index (indices on infrastructure)
9	Displacement and migration	<p>During 2015-2016 there was large influx of migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees. This imposed a burden on the country. Future influx of refugees is a risk factor.</p> <p>Outmigration by skilled labour force poses a risk to local economy and social services. Emigration of doctors and medical staff is of great concern.</p> <p>Affected SDGs: 8, 16, 17</p> <p>Affected population groups: migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees, local population, professionals in social services</p>	High	Medium	<p>Influx of refugees, asylum seekers</p> <p>IOM reports on early warning</p> <p>Migration outflows</p>
10	Public Health	<p>NCDs have emerged as a big public health risk. The country is also impacted by the global Covid-19 pandemic with 2315 confirmed cases and 140 deaths (as of 31 May 2020). The country has taken numerous measures to decrease the number of the infected people and contain the spread. This has been a major challenge and is a major future risk factor.</p> <p>High out of pocket health expenses could prove disastrous for some households. Air pollution and poor quality of drinking water are other public health risks.</p> <p>Affected SDGs: 3, 6, 13, 11, 12, 16, 17</p> <p>Affected population groups: People living with multiple morbidities, Covid-19 infected population</p>	High	High	Sudden rise in infections and NCDs-disaggregated by regions / population groups
11	Food security, food safety, agriculture and land	<p>Agricultural holdings are small and vulnerable to degrading natural resources (land, water, biodiversity, forestry) and climate change. There is high risk to small farmers' livelihoods who may fall into poverty trap in case of a disaster. If due to fiscal prudence, subsidies are reduced, farmers will face higher costs and become unviable.</p> <p>Risks to food security and small-farm agriculture associated with EU accession should be assessed. But as an EU member the country will be compliant with EU's food safety norms and standards.</p> <p>Unfavourable balance between food import and export (low value added)</p> <p>Affected SDGs: 2, 15, 17</p> <p>Affected population groups: Food insecure and malnourished population, Young children, Women (especially with anaemia), small farmers</p>	Low/ Medium	Low/ Medium	<p>Crop diseases and decrease in yields</p> <p>Weather events</p> <p>Price shocks</p> <p>Land degradation</p> <p>Forestry degradation</p> <p>Rejection of agro-processed exports</p>

#	Risk factors	Assessment / affected SDGs / indicators to be tracked	Impact	Likelihood	Early warning indicators
12	Environment and climate change	<p>Climate change has led to significant increase in frequency of extreme weather events with increased risks of river floods (North west part of the country), droughts (southern part of the country), landslides, fires; forest degradation and increased risks to human health and damage of economic sectors.</p> <p>Inform Global Risk Management Initiative (GRI) rates risk of earthquakes at 6.6 and floods at 4.2. The composite Index (Hazard and Exposure, Vulnerability and Lack of Coping Capacity) is 3.0 /10.0.²¹³</p> <p>Affected SDGs: 1, 2, 3, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17</p> <p>Affected population groups: Population living in disaster-prone areas</p>	High	Medium	<p>PRTR / Met data</p> <p>State of the environment / thematic reports</p> <p>Extreme weather events</p> <p>Sendai framework EWS</p> <p>Sub-regional data</p>

²¹³ Inform Global Risk Index, 2020 <http://www.inform-index.org>

9 Gaps and challenges towards achieving the Agenda 2030

At the strategic level, a key gap is the non-existence of a national consensus on the development priorities and targets that include but also builds beyond EU accession to ensure continuity of reforms over the longer period (next 15-30 years). The current policymaking is driven by the EU accession. The recent publication of the first National Voluntary Review in July 2020 shows renewed commitment to the SDGs and Agenda 2030. The national vision on sustainable development is fragmented with a lack of clear path and national indicators framework. The national machinery set up to monitor SDGs can be further strengthened. No costing of SDGs has been done and no SDG finance assessment carried out to guide planning and budgeting. In view of the above, monitoring SDGs progress becomes a challenging.

Policy making in the country is at times centralized, ambiguous and incoherent, lacking strong evidence or policy alternatives and meaningful stakeholder engagement. It would benefit from mutual reinforcement and synergy. Evidence-based policy making requires strong, disaggregated data bases and strengthened analytical capabilities, among others, to examine the impact of policies on certain population groups. Lack of reliable demographic data disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, disability status, migration pattern etc is an impediment in policy making for vulnerable population groups who may not be counted and not receive social services. SSO is the key agency responsible for collecting data. UN could work with SSO and other institutions responsible for collecting statistical data for capacity development to build disaggregated data bases for policy making. This could strengthen UN's advocacy for more inclusive and sustainable development and be potentially an accelerator towards Agenda 2030 and SDGs.

Inter-sectoral coordination or ownership of the SDG agenda by the sectoral ministries could be improved to avoid working in silos. Many of the sector policies are not effectively linked to or make no reference to SDGs. Horizontal coordination must be improved to achieve SDGs which by their design require a more integrated approach.

Implementation capacity weaknesses can also hamper progress towards SDGs. Public administration, a key arm of the Government responsible for service provision and one of the major areas of reform, is yet to demonstrate stronger accountability and responsiveness towards citizens, with some recent progress on transparency and consultation. Nepotism and clientelism can make bureaucracy highly politicised.

While a systematic government-wide capacity assessment has not been undertaken, a mapping of the public sector institutions carried out on behalf of the Ministry of Information Society and Administration²¹⁴, along with few EU led initiatives on reorganisation of state organs and functional analysis of central government institutions provide some evidence to the capacity gaps in the public administration with a view to assisting the government carry out more systematic, forward-looking, structural and functional reform of public administration. The mapping report questions the rationale of proliferation of small agencies in similar areas with low capacity and recommends their amalgamation. It further observes fragmentation of responsibilities that leads to inefficiencies and dissipation of accountability. The report also recommends an audit of the human resource for competencies. Be that as it may, a more thorough capacity assessment of the public administration system is needed to see if this is "fit for purpose" in view of the ongoing reforms, EU accession and SDG agenda and if it is line with futuristic, horizontal (rather than structured as vertical hierarchy) and cross-sectoral models of administration. Likewise, capacity assessment of the National Council for Sustainable Development and in fact civil society partners is required to make them effective partners in the implementation of the Cooperation Framework.

By and large the civil society in the country is vibrant and there is an improved cooperation between the government and civil society on major policy and legislative issues. But lack of capacity and resources make

²¹⁴ Final Report on Results of mapping of public sector institutions, functional analysis and recommendations to kick-start the PAR process (study for Ministry of Information Society and Administration), UNDP, May 2018

them dependent on donors. Further, the Law on Public Gatherings that was put up to parliament for amendment in November 2019, if passed, will impose many restrictions on the public protests thus limiting the freedom of assembly and democratic space for civil society.

The capacity of the private sector, particularly domestic private sector, is limited by their size and scale, productivity, and technological innovation among others. As such, it has not been an important partner in the achievement of SDGs. This is a serious gap. Global experience suggests that private sector stands to gain from partnering with UN in terms of enhanced reputation, profitability, brand advantage, image building as socially responsible firms, etc. This can add pace to achieving SDGs and be a win-win solution. Enhanced partnership with the private sector is a potential accelerator to achieve the Agenda 2030. While a detailed assessment of COVID-19 impact will be made in the revised version of CCA, the outbreak has opened up opportunities of working with the private sector, especially in e-commerce and other digital solutions, which could potentially create many more 'green' jobs and address the unemployment problem and thus accelerate progress towards the Agenda 2030.

Another major impediment to building inclusive society and "leaving no one behind" is insufficient social cohesion and trust. Societal attitudes and norms towards certain ethnic communities, LGBTI, refugees and persons with disabilities are at times not conducive to building cohesion in the society. For a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society that North Macedonia is, social cohesion should be both a goal in itself and an instrument in contributing to the achievement of inclusive and sustainable growth.

In addition to the cross-cutting gaps and challenges above, there are following thematic gaps and challenges that must be addressed for the country to progress towards Agenda 2030.

9.1 People

Poverty is declining but remains a challenge in North Macedonia. High unemployment and inactivity, inefficient social protection systems and unequal coverage and inconsistent quality of social services are some of the main determinants of the high poverty level. Ageing population and declining birth rates pose a challenge to availability of human capital and can hamper growth trajectory.

Health care system should factor in the ability to address pandemics in future and address high burden of NCDs as well as equity considerations including high out-of-pocket expenses. Education system does not adequately promote lifelong learning outcomes or equip children and young persons with knowledge and skills to thrive. Expenditure on health, education and social protection plays an important role in keeping the poverty under check. However, the outcomes are not commensurate with spending on social sectors.

Income inequalities have come down in the last decade, but the country continues to face other forms of inequalities including those of economic opportunities, which are rooted in the early childhood (e.g. the inequalities in pre-school enrolment) and education and are mostly faced by marginalized groups. Increase in the number of older persons in population poses its own challenges to the healthcare system, pension payments and social protection system. Implementation of "leave no one behind" remains challenging with many vulnerable population groups (women, children, Roma, refugees, persons with disabilities, LGBTI, older persons) facing discrimination and marginalization.

A key challenge is to promote gender equality and women's empowerment by introducing adequate measures for encouragement of women's participation in labour market and creating job opportunities for them through education and skills training and providing child care facilities; removing barriers to their entry in business and discrimination in labour market; improving enforcement of women's rights; provision of affordable family planning services that will enable choices for timing, spacing and number of childbirth; tackling gender stereotypes that impede advancement of women, including introduction of comprehensive sex education in formal education; reducing harmful practices, such as early marriages; addressing trafficking of and gender-based violence against women and girls; and encouraging their participation in social, economic and political life of the country, at all levels and in every sector.

9.2 Prosperity

A key challenge is to support the creation and growth of higher-value-added sectors as a large contingent of workers remain trapped in low-productivity, low-paid sectors and jobs. To produce more convincing economic results, it is necessary to embed the operations of foreign companies, which are driving the growth in the country, more closely with the domestic firms and strengthen backward linkages. This requires both technological upgradation of domestic firms and linking them to global value chains and creating conditions for foreign firms to link themselves with domestic business (such as through local procurement and enhancing the local content of their exports).

The economy is characterised by high degree of informality which acts as a drag on the economy and prevents integration with global value chains. There is a need to move beyond enclaves of prosperity with concentration of FDI-led export industries and diversify the economy to tap the full potential such as the export potential in agro-processed industries. Small, low-tech and low-productivity domestic private sector is another gap that needs to be addressed through major programme of private sector development. Infrastructure has shown improvement, but connectivity needs to further improve. To meet the aspiration of the fourth industrial revolution, the educational and technological advancements among youth need to be prioritized and they should be supported for start-ups, digitalization, and innovation to integrate with the global market.

There are distortions in labour market with high degree of unemployment (partly due to skills mismatch) and low-quality employment (“underemployment”). Non-availability of labour force due to high emigration co-exists with low women’s participation in labour force. There are gaps in the human capital as their knowledge and skills do not align with the demands of the emerging sectors of the economy and thus prevent growth of a dynamic labour market. Women also face discriminatory practices in the labour market (e.g. pay gaps). Limited attention is paid to promoting resilience in the economy and creating ‘green’ jobs. The potential for greening public procurement to support environmental protection and reap economic benefits remains untapped.

9.3 Planet

Climate change and unsustainable natural resource management practices pose a serious challenge to the development trajectory of the country. Extreme weather events, flooding, water scarcity and land degradation could become binding constraints for future development. It would be a challenge to improve the productivity of land in the context of climate change and vulnerability to weather. Making farmers adapt to extreme weather conditions, heat waves, floods and droughts and promoting weather-resistant crops could be daunting. Integrated river basin management is a challenge in the country as many of the river basins and sub-river basins do not have management plans.

The frequency of natural hazards has gone up and would impose a burden on disaster risk management and disaster response mechanisms to prevent loss of life and property. There is need to focus on improving the air quality in the cities (urban areas) and to decrease the adverse impact of air pollution to the human health through setting up effective short-term and long-term measures in the relevant source of emissions. For the country to comply with climate change related action (both mitigation and adaptation) it will have to set up institutions, build capacities, arrange resources, plan, coordinate, monitor and report. This could prove to be challenging. The country does not have enough capacity to report against the MEAs. Cooperation with neighbouring countries in transboundary basins, although posing some challenges, also brings mutual benefits and reduces uncertainties; therefore, it needs to be further developed and strengthened.

There is a clear need to strengthen nationwide environmental information system based on e-Government and Open Data Frameworks in the country. For example, there is no comprehensive data and information on the ground water quantity and quality and there is a lack of continuous monitoring; no systematic

monitoring of surface waters, forecasting and estimation of floods or early warning systems for prevention of floods; no established methodologies for valuation of flood damages; no reliable data on water consumption for irrigation. There are also gaps in air quality data.

9.4 Peace

The country has embarked on a judicial, legislative and administrative reform agenda within the EU accession process. The relations with neighbouring countries have also improved. The challenge is to effectively carry out these reforms to make judiciary more independent and build people's trust in the judicial system, strengthen the parliament scrutiny of the executive, and ensure that administration is non-partisan and more accountable to people. Limited implementation and monitoring capacity hampers progress towards sustainable development.

Human rights defenders, like the Office of the Ombudsman, need greater autonomy and commitment to defend citizens from abuses from the state outside of partisan politics. Weaknesses in good governance and decision-making prevent more effective and timely results, Civil society engagement could further improve and be institutionalized for people's voices to be heard.

Corruption levels in the country are high and pervasive. Many high-profile corruption cases have not been effectively led to a conclusion, resulting in loss of public faith in the governance institutions, especially judiciary, and lower global image. The transparency in decision-making has improved in the recent years including through open data, but further efforts are necessary to strengthen accountability of institutions.

Local self-governments have small revenue base, lack functional autonomy and are cash strapped – hence heavily reliant on the central government for transfer of resources and unable to provide quality public services. Societal norms and people's attitudes towards certain population groups impede inclusive growth and social cohesion.

9.5 Partnerships

Domestic financing will remain the primary source of SDG financing, but is sluggish due to lower share of taxes in total revenue thanks to large exemptions and not broad basing the tax net. Raising share of taxes will be important but unpopular and challenging. ODA is low and will continue to decline as the country is an upper-middle income country. The country lags behind in exploring innovative means of SDG financing like 'green bonds', raising private and blended capital. Lack of capacity, information and internal regulatory mechanisms to monitor new funding sources may result in loss of this opportunity to finance SDGs. Remittances are an important source in ameliorating poverty and they also build capital when receiving households invest in house renovations. Part of the remittances can be used more productively rather than spent on consumption for which schemes may be designed. FDI is an important source of SDG financing but does not result in concomitant transfer of technology or creating skills through backward integration with domestic industry. It will be important to improve efficiency in public spending public expenditure, including on social services, results in sub-optimal outcomes. The data gaps and lack of monitoring capacity may also be noted which hinder measurement of SDG progress.

Partnerships with businesses, who globally are showing interest in SDGs, have not been sufficiently explored. There are gains for the business in promoting SDGs in terms of their brand value, social responsibility image, business solutions to societal problems, and competitive edge it gets over rivals through differentiation. Their interest and understanding in sustainable and responsible investment have not been fully addressed.

10 Governance structures and institutions

North Macedonia is a multi-party parliamentary democracy and its powers are divided among the legislative, judicial and executive branches. Geographically, there are 80 municipalities, 10 of which constitute the city of Skopje. Constitutionally there is clear separation of powers between the legislative, judicial and executive branches of the state. Despite the progress achieved in the recent past, further efforts are necessary to strengthen the scrutiny of the parliament and the independence of the judiciary, and thus ensure more robust system of checks and balances that would prevent concentration of power in the executive.

10.1 Legislative

The country is a parliamentary democracy with a unicameral chamber of 120 members of parliament (MPs) elected proportionally from the party lists for four-year terms. Political parties are mandated by law to compile lists which promote greater gender inclusion. As a result, almost 40 percent of MPs in the National Assembly are women.

The Parliament has the responsibility to elect the government and cabinet ministers, and several independent boards, bodies and agencies, including the State Election Commission, Anti-Corruption Commission, State Audit Office, and State Broadcaster. The Assembly is constitutionally mandated to adopt legislation, represent citizens and control the work of the executive. In practice, however, the members of parliament are often subservient to the executive branch of government. According to Freedom House, “the government dominates the legislative branch, and the parliament generally does not play an effective oversight role.”²¹⁵ However, the 2020 EU Country Report 2020 has recognized an improved role of the Parliament in certain areas such legislative role and oversight and notes few areas for improvement.²¹⁶ A representative sample of citizens surveyed in late October and early November 2019 perceived the Parliament and Members of Parliament mostly negative with 38.1 percent unsatisfactory, 26.1 percent sufficient, 23.2 percent good, and only 7.5 percent citizens graded Parliament and Members of Parliament as very good and 2.6 percent as the best.²¹⁷

10.2 Executive

The executive branch of the government is elected by the Assembly and led by the Prime Minister. There are currently four Deputy Prime Ministers and 16 ministers and 43 bodies working under the Government. Article 2 of the Law on the Government stipulates that the Government “performs its activities independently within the framework of the Constitution, laws and ratified international agreements, and on the basis of the principles of transparency, efficiency and protection of human rights and freedoms”. There are currently four female ministers in the SDSM-led government.

According to the finding of the EC in their 2020 report, “efforts continued to strengthen democracy and the rule of law, including by activating existing checks and balances and through discussions and debates in key policy and legislative issues.”²¹⁸ The government received wide-spread international praise for their work to resolve the name dispute with Greece, improve bilateral relations with Bulgaria and overall fostering a culture of compromise in the country and the region. The EU added, “The Government has sustained

²¹⁵ Freedom House 2019 North Macedonia Country Report, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/north-macedonia> 216 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/COUNTRY_20_1795

²¹⁷ Face to Face Survey of 1612 citizens (18 years or older) conducted by Team Institute, October-November 2019.

²¹⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/COUNTRY_20_1795

efforts to foster inter-ethnic relations and to implement the ²¹⁹ There was greater transparency, consultations and inclusiveness, but further efforts to foster accountability are needed.

Citizens' surveyed in late October and early November 2019 perceived the Government and Ministers mostly negative with 35.7 percent unsatisfactory, 22.2 percent sufficient, 24.9 percent good, and only 10.7 percent citizens gave a very good and 5.1 percent as the best.²²⁰

10.3 Judiciary

The judicial system in North Macedonia has 25 basic courts; three specialized courts (Administrative, Criminal Law and Civil Law); four appellate courts; higher Administrative Court; Supreme Council; and a Constitutional Court. There is also a Judicial Council and a Council of Public Prosecutors. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the country to oversee fair administration of laws by all courts. The Administrative Court decides on the legality of the administrative acts of the government, including municipalities and other public authorities. The Constitutional Court is an independent body to decide on the constitutionality of national laws and protection of constitutional and legal rights and resolves disputes related to separation of powers between the executive legislative and judicial branches.

In the European Commission's assessment "the judicial system has "some level of preparation/is moderately prepared" "addressing the 'Urgent Reform Priorities' and recommendations from the Venice Commission and the Senior Experts' Group on systemic Rule of Law issues."²²¹ The EU also elaborates "effective implementation of the legal framework as well as increased efforts by all stakeholders to demonstrate their exemplarity will contribute to increasing public trust in the judiciary."²²²

Following the arrest of former Special Prosecutor and slow pace in addressing the criminal activity alleged within the wiretapping scandal, citizens of North Macedonia were surveyed to assess the performance of the Courts and Judges using the grading scale with one being unsatisfactory and five being the best. A majority of those surveyed (53.4 percent) rated the Court and Judges the lowest, followed by 20.9 percent as sufficient, 15.6 percent as good, and only 5.6 percent as very good. Incidentally, of all the governance institutions, judiciary received the worst rating and by a high margin compared to other governance institutions.²²³

10.4 President

The President of the Republic of North Macedonia, elected for a five-year term, has a limited governance role as head of state. During the mandate, the president is commander of the armed services; signs legal decrees and can veto legislation; bestows pardons; appoints ambassadors; and makes appointments to the Constitutional Court, the Judicial Council, Security Council, including the Director of the Intelligence Agency and the Army's Chief of General Staff.

A representative sample of citizens surveyed in late October and early November 2019 rated the performance of the President the most favourably with a combined grade of 50.9 percent good/very good/best. Using the grading scale, with one being unsatisfactory and five being the best, 28 percent graded the President unsatisfactorily, while 17.9 percent scored him sufficient, followed by 22.6 percent good, 15 percent very good, and 12.8 percent best ²²⁴

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ See footnote 201

²²¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/COUNTRY_20_1795

²²² Ibid

²²³ See footnote 201

²²⁴ Ibid

10.5 Local self-government

There are eighty municipalities plus the City of Skopje that constitute the local self-government system in North Macedonia. Local government is responsible for communal issues, such as public services, local development, local tax collection, culture, sport and partially education. Current municipal councils, elected for a four-year mandate (2017 - 2021), are composed of members from sixteen political parties and 35 independents. Six municipalities are led by women mayors. Because of the “zip quota system” similar to that of the Parliament, between 30-40 percent of councillors are women.

The European Commission remarked, decentralisation has been a commitment since the OFA was signed and that the municipalities improved the financial management and collection of local taxes in the reporting period.”²²⁵

A representative sample of citizens were asked to grade the performance of the Mayors and Municipalities using the grading scale with five being unsatisfactory and one being the best. Citizens surveyed in late October and early November 2019 perceived the Mayors and Municipalities slightly negative with 31.7 percent unsatisfactory, 18.8. percent sufficient, 24.2 percent good, and only 14.2 percent citizens gave a very good and 9.3 percent as the best.²²⁶

In addition, as per a UNDP survey of citizens living in municipalities²²⁷ every second citizen was satisfied with their municipality as a place to live, the quality of life it has and the safety of the community in their municipality. Citizens were least satisfied with municipality as a place to live for the vulnerable categories of citizens (32 percent) but at this level the satisfaction was higher than previous year (23 percent). Residents in urban areas reported higher satisfaction level (43 percent) than the residents of rural municipalities (38 percent). About 50 percent of residents reported presence of corruption in municipalities. Familiarity with e-services in municipality and presence of CSOs was very low.

10.6 Public administration

The public administration is responsible for providing services and executing policies and programmes of the government of the day. During 2006 to 2018, “the government was the country’s largest employer; some analysts estimated it employed as many as 180,000 persons, despite official statistics showing public sector employment of approximately 128,000 persons.”²²⁸ The increase in the number of civil servants did not necessarily increase the quality or service-delivery in the public administration. The EU wrote in its 2020 country progress report that “some progress was made in improving transparency...[but] ensuring respect for the principles of transparency, merit and equitable representation remains essential.”²²⁹

Inclusion practices of ethnic communities hired in the public administration, especially ethnic Albanians, increased following the signing of the OFA, reaching to 19.5 percent Albanians in state institutions²³⁰ however many of them are yet not integrated in the public service due to the mismatch between the political objective for equitable representations on one side and the human resources planning and standards at the other. As result, number of these civil servants receive salaries while staying at home. To address some of the challenges within the public administration, the EU recommended to: (1) Ensure full respect of merit-based recruitment for senior civil service and other positions; (2) Finalise the horizontal functional review

²²⁵ North Macedonia 2020, European Commission https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/north_macedonia_report_2020.pdf pg.11

²²⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/COUNTRY_20_1795

²²⁷ Public Opinion Survey Report on Citizens’ Satisfaction from Local Services, UNDP-Rating Agency, November 2019

²²⁸ North Macedonia 2018 Human Rights Report, United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour, p. 22.

²²⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/COUNTRY_20_1795.

²³⁰ Informant interview

and start implementing it to ensure clear accountability lines between institutions; and (3) Ensure full implementation of the Law on General Administrative Procedures.²³¹

Despite some changes in the recent years, the downward accountability of public administration to people remains a challenge. Civil servants feel more accountable to the political and administrative leaders in the hierarchy, but accountability towards people as a principle is not yet embedded in the administrative culture. Government – through the civil servants – is the primary duty bearer and is responsible to ensure full realisation of human rights of all rights holders.

Quality administrative servants are overshadowed by less qualified candidates employed to curry political favour. Clientelism and nepotism diminishes the quality of the public administration and efficient service-delivery by those employed at taxpayer's expense through suspect means.

When asked in late October and early November 2019, a representative sample of citizens, using the grading system with one being unsatisfactory and five being the best, 30.3 percent graded the public administration unsatisfactorily, 23.1 percent sufficient, 28.7 percent good, 11.7 percent very good and 4.3 percent best.²³²

PAR Strategy 2018-2022 of North Macedonia defines the measures to be taken over five-year period in a number of key areas including policy-making and coordination; public service and human resource management, including depoliticising the administration; responsibility, accountability and transparency; and delivery of services and ICT support to administration. To implement the reforms, the Strategy also envisages setting up of a Council for Public Administration Reform.

²³¹ North Macedonia 2019 Report, European Commission, 29 May 2019, p. 11.

²³² See footnote 201

11 *Conclusions and possible response to key development challenges*

The analysis above leads us to the following **broad conclusions**:

1. Making the growth more inclusive, just and resilient is the key development priority for the country.
2. The achievement of the Agenda 2030 would require a distinct national strategic document and stronger integration with the ongoing reforms for EU accession, national development strategies and sectoral programmes than is the case now. Identifying and prioritising accelerators of sustainable development remains essential.
3. Policy coherence while prioritizing sustainable measures, political consensus on strategic issues, and addressing deficiencies in governance institutions will be imperative for further progress towards SDGs.
4. Societal transformation for more responsible individual and community approach towards sustainable and inclusive development.

Based on the development challenges identified in the foregoing analysis and validated through the findings from the People perception research, the following are possible responses to these challenges:

1. Building a robust, formal, competitive, innovative, inclusive and resilient low-carbon economy for accelerated and job-rich growth at par with European peers.
2. Decisively addressing exclusion and inequalities that affect women and children, youth not in employment, education or training, ethnic communities, LGBTI, and people with disabilities, rural population / small farmers, refugees and asylum seekers, persons at risk of statelessness, minority and other vulnerable groups.
3. Increasing the quantity and quality of jobs and coping with outmigration of labour force, especially skilled labour force, by fighting informal economy and creating decent employment opportunities equally for all and promoting rights at work.
4. Appreciably investing in human capital through improved quality of education, technical and vocational education and training, lifelong learning and the recognition of prior learning, and health, especially in view of the changing demographic profile.
5. Addressing design and efficiency issues in delivery of social services to make it more efficient, fiscally sustainable and potentially productive by focusing more on activation policies and delivery of quality services.
6. Improving governance by taking decisive action against corruption, making judiciary independent and effective, and improving policy coherence and performance management in the administration, and consulting with civil society partners in a meaningful way.
7. Adapting to climate and other environment-related challenges and taking steps at mitigation in line with EU environmental and climate change standards; improving environmental governance and managing natural resources more sustainably, improve human health and building resilience.
8. Promoting social coherence and trust building among youth and marginalized groups and strengthen cooperation with countries from the Western Balkans region.
9. Ensuring compliance with international norms and standards in dealing with refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and other people on the move, and stateless persons.

Annex 1: Human rights, labour and environmental treaties acceded to the Republic of North Macedonia

United Nations

Chapter Number	Full title of the treaty	Action type	Date and place of conclusion	Date of deposit	Registration number
IV – Human Rights					
IV-1	Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide	Succession	Paris 09/12/1948	1/18/94	I-1021
IV-2	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	Succession	New York 07/03/1966	1/18/94	I-9464
IV-2	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	Declaration	New York 07/03/1966	12/22/99	I-9464
IV-3	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	Succession	New York 16/12/1966	1/18/94	I-14531
IV-3-a	Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	Signature	New York 10/12/2008	8/14/13	A-14531
IV-4	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	Succession	New York 16/12/1966	1/18/94	I-14668
IV-5	Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	Ratification	New York 16/12/1966	12/12/94	A-14668
IV-5	Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	Succession signature to	New York 16/12/1966	12/12/94	A-14668
IV-6	Convention on the non-applicability of statutory limitations to war crimes and crimes against humanity	Succession	New York 26/11/1968	1/18/94	I-10823
IV-7	International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid	Succession	New York 30/11/1973	1/18/94	I-14861
IV-8	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	Succession	New York 18/12/1979	1/18/94	I-20378
IV-8-b	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	Signature	New York 06/10/1999	4/3/00	A-20378
IV-8-b	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	Ratification	New York 06/10/1999	10/17/03	A-20378
IV-9	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	Succession	New York 10/12/1984	12/12/94	I-24841
IV-9-b	Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	Signature	New York 18/12/2002	9/1/06	A-24841
IV-9-b	Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	Ratification	New York 18/12/2002	2/13/09	A-24841
IV-11	Convention on the Rights of the Child	Succession	New York 20/11/1989	12/2/93	I-27531
IV-11	Convention on the Rights of the Child	Notification	New York 20/11/1989	10/10/97	I-27531
IV-11-a	Amendment to article 43 (2) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child	Acceptance	New York 12/12/1995	10/16/96	A-27531
IV-11-b	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict	Ratification	New York 25/05/2000	1/12/04	A-27531
IV-11-b	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict	Signature	New York 25/05/2000	7/17/01	A-27531
IV-11-c	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography	Signature	New York 25/05/2000	7/17/01	A-27531
IV-11-c	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography	Ratification	New York 25/05/2000	10/17/03	A-27531
IV-11-d	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure	Signature	New York 19/12/2011	5/23/12	A-27531

Chapter Number	Full title of the treaty	Action type	Date and place of conclusion	Date of deposit	Registration number
IV-12	Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty	Accession	New York 15/12/1989	1/26/95	A-14668
IV-15	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Ratification	New York 13/12/2006	12/29/11	I-44910
IV-15	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Signature	New York 13/12/2006	3/30/07	I-44910
IV-15-a	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Signature	New York 13/12/2006	7/29/09	A-44910
IV-15-a	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Ratification	New York 13/12/2006	12/29/11	A-44910
IV-16	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance	Signature	New York 20/12/2006	2/6/07	I-48088
V – Refugees and Stateless People					
V-2	Convention relating to the Status of Refugees	Succession	Geneva 28/07/1951	1/18/94	I-2545
V-3	Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons	Succession	New York 28/09/1954	1/18/94	I-5158
V-4	Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness	Accession	New York 30/08/1961	1/3/20	I-14458
V-5	Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees	Succession	New York 31/01/1967	1/18/94	I-8791
VI – Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances					
VI-15	Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961	Accession	New York 30/03/1961	10/13/93	I-7515
VI-16	Convention on psychotropic substances	Accession	Vienna 21/02/1971	10/13/93	I-14956
VI-17	Protocol amending the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961	Accession	Geneva 25/03/1972	10/13/93	I-14151
VI-18	Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, as amended by the Protocol amending the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961	Participation in the Convention by virtue of ratification, accession or succession to the Protocol of 25 March 1972 or to the 1961 Convention after the entry into force of the Protocol	New York 08/08/1975	10/13/93	I-14152
VI-19	United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances	Accession	Vienna 20/12/1988	10/13/93	I-27627
VII – Trafficking in Persons					
VII-3	International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children	Succession	Geneva 30/09/1921	1/18/94	LoN-269
VII-11-a	Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others	Succession	Lake Success New York 21/03/1950	1/18/94	I-1342
IX – Health					
IX-1	Constitution of the World Health Organization	Acceptance	New York 22/07/1946	4/22/93	I-221
IX-1-b	Amendment to article 7 of the Constitution of the World Health Organization	Acceptance	Geneva 20/05/1965	3/9/99	NIF-0
IX-1-f	Amendment to article 74 of the Constitution of the World Health Organization	Acceptance	Geneva 18/05/1978	3/9/99	NIF-0
IX-1-h	Amendments to articles 24 and 25 of the Constitution of the World Health Organization	Acceptance	Geneva 16/05/1998	3/9/99	A-221
IX-4	WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control	Accession	Geneva 21/05/2003	6/30/06	I-41032
IX-4-a	Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products	Signature	Seoul 12/11/2012	1/8/14	I-55487
X – International Trade and Development					
X-8	Agreement establishing the International Fund for Agricultural Development	Accession	Rome 13/06/1976	1/26/94	I-16041
X-9	Constitution of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization	Accession	Vienna 08/04/1979	5/27/93	I-23432
X-10	United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods	Succession	Vienna 11/04/1980	11/22/06	I-25567

Chapter Number	Full title of the treaty	Action type	Date and place of conclusion	Date of deposit	Registration number
XI – Transport and Communication					
XI-A-8	Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles	Succession	New York 04/06/1954	12/20/99	I-4101
XI-A-10	Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Commercial Road Vehicles	Succession	Geneva 18/05/1956	12/20/99	I-4721
XI-A-16	Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention)	Succession	Geneva 14/11/1975	12/2/93	I-16510
XI-A-16	Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention)	Notification	Geneva 14/11/1975	9/29/09	I-16510
XI-A-17	International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods	Succession	Geneva 21/10/1982	12/20/99	I-23583
XI-B-11	Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR)	Succession	Geneva 19/05/1956	6/20/97	I-5742
XI-B-11-a	Protocol to the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR)	Accession	Geneva 05/07/1978	6/20/97	I-19487
XI-B-14	European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR)	Succession	Geneva 30/09/1957	4/18/97	I-8940
XI-B-14-a	Protocol amending article 14 (3) of the European Agreement of 30 September 1957 concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR)	Succession	New York 21/08/1975	4/18/97	A-8940
XI-B-16	Agreement concerning the Adoption of Harmonized Technical United Nations Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts which can be Fitted and/or be Used on Wheeled Vehicles and the Conditions for Reciprocal Recognition of Approvals Granted on the Basis of these United Nations Regulations	Succession	Geneva 20/03/1958	4/1/98	I-4789
XI-B-16-0	United Nations Regulation No. 0. Uniform provisions concerning the International Whole Vehicle Type Approval (IWVTA)	Application regulation	of Geneva 15/11/2017	7/19/18	A-4789
XI-B-16-10	United Nations Regulation No. 10. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of vehicles with regard to electromagnetic compatibility	Succession	Geneva 01/04/1969	4/1/98	A-4789
XI-B-16-106	United Nations Regulation No. 106. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of pneumatic tyres for agricultural vehicles and their trailers	Application regulation	of Geneva 07/05/1998	5/7/98	A-4789
XI-B-16-107	United Nations Regulation No. 107. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of category M2 or M3 vehicles with regard to their general construction	Application regulation	of Geneva 18/06/1998	6/18/98	A-4789
XI-B-16-108	United Nations Regulation No. 108. Uniform provisions concerning the approval for the production of retreaded pneumatic tyres for motor vehicles and their trailers	Application regulation	of Geneva 23/06/1998	6/23/98	A-4789
XI-B-16-109	United Nations Regulation No. 109. Uniform provisions concerning the approval for the production of retreaded pneumatic tyres for commercial vehicles and their trailers	Application regulation	of Geneva 23/06/1998	6/23/98	A-4789
XI-B-16-110	United Nations Regulation No. 110. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of: I. Specific components of motor vehicles using compressed natural gas (CNG) and/or liquefied natural gas (LNG) in their propulsion system; II. Vehicles with regard to the installation of specific components of an approved type for the use of compressed natural gas (CNG) and/or liquefied natural gas (LNG) in their propulsion system	Application regulation	of Geneva 28/12/2000	12/28/00	A-4789
XI-B-16-111	United Nations Regulation No. 111. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of tank vehicles of categories N and O with regard to rollover stability	Application regulation	of Geneva 28/12/2000	12/28/00	A-4789
XI-B-16-112	United Nations Regulation No. 112. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of motor vehicle headlamps emitting an asymmetrical passing beam or a driving beam or both and equipped with filament lamps and/or LED modules	Application regulation	of Geneva 21/09/2001	9/21/01	A-4789
XI-B-16-113	United Nations Regulation No. 113. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of motor vehicle headlamps emitting a symmetrical passing beam or a driving beam or both and equipped with filament lamps, gas-discharge light sources or LED modules	Application regulation	of Geneva 21/09/2001	9/21/01	A-4789

Chapter Number	Full title of the treaty	Action type	Date and place of conclusion	Date of deposit	Registration number
XI-B-16-114	United Nations Regulation No. 114. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of: I. An airbag module for a replacement airbag system; II. A replacement steering wheel equipped with an airbag module of an approved type; III. A replacement airbag system other than that installed in a steering wheel	Application regulation	of Geneva 01/02/2003	2/1/03	A-4789
XI-B-16-116	United Nations Regulation No. 116. Uniform provisions concerning the protection of motor vehicles against unauthorized use	Application regulation	of Geneva 06/04/2005	4/6/05	A-4789
XI-B-16-117	United Nations Regulation No. 117. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of tyres with regard to rolling sound emissions and/or to adhesion on wet surfaces and/or to rolling resistance	Application regulation	of Geneva 06/04/2005	4/6/05	A-4789
XI-B-16-118	United Nations Regulation No. 118. Uniform technical prescriptions concerning the burning behaviour and/or the capability to repel fuel or lubricant of materials used in the construction of certain categories of motor vehicles	Application regulation	of Geneva 06/04/2005	4/6/05	A-4789
XI-B-16-119	United Nations Regulation No. 119. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of cornering lamps for power-driven vehicles	Application regulation	of Geneva 06/04/2005	4/6/05	A-4789
XI-B-16-120	United Nations Regulation No. 120. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of internal combustion engines to be installed in agricultural and forestry tractors and in non-road mobile machinery, with regard to the measurement of the net power, net torque and specific fuel consumption	Application regulation	of Geneva 06/04/2005	4/6/05	A-4789
XI-B-16-121	United Nations Regulation No. 121. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of vehicles with regard to the location and identification of hand controls, tell-tales and indicators	Application regulation	of Geneva 18/01/2006	1/18/06	A-4789
XI-B-16-122	United Nations Regulation No. 122. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of vehicles of categories M, N and O with regard to their heating systems	Application regulation	of Geneva 18/01/2006	1/18/06	A-4789
XI-B-16-125	United Nations Regulation No. 125. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of motor vehicles with regard to the forward field of vision of the driver	Application regulation	of Geneva 09/11/2007	11/9/07	A-4789
XI-B-16-126	United Nations Regulation No. 126. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of partitioning systems to protect passengers against displaced luggage, supplied as non-original vehicle equipment	Application regulation	of Geneva 09/11/2007	11/9/07	A-4789
XI-B-16-127	United Nations Regulation No. 127. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of motor vehicles with regard to their pedestrian safety performance	Application regulation	of Geneva 17/11/2012	11/17/12	A-4789
XI-B-16-128	United Nations Regulation No. 128. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of Light Emitting Diode (LED) light sources for use in approved lamps on power-driven vehicles and their trailers	Application regulation	of Geneva 17/11/2012	11/17/12	A-4789
XI-B-16-129	United Nations Regulation No. 129. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of enhanced Child Restraint Systems used on board of motor vehicles	Application regulation	of Geneva 13/12/2012	7/9/13	A-4789
XI-B-16-13	United Nations Regulation No. 13. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of vehicles of categories M, N and O with regard to braking	Succession	Geneva 01/06/1970	4/1/98	A-4789
XI-B-16-130	United Nations Regulation No. 130. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of motor vehicles with regard to the Lane Departure Warning System	Application regulation	of Geneva 13/12/2012	7/9/13	A-4789
XI-B-16-131	United Nations Regulation No. 131. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of motor vehicles with regard to the Advanced Emergency Braking Systems (AEBS)	Application regulation	of Geneva 13/12/2012	7/9/13	A-4789
XI-B-16-132	United Nations Regulation No. 132. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of retrofit emission control devices (rec) for heavy duty vehicles, agricultural and forestry tractors and non-road mobile machinery equipped with compression ignition engines	Application regulation	of Geneva 02/12/2013	6/17/14	A-4789
XI-B-16-133	United Nations Regulation No. 133. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of motor vehicles with regard to their reusability, recyclability and recoverability	Application regulation	of Geneva 02/12/2013	6/17/14	A-4789
XI-B-16-134	United Nations Regulation No. 134. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of motor vehicles and their components with regard to the safety-related performance of hydrogen-fuelled vehicles	Application regulation	of Geneva 05/12/2014	6/15/15	A-4789

Chapter Number	Full title of the treaty	Action type	Date and place of conclusion	Date of deposit	Registration number
XI-B-16-135	United Nations Regulation No. 135. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of vehicles with regard to their Pole Side Impact performance	Application regulation	of Geneva 05/12/2014	6/15/15	A-4789
XI-B-16-136	United Nations Regulation No. 136. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of vehicles of category L with regard to specific requirements for the electric power train	Application regulation	of Geneva 07/07/2015	1/20/16	A-4789
XI-B-16-137	United Nations Regulation No. 137. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of passenger cars in the event of a frontal collision with focus on the restraint system	Application regulation	of Geneva 30/11/2015	6/9/16	A-4789
XI-B-16-138	United Nations Regulation No. 138. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of Quiet Road Transport Vehicles with regard to their reduced audibility	Application regulation	of Geneva 29/03/2016	10/5/16	A-4789
XI-B-16-139	United Nations Regulation No. 139. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of passenger cars with regard to Brake Assist Systems (BAS)	Application regulation	of Geneva 14/07/2016	1/22/17	A-4789
XI-B-16-14	United Nations Regulation No. 14. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of vehicles with regard to safety-belt anchorages	Succession	Geneva 01/04/1970	4/1/98	A-4789
XI-B-16-140	United Nations Regulation No. 140. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of passenger cars with regard to Electronic Stability Control (ESC) systems	Application regulation	of Geneva 14/07/2016	1/22/17	A-4789
XI-B-16-141	United Nations Regulation No. 141. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of vehicles with regard to their Tyre Pressure Monitoring Systems (TPMS)	Application regulation	of Geneva 14/07/2016	1/22/17	A-4789
XI-B-16-142	United Nations Regulation No. 142. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of motor vehicles with regard to the installation of their tyres	Application regulation	of Geneva 14/07/2016	1/22/17	A-4789
XI-B-16-143	United Nations Regulation No. 143. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of Heavy Duty Dual-Fuel Engine Retrofit Systems (HDDF-ERS) to be installed on heavy duty diesel engines and vehicles	Application regulation	of Geneva 13/12/2016	6/19/17	A-4789
XI-B-16-144	United Nations Regulation No. 144. Uniform provisions concerning: Ia. Accident Emergency Call Components (AECC); Ib. Accident Emergency Call Devices (AECD) which are intended to be fitted to vehicles of categories M ₁ and N ₁ ; II. Vehicles with regard to their Accident Emergency Call Systems (AECS) when equipped with an AECD of an approved type; III. Vehicles with regard to their Accident Emergency Call Systems (AECS) when equipped with an AECD of non approved type	Application regulation	of Geneva 15/11/2017	7/19/18	A-4789
XI-B-16-145	United Nations Regulation No. 145. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of vehicles with regard to ISOFIX anchorage systems, ISOFIX top tether anchorages and i-Size seating positions	Application regulation	of Geneva 15/11/2017	7/19/18	A-4789
XI-B-16-146	United Nations Regulation No. 146. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of motor vehicles and their components with regard to the safety-related performance of hydrogen-fuelled vehicles of categories L ₁ , L ₂ , L ₃ , L ₄ and L ₅	Application regulation	of Geneva 22/06/2018	1/2/19	A-4789
XI-B-16-147	United Nations Regulation No. 147. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of mechanical coupling components of combinations of agricultural vehicles	Application regulation	of Geneva 22/06/2018	1/2/19	A-4789
XI-B-16-148	United Nations Regulation No. 148. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of light-signalling devices (lamps) for power-driven vehicles and their trailers	Application regulation	of Geneva 24/04/2019	11/15/19	N/A
XI-B-16-149	United Nations Regulation No. 149. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of road illumination devices (lamps) and systems for power-driven vehicles	Application regulation	of Geneva 24/04/2019	11/15/19	N/A
XI-B-16-150	United Nations Regulation No. 150. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of retro-reflective devices and markings for power-driven vehicles and their trailers	Application regulation	of Geneva 24/04/2019	11/15/19	N/A
XI-B-16-151	United Nations Regulation No. 151. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of motor vehicles with regard to the Blind Spot Information System for the Detection of Bicycles	Application regulation	of Geneva 24/04/2019	11/15/19	N/A
XI-B-16-152	Uniform provisions concerning the approval of motor vehicles with regard to the Advanced Emergency Braking System (AEBS) for M ₁ and N ₁ vehicles	Application regulation	of Geneva 26/06/2019	1/22/20	N/A
XI-B-16-16	United Nations Regulation No. 16. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of: I. Safety-belts, restraint systems, child restraint systems and ISOFIX child restraint systems for occupants of power-driven vehicles	Succession	Geneva 01/12/1970	4/1/98	A-4789

Chapter Number	Full title of the treaty	Action type	Date and place of conclusion	Date of deposit	Registration number
	II. Vehicles equipped with safety-belts, safety-belt reminder, restraint systems, child restraint systems, ISOFIX child restraint systems and i-Size child restraint systems				
XI-B-16-19	United Nations Regulation No. 19. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of power-driven vehicle front fog lamps	Succession	Geneva 01/03/1971	4/1/98	A-4789
XI-B-16-21	United Nations Regulation No. 21. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of vehicles with regard to their interior fittings	Succession	Geneva 01/12/1971	4/1/98	A-4789
XI-B-16-23	United Nations Regulation No. 23. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of reversing and manoeuvring lamps for power-driven vehicles and their trailers	Succession	Geneva 01/12/1971	4/1/98	A-4789
XI-B-16-26	United Nations Regulation No. 26. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of vehicles with regard to their external projections	Succession	Geneva 01/07/1972	4/1/98	A-4789
XI-B-16-3	United Nations Regulation No. 3. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of retro-reflecting devices for power-driven vehicles and their trailers	Succession	Geneva 01/11/1963	4/1/98	A-4789
XI-B-16-37	United Nations Regulation No. 37. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of filament light sources for use in approved lamps of power-driven vehicles and of their trailers	Succession	Geneva 01/02/1978	4/1/98	A-4789
XI-B-16-38	United Nations Regulation No. 38. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of rear fog lamps for power-driven vehicles and their trailers	Succession	Geneva 01/08/1978	4/1/98	A-4789
XI-B-16-4	United Nations Regulation No. 4. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of devices for the illumination of rear registration plates of power-driven vehicles and their trailers	Succession	Geneva 15/04/1964	4/1/98	A-4789
XI-B-16-44	United Nations Regulation No. 44. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of restraining devices for child occupants of power-driven vehicles ("Child Restraint Systems")	Application of regulation	Geneva 01/02/1981	6/20/02	A-4789
XI-B-16-45	United Nations Regulation No. 45. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of headlamp cleaners, and of power-driven vehicles with regard to headlamp cleaners	Application of regulation	Geneva 01/07/1981	6/20/02	A-4789
XI-B-16-46	United Nations Regulation No. 46. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of devices for indirect vision and of motor vehicles with regard to the installation of these devices	Application of regulation	Geneva 01/09/1981	6/20/02	A-4789
XI-B-16-47	United Nations Regulation No. 47. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of mopeds equipped with a positive-ignition engine with regard to the emission of gaseous pollutants by the engine	Succession	Geneva 01/11/1981	4/1/98	A-4789
XI-B-16-48	United Nations Regulation No. 48. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of vehicles with regard to the installation of lighting and light-signalling devices	Succession	Geneva 01/01/1982	4/1/98	A-4789
XI-B-16-49	United Nations Regulation No. 49. Uniform provisions concerning the measures to be taken against the emission of gaseous and particulate pollutants from compression-ignition engines and positive ignition engines for use in vehicles	Succession	Geneva 15/04/1982	4/1/98	A-4789
XI-B-16-50	United Nations Regulation No. 50. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of front position lamps, rear position lamps, stop lamps, direction indicators and rear-registration-plate illuminating devices for vehicles of category L	Succession	Geneva 01/06/1982	4/1/98	A-4789
XI-B-16-53	United Nations Regulation No. 53. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of category L3 vehicles with regard to the installation of lighting and light-signalling devices	Succession	Geneva 01/02/1983	4/1/98	A-4789
XI-B-16-58	United Nations Regulation No. 58. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of: I. Rear underrun protective devices (RUPDs); II. Vehicles with regard to the installation of an RUPD of an approved type; III. Vehicles with regard to their rear underrun protection (RUP)	Succession	Geneva 01/07/1983	4/1/98	A-4789
XI-B-16-6	United Nations Regulation No. 6. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of direction indicators for power-driven vehicles and their trailers	Succession	Geneva 15/10/1967	4/1/98	A-4789

Chapter Number	Full title of the treaty	Action type	Date and place of conclusion	Date of deposit	Registration number
XI-B-16-64	United Nations Regulation No. 64. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of vehicles with regard to their equipment which may include: a temporary use spare unit, run flat tyres and/or a run flat system and/or extended mobility tyres	Application regulation of	Geneva 01/10/1985	6/20/02	A-4789
XI-B-16-67	United Nations Regulation No. 67. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of: I. Specific equipment of motor vehicles using liquefied petroleum gases in their propulsion system; II. A vehicle fitted with specific equipment for the use of liquefied petroleum gases in its propulsion system with regard to the installation of such equipment	Application regulation of	Geneva 01/06/1987	6/20/02	A-4789
XI-B-16-7	United Nations Regulation No. 7. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of front and rear position lamps, stop-lamps and end-outline marker lamps for motor vehicles and their trailers	Succession	Geneva 15/10/1967	4/1/98	A-4789
XI-B-16-72	United Nations Regulation No. 72. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of motor cycle headlamps emitting an asymmetrical passing beam and a driving beam and equipped with halogen lamps (HS1 lamps)	Application regulation of	Geneva 15/02/1988	6/20/02	A-4789
XI-B-16-75	United Nations Regulation No. 75. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of pneumatic tyres for L-category vehicles	Application regulation of	Geneva 01/04/1988	6/20/02	A-4789
XI-B-16-76	United Nations Regulation No. 76. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of headlamps for mopeds emitting a driving beam and a passing beam	Application regulation of	Geneva 01/07/1988	6/20/02	A-4789
XI-B-16-83	United Nations Regulation No. 83. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of vehicles with regard to the emission of pollutants according to engine fuel requirements	Application regulation of	Geneva 05/11/1989	6/20/02	A-4789
XI-B-16-98	United Nations Regulation No. 98. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of motor vehicle headlamps equipped with gas-discharge light sources	Application regulation of	Geneva 15/04/1996	6/20/02	A-4789
XI-B-16-99	United Nations Regulation No. 99. Uniform provisions concerning the approval of gas-discharge light sources for use in approved lamps of power-driven vehicles	Application regulation of	Geneva 15/04/1996	6/20/02	A-4789
XI-B-19	Convention on Road Traffic	Succession	Vienna 08/11/1968	8/18/93	I-15705
XI-B-20	Convention on Road Signs and Signals	Succession	Vienna 08/11/1968	12/20/99	I-16743
XI-B-21	European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles Engaged in International Road Transport (AETR)	Succession	Geneva 01/07/1970	11/10/99	I-14533
XI-B-22	Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be used for such Carriage (ATP)	Succession	Geneva 01/09/1970	12/20/99	I-15121
XI-B-23	European Agreement supplementing the Convention on road traffic opened for signature at Vienna on 8 November 1968	Succession	Geneva 01/05/1971	12/20/99	I-17847
XI-B-24	European Agreement supplementing the Convention on Road Signs and Signals	Succession	Geneva 01/05/1971	12/20/99	I-17935
XI-B-25	Protocol on Road Markings, additional to the European Agreement supplementing the Convention on Road Signs and Signals	Succession	Geneva 01/03/1973	12/20/99	I-23345
XI-B-28	European Agreement on main international traffic arteries (AGR)	Succession	Geneva 15/11/1975	12/20/99	I-21618
XI-C-3	European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC)	Succession	Geneva 31/05/1985	10/5/94	I-26540
XII-1	Convention on the International Maritime Organization	Acceptance	Geneva 06/03/1948	10/13/93	I-4214
XIV Charter – Educational and Cultural Matters					
XIV-1	Agreement for Facilitating the International Circulation of Visual and Auditory Materials of an Educational, Scientific and Cultural Character	Succession	Lake Success New York 15/07/1949	9/2/97	I-2631
XIV-2	Agreement on the Importation of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Materials	Succession	Lake Success New York 22/11/1950	9/2/97	I-1734
XIV-3	International Convention for the Protection of Performers, Producers of Phonograms and Broadcasting Organisations	Accession	Rome 26/10/1961	12/2/97	I-7247

Chapter Number	Full title of the treaty	Action type	Date and place of conclusion	Date of deposit	Registration number
XIV-4	Convention for the Protection of Producers of Phonograms against Unauthorized Duplication of their Phonograms	Accession	Geneva 29/10/1971	12/2/97	I-12430
XIV-5	Protocol to the Agreement on the Importation of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Materials of 22 November 1950	Succession	Nairobi 26/11/1976	9/2/97	I-20669
XIV-7	Statutes of the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology	Accession	Madrid 13/09/1983	4/27/94	I-30673
XVI Charter – Status of women					
XVI-1	Convention on the Political Rights of Women	Succession	New York 31/03/1953	1/18/94	I-2613
XVI-2	Convention on the Nationality of Married Women	Succession	New York 20/02/1957	4/20/94	I-4468
XVI-3	Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages	Succession	New York 10/12/1962	1/18/94	I-7525
XVIII – Penal matters					
XVIII-3	Slavery Convention	Succession	Geneva 25/09/1926	1/18/94	LoN-1414
XVIII-4	Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery	Succession	Geneva 07/09/1956	1/18/94	I-3822
XVIII-5	International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages	Succession	New York 17/12/1979	3/12/98	I-21931
XVIII-7	Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents	Succession	New York 14/12/1973	3/12/98	I-15410
XVIII-8	Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel	Accession	New York 09/12/1994	3/6/02	I-35457
XVIII-9	International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings	Signature	New York 15/12/1997	12/16/98	I-37517
XVIII-9	International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings	Ratification	New York 15/12/1997	8/30/04	I-37517
XVIII-10	Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court	Ratification	Rome 17/07/1998	3/6/02	I-38544
XVIII-10	Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court	Signature	Rome 17/07/1998	10/7/98	I-38544
XVIII-10	Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court	Notification	Rome 17/07/1998	5/27/04	I-38544
XVIII-10-a	Amendment to article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court	Ratification	Kampala 10/06/2010	3/1/16	A-38544
XVIII-10-b	Amendments on the crime of aggression to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court	Ratification	Kampala 11/06/2010	3/1/16	A-38544
XVIII-11	International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism	Ratification	New York 09/12/1999	8/30/04	I-38349
XVIII-11	International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism	Signature	New York 09/12/1999	1/31/00	I-38349
XVIII-12	United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime	Ratification	New York 15/11/2000	1/12/05	I-39574
XVIII-12	United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime	Signature	New York 15/11/2000	12/12/00	I-39574
XVIII-12-a	Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime	Ratification	New York 15/11/2000	1/12/05	A-39574
XVIII-12-a	Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime	Signature	New York 15/11/2000	12/12/00	A-39574
XVIII-12-b	Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime	Ratification	New York 15/11/2000	1/12/05	A-39574
XVIII-12-b	Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime	Signature	New York 15/11/2000	12/12/00	A-39574
XVIII-12-c	Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime	Accession	New York 31/05/2001	9/14/07	A-39574
XVIII-13	Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Criminal Court	Accession	New York 09/09/2002	10/19/05	I-40446

Chapter Number	Full title of the treaty	Action type	Date and place of conclusion	Date of deposit	Registration number
XVIII-14	United Nations Convention against Corruption	Ratification	New York 31/10/2003	4/13/07	I-42146
XVIII-14	United Nations Convention against Corruption	Notification	New York 31/10/2003	4/16/08	I-42146
XVIII-14	United Nations Convention against Corruption	Notification	New York 31/10/2003	4/16/08	I-42146
XVIII-14	United Nations Convention against Corruption	Signature	New York 31/10/2003	8/18/05	I-42146
XVIII-15	International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism	Signature	New York 13/04/2005	9/16/05	I-44004
XVIII-15	International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism	Ratification	New York 13/04/2005	3/19/07	I-44004
XX – Maintenance Obligations					
XX-1	Convention on the Recovery Abroad of Maintenance	Designation of authorities	New York 20/06/1956	4/6/00	I-3850
XX-1	Convention on the Recovery Abroad of Maintenance	Succession	New York 20/06/1956	3/10/94	I-3850
XXI – Law of the sea					
XXI-6	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea	Succession	Montego Bay 10/12/1982	8/19/94	I-31363
XXI-6-a	Agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982	Provisional application by virtue of signature, adoption of the Agreement or accession thereto	New York 28/07/1994	11/16/94	I-31364
XXI-6-a	Agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982	Consent to be bound	New York 28/07/1994	8/19/94	I-31364
XXI-9	Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Seabed Authority	Signature	Kingston 27/03/1998	9/17/98	I-39357
XXII – Commercial Arbitration and Mediation					
XXII-1	Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards	Succession	New York 10/06/1958	3/10/94	I-4739
XXII-1	Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards	Withdrawal of reservation	New York 10/06/1958	9/16/09	I-4739
XXII-2	European Convention on International Commercial Arbitration	Succession	Geneva 21/04/1961	3/10/94	I-7041
XXII-4	United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation	Signature	New York 20/12/2018	8/7/19	N/A
XXIII-1	Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties	Communication	Vienna 23/05/1969	3/3/99	I-18232
XXIII-1	Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties	Succession	Vienna 23/05/1969	7/8/99	I-18232
XXIII-1	Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties	Nomination	Vienna 23/05/1969	4/27/11	I-18232
XXIII-2	Vienna Convention on succession of States in respect of treaties	Succession	Vienna 23/08/1978	10/7/96	I-33356
XXV – Telecommunications					
XXV-1	Convention relating to the distribution of programme-carrying signals transmitted by satellite	Succession	Brussels 21/05/1974	9/2/97	I-17949
XXV-4	Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations	Signature	Tampere 18/06/1998	12/3/98	I-40906
XXVI – Disarmament					
XXVI-2	Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects (with Protocols I, II and III)	Succession	Geneva 10/10/1980	12/30/96	I-22495
XXVI-2-a	Additional Protocol to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects (Protocol IV, entitled Protocol on Blinding Laser Weapons)	Consent to be bound	Vienna 13/10/1995	3/19/07	A-22495
XXVI-2-b	Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices as amended on 3 May 1996 (Protocol II, as amended on 3 May 1996) annexed to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional	Consent to be bound	Geneva 03/05/1996	5/31/05	A-22495

Chapter Number	Full title of the treaty	Action type	Date and place of conclusion	Date of deposit	Registration number
	Weapons which may be deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects				
XXVI-2-c	Amendment to Article I of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects	Accession	Geneva 21/12/2001	7/11/07	A-22495
XXVI-2-d	Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects (Protocol V)	Consent to be bound	Geneva 28/11/2003	3/19/07	A-22495
XXVI-3	Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction	Accession	Geneva 03/09/1992	6/20/97	I-33757
XXVI-4	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty	Ratification	New York 10/09/1996	3/14/00	NIF-0
XXVI-4	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty	Signature	New York 10/09/1996	10/29/98	NIF-0
XXVI-5	Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction	Accession	Oslo 18/09/1997	9/9/98	I-35597
XXVI-6	Convention on Cluster Munitions	Signature	Dublin 30/05/2008	12/3/08	I-47713
XXVI-6	Convention on Cluster Munitions	Ratification	Dublin 30/05/2008	10/8/09	I-47713
XXVI-8	Arms Trade Treaty	Ratification	New York 02/04/2013	3/6/14	I-52373
XXVI-8	Arms Trade Treaty	Signature	New York 02/04/2013	9/25/13	I-52373
XXVII – Environment					
XXVII-1	Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution	Succession	Geneva 13/11/1979	12/30/97	I-21623
XXVII-1-a	Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution on Long-term Financing of the Co-operative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe (EMEP)	Accession	Geneva 28/09/1984	3/10/10	I-25638
XXVII-1-b	Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution on the Reduction of Sulphur Emissions or their Transboundary Fluxes by at least 30 per cent	Accession	Helsinki 08/07/1985	3/10/10	I-25247
XXVII-1-c	Protocol to the 1979 Convention on long-range transboundary air pollution concerning the control of emissions of nitrogen oxides or their transboundary fluxes	Accession	Sofia 31/10/1988	3/10/10	I-27874
XXVII-1-d	Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution concerning the Control of Emissions of Volatile Organic Compounds or their Transboundary Fluxes	Accession	Geneva 18/11/1991	3/10/10	I-34322
XXVII-1-e	Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution on Further Reduction of Sulphur Emissions	Accession	Oslo 14/06/1994	6/5/14	A-21623
XXVII-1-e	Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution on Further Reduction of Sulphur Emissions	Accession	Oslo 14/06/1994	3/10/10	A-21623
XXVII-1-f	Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution on Heavy Metals	Accession	Aarhus 24/06/1998	11/1/10	A-21623
XXVII-1-g	Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution on Persistent Organic Pollutants	Accession	Aarhus 24/06/1998	11/1/10	A-21623
XXVII-1-h	Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone	Accession	Gothenburg (Sweden) 30/11/1999	11/1/10	A-21623
XXVII-1-h	Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone	Accession	Gothenburg (Sweden) 30/11/1999	6/5/14	A-21623
XXVII-2	Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer	Succession	Vienna 22/03/1985	3/10/94	I-26164
XXVII-2-a	Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer	Succession	Montreal 16/09/1987	3/10/94	I-26369

Chapter Number	Full title of the treaty	Action type	Date and place of conclusion	Date of deposit	Registration number
XXVII-2-b	Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer	Ratification	London 29/06/1990	11/9/98	A-26369
XXVII-2-c	Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer	Ratification	Copenhagen 25/11/1992	11/9/98	A-26369
XXVII-2-d	Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer	Accession	Montreal 17/09/1997	8/31/99	A-26369
XXVII-2-e	Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer	Accession	Beijing 03/12/1999	5/23/02	A-26369
XXVII-2-f	Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer	Ratification	Kigali 15/10/2016	3/12/20	A-26369
XXVII-3	Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal	Accession	Basel 22/03/1989	7/16/97	I-28911
XXVII-3-a	Amendment to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal	Ratification	Geneva 22/09/1995	11/18/04	NIF-0
XXVII-3-b	Basel Protocol on Liability and Compensation for Damage Resulting from Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal	Signature	Basel 10/12/1999	4/3/00	NIF-0
XXVII-4	Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context	Accession	Espoo 25/02/1991	8/31/99	I-34028
XXVII-4-b	Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context	Ratification	Kiev 21/05/2003	9/13/13	A-34028
XXVII-4-b	Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context	Signature	Kiev 21/05/2003	5/21/03	A-34028
XXVII-5	Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes	Accession	Helsinki 17/03/1992	7/28/15	I-33207
XXVII-5-b	Amendments to Articles 25 and 26 of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes	Accession	Madrid 28/11/2003	7/28/15	A-33207
XXVII-6	Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents	Accession	Helsinki 17/03/1992	3/2/10	I-36605
XXVII-7	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	Accession	New York 09/05/1992	1/28/98	I-30822
XXVII-7-a	Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	Accession	Kyoto 11/12/1997	11/18/04	A-30822
XXVII-7-c	Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol	Acceptance	Doha 08/12/2012	10/18/19	N/A
XXVII-7-d	Paris Agreement	Ratification	Paris 12/12/2015	1/9/18	I-54113
XXVII-7-d	Paris Agreement	Signature	Paris 12/12/2015	4/22/16	I-54113
XXVII-8	Convention on Biological Diversity	Accession	Rio de Janeiro 05/06/1992	12/2/97	I-30619
XXVII-8-a	Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity	Ratification	Montreal 29/01/2000	6/14/05	A-30619
XXVII-8-a	Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity	Signature	Montreal 29/01/2000	7/26/00	A-30619
XXVII-10	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa	Accession	Paris 14/10/1994	3/6/02	I-33480
XXVII-13	Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters	Accession	Aarhus, Denmark 25/06/1998	7/22/99	I-37770
XXVII-13-a	Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters	Ratification	Kiev 21/05/2003	11/2/10	A-37770
XXVII-13-a	Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters	Signature	Kiev 21/05/2003	5/21/03	A-37770
XXVII-14	Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade	Accession	Rotterdam 10/09/1998	8/12/10	I-39973
XXVII-15	Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants	Signature	Stockholm 22/05/2001	5/23/01	I-40214
XXVII-15	Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants	Ratification	Stockholm 22/05/2001	5/27/04	I-40214

Chapter Number	Full title of the treaty	Action type	Date and place of conclusion	Date of deposit	Registration number
XXVII-17	Minamata Convention on Mercury	Ratification	Kumamoto 10/10/2013	3/12/20	I-54669
XXVII-17	Minamata Convention on Mercury	Signature	Kumamoto 10/10/2013	7/25/14	I-54669
XXIX-1	Agreement on Succession Issues	Ratification	Vienna 29/06/2001	3/6/02	I-40296
XXIX-1	Agreement on Succession Issues	Signature	Vienna 29/06/2001	6/29/01	I-40296
PARTII-3	Protocol relating to a Certain Case of Statelessness	Succession	The Hague 12/04/1930	1/18/94	LoN-4138
PARTII-6	Protocol on Arbitration Clauses	Succession	Geneva 24/09/1923	3/10/94	LoN-678
PARTII-7	Convention on the Execution of Foreign Arbitral Awards	Succession	Geneva 26/09/1927	3/10/94	LoN-2096
PARTII-14-a	International Convention for the Suppression of Counterfeiting Currency	Succession	Geneva 20/04/1929	3/7/05	LoN-2623

OSCE human dimension commitments and key benchmarks for EU accession

OSCE Human Dimension Commitments, Volume 1, Thematic Compilation (third edition - 2012)
<https://www.osce.org/odihr/76894>

OSCE Human Dimension Commitments, Volume 2, Chronological Compilation (third edition - 2012)
<https://www.osce.org/odihr/76895>

Date	Key benchmarks on EU Accession
24 Jan 2000	The European Commission adopts directives regarding cooperation and negotiations for potential membership
March 2000	Opening of the EU Delegation in Skopje
5 Apr 2000	Start of 1st round of negotiations on the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA)
9 Apr 2001	SAA and Interim Agreement on Trade and Trade Issues signed
1 Apr 2004	SAA enters into force following the ratifications by all the EU Member States
22 Apr 2004	North Macedonia submitted its application for EU membership
3 Jun 2004	1st meeting of the Stabilisation and Association Committee held in Skopje
14 Sep 2004	1st meeting of the Stabilisation and Association Council in Brussels
17 Dec 2005	The European Council in Brussels approves the candidate status
9 Nov 2006	The European Commission decides to start visa facilitation negotiations with the Republic
29 Mar 2012	European Commission launches a High-Level Accession Dialogue
12 Jun 2018	An agreement was reached between Greek PM Alexis Tsipras and Macedonian PM Zoran Zaev, known as Prespa agreement, under which the country would be renamed to the „Republic of North Macedonia“
18 Oct 2019	European Council decides not to open negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania for the 3rd time
26 Mar 2020	Council of the European Union and European Council support opening of accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania. The Commission is tasked with drafting the negotiating framework – methodology
27 Mar 2020	North Macedonia officially became the 30th member of NATO
1 Jul 2020	EU Accession Negotiation Framework published

International Labour Organization (ILO)

1. **C002** - Unemployment Convention, 1919 (No. 2) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Instrument with interim status)
2. **C003** - Maternity Protection Convention, 1919 (No. 3) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Instrument with interim status)
3. **C008** - Unemployment Indemnity (Shipwreck) Convention, 1920 (No. 8) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Outdated instrument)
4. **C009** - Placing of Seamen Convention, 1920 (No. 9) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Outdated instrument)
5. **C011** - Right of Association (Agriculture) Convention, 1921 (No. 11) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Instrument with interim status)
6. **C012** - Workmen's Compensation (Agriculture) Convention, 1921 (No. 12) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Instrument with interim status)
7. **C013** - White Lead (Painting) Convention, 1921 (No. 13) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Instrument to be revised)
8. **C014** - Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921 (No. 14) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
9. **C016** - Medical Examination of Young Persons (Sea) Convention, 1921 (No. 16) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Outdated instrument)
10. **C017** - Workmen's Compensation (Accidents) Convention, 1925 (No. 17) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Outdated instrument)
11. **C018** - Workmen's Compensation (Occupational Diseases) Convention, 1925 (No. 18) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Outdated instrument)
12. **C019** - Equality of Treatment (Accident Compensation) Convention, 1925 (No. 19) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Instrument with interim status)
13. **C022** - Seamen's Articles of Agreement Convention, 1926 (No. 22) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Outdated instrument)
14. **C023** - Repatriation of Seamen Convention, 1926 (No. 23) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Outdated instrument)
15. **C024** - Sickness Insurance (Industry) Convention, 1927 (No. 24) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Outdated instrument)
16. **C025** - Sickness Insurance (Agriculture) Convention, 1927 (No. 25) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Outdated instrument)
17. **C027** - Marking of Weight (Packages Transported by Vessels) Convention, 1929 (No. 27) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Instrument to be revised)
18. **C029** - Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) (Fundamental) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
19. **C032** - Protection against Accidents (Dockers) Convention (Revised), 1932 (No. 32) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Outdated instrument)
20. **C045** - Underground Work (Women) Convention, 1935 (No. 45) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Instrument with interim status)
21. **C048** - Maintenance of Migrants' Pension Rights Convention, 1935 (No. 48) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Outdated instrument)
22. **C053** - Officers' Competency Certificates Convention, 1936 (No. 53) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Outdated instrument)
23. **C056** - Sickness Insurance (Sea) Convention, 1936 (No. 56) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Outdated instrument)

24. **C069** - Certification of Ships' Cooks Convention, 1946 (No. 69) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Instrument to be revised)
25. **C073** - Medical Examination (Seafarers) Convention, 1946 (No. 73) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Outdated instrument)
26. **C074** - Certification of Able Seamen Convention, 1946 (No. 74) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Outdated instrument)
27. **C080** - Final Articles Revision Convention, 1946 (No. 80) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Final Article Convention, not examined)
28. **C081** - Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) (Governance (Priority)) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
29. **C087** - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) (Fundamental) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
30. **C088** - Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Instrument with interim status)
31. **C089** - Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1948 (No. 89) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Instrument with interim status)
32. **C090** - Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention (Revised), 1948 (No. 90) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Instrument to be revised)
33. **C091** - Paid Vacations (Seafarers) Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 91) (Technical) In Force Ratification: **1991** (Outdated instrument)
34. **C092** - Accommodation of Crews Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 92) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Instrument with interim status)
35. **C094** - Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Convention, 1949 (No. 94) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **2010** (Up-to-date instrument)
36. **C097** - Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
37. **C098** - Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98) (Fundamental) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
38. **C100** - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) (Fundamental) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
39. **C102** - Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument) *Has accepted Parts II to VI, VIII and X. Part VI is no longer applicable as a result of the ratification of Convention No. 121.*
40. **C103** - Maternity Protection Convention (Revised), 1952 (No. 103) (Technical) Not in force - Ratification: **1991** (Outdated instrument)
41. **C105** - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105) (Fundamental) In Force - Ratification: **2003** (Up-to-date instrument)
42. **C106** - Weekly Rest (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1957 (No. 106) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
43. **C109** - Wages, Hours of Work and Manning (Sea) Convention (Revised), 1958 (No. 109) (Technical) Not in force - Ratification: **1991** (Outdated instrument)
44. **C111** - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) (Fundamental) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
45. **C113** - Medical Examination (Fishermen) Convention, 1959 (No. 113) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Instrument to be revised)
46. **C114** - Fishermen's Articles of Agreement Convention, 1959 (No. 114) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Instrument to be revised)
47. **C116** - Final Articles Revision Convention, 1961 (No. 116) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Final Article Convention, not examined)

48. **C119** - Guarding of Machinery Convention, 1963 (No. 119) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Instrument to be revised)
49. **C121** - Employment Injury Benefits Convention, 1964 [Schedule I amended in 1980] (No. 121) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
50. **C122** - Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122) (Governance (Priority)) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
51. **C126** - Accommodation of Crews (Fishermen) Convention, 1966 (No. 126) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Request for information)
52. **C129** - Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129) (Governance (Priority)) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
53. **C131** - Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
54. **C132** - Holidays with Pay Convention (Revised), 1970 (No. 132) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Instrument with interim status). *Length of holiday specified: 18 working days. Has accepted the provisions of Article 15, paragraph 1(a) and (b).*
55. **C135** - Workers' Representatives Convention, 1971 (No. 135) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
56. **C136** - Benzene Convention, 1971 (No. 136) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Instrument to be revised)
57. **C138** - Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) (Fundamental) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument) *Minimum age specified: 15 years*
58. **C139** - Occupational Cancer Convention, 1974 (No. 139) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
59. **C140** - Paid Educational Leave Convention, 1974 (No. 140) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
60. **C141** - Rural Workers' Organisations Convention, 1975 (No. 141) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **2018** (Up-to-date instrument)
61. **C142** - Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
62. **C143** - Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
63. **C144** - Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144) (Governance (Priority)) In Force - Ratification: **2005** (Up-to-date instrument)
64. **C148** - Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Convention, 1977 (No. 148) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
65. **C150** - Labour Administration Convention, 1978 (No. 150) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **2013** (Up-to-date instrument)
66. **C151** - Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **2013** (Up-to-date instrument)
67. **C154** - Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **2013** (Up-to-date instrument)
68. **C155** - Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
69. **C156** - Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
70. **C158** - Termination of Employment Convention, 1982 (No. 158) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (No conclusions)
71. **C159** - Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
72. **C161** - Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
73. **C162** - Asbestos Convention, 1986 (No. 162) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **1991** (Up-to-date instrument)
74. **C171** - Night Work Convention, 1990 (No. 171) (Technical) In Force -

Ratification: **2018** (Up-to-date instrument)

75. **C177** - Home Work Convention, 1996 (No. 177) (Technical) In Force – Ratification: **2012** (Up-to-date instrument)
76. **C181** - Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **2012** (Up-to-date instrument)
77. **C182** - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) (Fundamental) In Force - Ratification: **2002** (Up-to-date instrument)
78. **C183** - Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) (Technical) In Force - Ratification: **2012** (Up-to-date instrument). *The length of the maternity leave is 9 months in the case of 1 child, and 12 months in the case of 2 or more children*
79. **C187** - Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187) (Technical) In Force – Ratification: **2012** (Up-to-date instrument)

34 ILO conventions and protocols indicated below have not been ratified:

- C077** - Medical Examination of Young Persons (Industry) Convention, 1946 (No. 77)
- C078** - Medical Examination of Young Persons (Non-Industrial Occupations) Convention, 1946 (No. 78)
- C095** - Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95)
- C110** - Plantations Convention, 1958 (No. 110)
- C115** - Radiation Protection Convention, 1960 (No. 115)
- C118** - Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962 (No. 118)
- C120** - Hygiene (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1964 (No. 120)
- C124** - Medical Examination of Young Persons (Underground Work) Convention, 1965 (No. 124)
- C128** - Invalidity, Old-Age and Survivors' Benefits Convention, 1967 (No. 128)
- C130** - Medical Care and Sickness Benefits Convention, 1969 (No. 130)
- C147** - Merchant Shipping (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 147)
- C149** - Nursing Personnel Convention, 1977 (No. 149)
- C152** - Occupational Safety and Health (Dock Work) Convention, 1979 (No. 152)
- C157** - Maintenance of Social Security Rights Convention, 1982 (No. 157)
- C160** - Labour Statistics Convention, 1985 (No. 160)
- C163** - Seafarers' Welfare Convention, 1987 (No. 163)
- C164** - Health Protection and Medical Care (Seafarers) Convention, 1987 (No. 164)
- C165** - Social Security (Seafarers) Convention (Revised), 1987 (No. 165)
- C167** - Safety and Health in Construction Convention, 1988 (No. 167)
- C168** - Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention, 1988 (No. 168)
- C169** - Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169)
- C170** - Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170)
- C172** - Working Conditions (Hotels and Restaurants) Convention, 1991 (No. 172)
- C173** - Protection of Workers' Claims (Employer's Insolvency) Convention, 1992 (No. 173)
- C174** - Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174)
- C175** - Part-Time Work Convention, 1994 (No. 175)
- C176** - Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176)
- C178** - Labour Inspection (Seafarers) Convention, 1996 (No. 178)
- C184** - Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184)
- C185** - Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003, as amended (No. 185)
- C188** - Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188)
- C189** - Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)

- C190** - Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190)
MLC, 2006 - Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006)
P029 - Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930
P081 - Protocol of 1995 to the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947
P089 - Protocol of 1990 to the Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1948
P110 - Protocol of 1982 to the Plantations Convention, 1958
P147 - Protocol of 1996 to the Merchant Shipping (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1976
P155 - Protocol of 2002 to the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981

Council of Europe

No.	Title, signature, ratification / entry into force for North Macedonia	Opening of the treaty	Entry into Force	E.	N.	U.
001	Statute of the Council of Europe Ratification: 09/11/1995	05/05/1949	03/08/1949			
002	General Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Council of Europe Ratification: 10/04/1997	02/09/1949	10/09/1952			
005	Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms Signature: 09/11/1995 Ratification: 10/04/1997	04/11/1950	03/09/1953			U.
009	Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms Signature: 14/06/1996 Ratification: 10/04/1997	20/03/1952	18/05/1954			
010	Protocol to the General Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Council of Europe Ratification: 10/04/1997	06/11/1952	11/07/1956			
015	European Convention on the Equivalence of Diplomas leading to Admission to Universities Ratification: 30/03/1994	11/12/1953	20/04/1954	E.	N.	
016	European Convention relating to the Formalities required for Patent Applications Signature: 24/02/1998 Ratification: 24/02/1998	11/12/1953	01/06/1955	E.	N.	
018	European Cultural Convention Ratification: 24/11/1995	19/12/1954	05/05/1955	E.		
021	European Convention on the Equivalence of Periods of University Study Ratification: 30/03/1994	15/12/1956	18/09/1957	E.	N.	
024	European Convention on Extradition Signature: 28/07/1999 Ratification: 28/07/1999	13/12/1957	18/04/1960	E.	N.	
030	European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Signature: 28/07/1999 Ratification: 28/07/1999	20/04/1959	12/06/1962	E.	N.	
032	European Convention on the Academic Recognition of University Qualifications Ratification: 30/03/1994	14/12/1959	27/11/1961	E.	N.	
035	European Social Charter Signature: 05/05/1998 Ratification: 31/03/2005	18/10/1961	26/02/1965			
037	European Agreement on Travel by Young Persons on Collective Passports between the Member Countries of the Council of Europe Signature: 24/02/1998 Ratification: 24/02/1998	16/12/1961	17/01/1962	E.	N.	
041	Convention on the Liability of Hotel-keepers concerning the Property of their Guests Ratification: 30/03/1994	17/12/1962	15/02/1967	E.	N.	
044	Protocol No. 2 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, conferring upon the European Court of Human Rights competence to give advisory opinions	06/05/1963	21/09/1970			

No.	Title, signature, ratification / entry into force for North Macedonia	Opening of the treaty	Entry into Force	E.	N.	U.
	Signature: 09/11/1995 Ratification: 10/04/1997 Entry into Force: 10/04/1997					
045	Protocol No. 3 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, amending Articles 29, 30 and 34 of the Convention Signature: 09/11/1995 Ratification: 10/04/1997 Entry into Force: 10/04/1997	06/05/1963	21/09/1970			
046	Protocol No. 4 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, securing certain rights and freedoms other than those already included in the Convention and in the first Protocol thereto Signature: 14/06/1996 Ratification: 10/04/1997 Entry into Force: 10/04/1997	16/09/1963	02/05/1968			
047	Convention on the Unification of Certain Points of Substantive Law on Patents for Invention Signature: 24/02/1998 Ratification: 24/02/1998 Entry into Force: 25/05/1998	27/11/1963	01/08/1980	E.	N.	
049	Protocol to the European Convention on the Equivalence of Diplomas leading to Admission to Universities Ratification: 30/03/1994 Entry into Force: 01/05/1994	03/06/1964	04/07/1964	E.	N.	
050	Convention on the Elaboration of a European Pharmacopoeia Ratification: 30/03/1994 Entry into Force: 01/07/1994	22/07/1964	08/05/1974	E.		U.
051	European Convention on the Supervision of Conditionally Sentenced or Conditionally Released Offenders Ratification: 30/03/1994 Entry into Force: 01/07/1994	30/11/1964	22/08/1975	E.	N.	
055	Protocol No. 5 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, amending Articles 22 and 40 of the Convention Signature: 09/11/1995 Ratification: 10/04/1997 Entry into Force: 10/04/1997	20/01/1966	20/12/1971			
058	European Convention on the Adoption of Children Signature: 03/04/2001 Ratification: 15/01/2003 Entry into Force: 16/04/2003	24/04/1967	26/04/1968	E.	N.	
062	European Convention on Information on Foreign Law Signature: 08/12/2000 Ratification: 15/01/2003 Entry into Force: 16/04/2003	07/06/1968	17/12/1969	E.	N.	
066	European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage Ratification: 30/03/1994 Entry into Force: 01/07/1994 Denunciation: 06/02/2006	06/05/1969	20/11/1970	E.	N.	
069	European Agreement on continued Payment of Scholarships to students studying abroad Ratification: 30/03/1994 Entry into Force: 01/05/1994	12/12/1969	02/10/1971	E.	N.	
073	European Convention on the Transfer of Proceedings in Criminal Matters Signature: 08/11/2001 Ratification: 29/11/2004 Entry into Force: 01/03/2005	15/05/1972	30/03/1978	E.	N.	
085	European Convention on the Legal Status of Children born out of Wedlock Signature: 03/04/2001 Ratification: 29/11/2002 Entry into Force: 01/03/2003	15/10/1975	11/08/1978	E.	N.	
086	Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Extradition Signature: 28/07/1999 Ratification: 28/07/1999 Entry into Force: 26/10/1999	15/10/1975	20/08/1979	E.	N.	
087	European Convention for the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes Ratification: 30/03/1994 Entry into Force: 01/10/1994	10/03/1976	10/09/1978	E.	N.	U.
088	European Convention on the International Effects of Deprivation of the Right to Drive a Motor Vehicle Ratification: 30/03/1994 Entry into Force: 01/07/1994	03/06/1976	28/04/1983	E.	N.	
090	European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism Signature: 08/11/2001 Ratification: 29/11/2004 Entry into Force: 01/03/2005	27/01/1977	04/08/1978			
092	European Agreement on the Transmission of Applications for Legal Aid Signature: 08/06/2000 Ratification: 15/01/2003 Entry into Force: 16/02/2003	27/01/1977	28/02/1977	E.	N.	
097	Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Information on Foreign Law Signature: 08/12/2000 Ratification: 15/01/2003 Entry into Force: 16/04/2003	15/03/1978	31/08/1979	E.	N.	
098	Second Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Extradition Signature: 28/07/1999 Ratification: 28/07/1999 Entry into Force: 26/10/1999	17/03/1978	05/06/1983	E.	N.	
099	Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Signature: 28/07/1999 Ratification: 28/07/1999 Entry into Force: 26/10/1999	17/03/1978	12/04/1982	E.	N.	
102	European Convention for the Protection of Animals for Slaughter Ratification: 30/03/1994 Entry into Force: 01/10/1994	10/05/1979	11/06/1982	E.	N.	U.
104	Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats	19/09/1979	01/06/1982	E.	N.	U.

No.	Title, signature, ratification / entry into force for North Macedonia	Opening of the treaty	Entry into Force	E.	N.	U.
	Signature: 17/12/1998 Ratification: 17/12/1998 Entry into Force: 01/04/1999					
105	European Convention on Recognition and Enforcement of Decisions concerning Custody of Children and on Restoration of Custody of Children Signature: 03/04/2001 Ratification: 29/11/2002 Entry into Force: 01/03/2003	20/05/1980	01/09/1983	E.	N.	
108	Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data Signature: 24/03/2006 Ratification: 24/03/2006 Entry into Force: 01/07/2006	28/01/1981	01/10/1985	E.	N.	
112	Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons Signature: 28/07/1999 Ratification: 28/07/1999 Entry into Force: 01/11/1999	21/03/1983	01/07/1985	E.	N.	
114	Protocol No. 6 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms concerning the Abolition of the Death Penalty Signature: 14/06/1996 Ratification: 10/04/1997 Entry into Force: 01/05/1997	28/04/1983	01/03/1985			
117	Protocol No. 7 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms Signature: 14/06/1996 Ratification: 10/04/1997 Entry into Force: 01/07/1997	22/11/1984	01/11/1988			
118	Protocol No. 8 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms Signature: 09/11/1995 Ratification: 10/04/1997 Entry into Force: 10/04/1997	19/03/1985	01/01/1990			
120	European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular at Football Matches Ratification: 30/03/1994 Entry into Force: 01/05/1994	19/08/1985	01/11/1985	E.	N.	
121	Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe Ratification: 30/03/1994 Entry into Force: 01/07/1994	03/10/1985	01/12/1987	E.	N.	U.
122	European Charter of Local Self-Government Signature: 14/06/1996 Ratification: 06/06/1997 Entry into Force: 01/10/1997	15/10/1985	01/09/1988			
123	European Convention for the Protection of Vertebrate Animals used for Experimental and other Scientific Purposes Signature: 22/01/2004 Ratification: 22/01/2004 Entry into Force: 01/08/2004	18/03/1986	01/01/1991	E.	N.	U.
124	European Convention on the Recognition of the Legal Personality of International Non-Governmental Organisations Signature: 19/05/2000 Ratification: 13/07/2000 Entry into Force: 01/11/2000	24/04/1986	01/01/1991	E.	N.	
126	European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment Signature: 14/06/1996 Ratification: 06/06/1997 Entry into Force: 01/10/1997	26/11/1987	01/02/1989	E.	N.	
127	Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters Signature: 27/06/2018 Ratification: 30/09/2019 Entry into Force: 01/01/2020	25/01/1988	01/04/1995	E.	N.	
128	Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter Signature: 05/05/1998	05/05/1988	04/09/1992			
132	European Convention on Transfrontier Television Signature: 30/05/2001 Ratification: 18/11/2003 Entry into Force: 01/03/2004	05/05/1989	01/05/1993	E.	N.	U.
135	Anti-Doping Convention Ratification: 30/03/1994 Entry into Force: 01/05/1994	16/11/1989	01/03/1990	E.	N.	
141	Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime Signature: 14/12/1999 Ratification: 19/05/2000 Entry into Force: 01/09/2000	08/11/1990	01/09/1993	E.	N.	
142	Protocol amending the European Social Charter Signature: 05/05/1998 Ratification: 31/03/2005	21/10/1991				
143	European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Revised) Signature: 06/02/2006 Ratification: 06/02/2006 Entry into Force: 07/08/2006	16/01/1992	25/05/1995	E.	N.	U.
147	European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production Signature: 11/04/2002 Ratification: 03/06/2003 Entry into Force: 01/10/2003	02/10/1992	01/04/1994	E.		U.
148	European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages Signature: 25/07/1996	05/11/1992	01/03/1998	E.	N.	
151	Protocol No. 1 to the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment Signature: 14/06/1996 Ratification: 06/06/1997 Entry into Force: 01/03/2002	04/11/1993	01/03/2002			
152	Protocol No. 2 to the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	04/11/1993	01/03/2002			

No.	Title, signature, ratification / entry into force for North Macedonia	Opening of the treaty	Entry into Force	E.	N.	U.
	Signature: 14/06/1996 Ratification: 06/06/1997 Entry into Force: 01/03/2002					
155	Protocol No. 11 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, restructuring the control machinery established thereby Signature: 09/11/1995 Ratification: 10/04/1997 Entry into Force: 01/11/1998	11/05/1994	01/11/1998			
157	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities Signature: 25/07/1996 Ratification: 10/04/1997 Entry into Force: 01/02/1998	01/02/1995	01/02/1998	E.	N.	
160	European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights Signature: 03/04/2001 Ratification: 15/01/2003 Entry into Force: 01/05/2003	25/01/1996	01/07/2000	E.	N.	U.
161	European Agreement relating to persons participating in proceedings of the European Court of Human Rights Signature: 16/11/1998	05/03/1996	01/01/1999			
162	Sixth Protocol to the General Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Council of Europe Signature: 03/04/2001 Ratification: 29/11/2002 Entry into Force: 30/12/2002	05/03/1996	01/11/1998			
163	European Social Charter (revised) Signature: 27/05/2009 Ratification: 06/01/2012 Entry into Force: 01/03/2012	03/05/1996	01/07/1999			
164	Convention for the protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine: Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine Signature: 04/04/1997 Ratification: 03/09/2009 Entry into Force: 01/01/2010	04/04/1997	01/12/1999	E.	N.	U.
165	Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region Signature: 11/04/1997 Ratification: 29/11/2002 Entry into Force: 01/01/2003	11/04/1997	01/02/1999	E.	N.	U.
166	European Convention on Nationality Signature: 06/11/1997 Ratification: 03/06/2003 Entry into Force: 01/10/2003	06/11/1997	01/03/2000	E.	N.	
167	Additional Protocol to the Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons Signature: 28/07/1999 Ratification: 28/07/1999 Entry into Force: 01/06/2000	18/12/1997	01/06/2000	E.	N.	
168	Additional Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine, on the Prohibition of Cloning Human Beings Signature: 12/01/1998 Ratification: 03/09/2009 Entry into Force: 01/01/2010	12/01/1998	01/03/2001	E.	N.	U.
170	Protocol of Amendment to the European Convention for the Protection of Vertebrate Animals used for Experimental and other Scientific Purposes Signature: 22/01/2004 Ratification: 22/01/2004 Entry into Force: 02/12/2005	22/06/1998	02/12/2005	E.	N.	U.
173	Criminal Law Convention on Corruption Signature: 28/07/1999 Ratification: 28/07/1999 Entry into Force: 01/07/2002	27/01/1999	01/07/2002	E.	N.	U.
174	Civil Law Convention on Corruption Signature: 08/06/2000 Ratification: 29/11/2002 Entry into Force: 01/11/2003	04/11/1999	01/11/2003	E.	N.	U.
176	European Landscape Convention Signature: 15/01/2003 Ratification: 18/11/2003 Entry into Force: 01/03/2004	20/10/2000	01/03/2004	E.		
177	Protocol No. 12 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms Signature: 04/11/2000 Ratification: 13/07/2004 Entry into Force: 01/04/2005	04/11/2000	01/04/2005			
181	Additional Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data, regarding supervisory authorities and transborder data flows Signature: 04/01/2008 Ratification: 26/09/2008 Entry into Force: 01/01/2009	08/11/2001	01/07/2004	E.	N.	U.
182	Second Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Signature: 08/11/2001 Ratification: 16/12/2008 Entry into Force: 01/04/2009	08/11/2001	01/02/2004	E.	N.	
185	Convention on Cybercrime Signature: 23/11/2001 Ratification: 15/09/2004 Entry into Force: 01/01/2005	23/11/2001	01/07/2004	E.	N.	
186	Additional Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine concerning Transplantation of Organs and Tissues of Human Origin Signature: 15/03/2002 Ratification: 03/09/2009 Entry into Force: 01/01/2010	24/01/2002	01/05/2006	E.	N.	U.
187	Protocol No. 13 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, concerning the abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances Signature: 03/05/2002 Ratification: 13/07/2004 Entry into Force: 01/11/2004	03/05/2002	01/07/2003			
188	Additional Protocol to the Anti-Doping Convention	12/09/2002	01/04/2004	E.	N.	

No.	Title, signature, ratification / entry into force for North Macedonia	Opening of the treaty	Entry into Force	E.	N.	U.
	Signature: 12/09/2002					
189	Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems Signature: 14/11/2005 Ratification: 14/11/2005 Entry into Force: 01/03/2006	28/01/2003	01/03/2006	E.	N.	
190	Protocol amending the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism Signature: 15/05/2003 Ratification: 14/11/2005	15/05/2003				
191	Additional Protocol to the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption Signature: 15/05/2003 Ratification: 14/11/2005 Entry into Force: 01/03/2006	15/05/2003	01/02/2005	E.	N.	U.
194	Protocol No. 14 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, amending the control system of the Convention Signature: 15/09/2004 Ratification: 15/06/2005 Entry into Force: 01/06/2010	13/05/2004	01/06/2010			
196	Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism Signature: 21/11/2006 Ratification: 23/03/2010 Entry into Force: 01/07/2010	16/05/2005	01/06/2007	E.	N.	U.
197	Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings Signature: 17/11/2005 Ratification: 27/05/2009 Entry into Force: 01/09/2009	16/05/2005	01/02/2008	E.	N.	U.
198	Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism Signature: 17/11/2005 Ratification: 27/05/2009 Entry into Force: 01/09/2009	16/05/2005	01/05/2008	E.	N.	U.
199	Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society Signature: 24/09/2010 Ratification: 08/07/2011 Entry into Force: 01/11/2011	27/10/2005	01/06/2011	E.	N.	U.
201	Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse Signature: 25/10/2007 Ratification: 11/06/2012 Entry into Force: 01/10/2012	25/10/2007	01/07/2010	E.	N.	U.
202	European Convention on the Adoption of Children (Revised) Signature: 30/04/2013	27/11/2008	01/09/2011	E.	N.	
204	Protocol No. 14bis to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms Signature: 03/09/2009 Ratification: 27/04/2010	27/05/2009	01/10/2009			
205	Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents Signature: 18/06/2009	18/06/2009		E.	N.	U.
207	Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority Signature: 21/11/2013 Ratification: 30/09/2015 Entry into Force: 01/01/2016	16/11/2009	01/06/2012			
209	Third Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Extradition Signature: 10/11/2010 Ratification: 21/11/2013 Entry into Force: 01/03/2014	10/11/2010	01/05/2012	E.	N.	
210	Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence Signature: 08/07/2011 Ratification: 23/03/2018 Entry into Force: 01/07/2018	11/05/2011	01/08/2014	E.	N.	U.
213	Protocol No. 15 amending the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms Signature: 21/11/2013 Ratification: 16/06/2016	24/06/2013				U.
217	Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism Signature: 18/01/2017	22/10/2015	01/07/2017	E.	N.	U.
218	Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events Signature: 03/07/2016	03/07/2016	01/11/2017	E.	N.	
219	Protocol amending the European Landscape Convention Ratification: 01/08/2018	01/08/2016		E.		
220	Council of Europe Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production (revised) Signature: 08/10/2018	30/01/2017	01/10/2017	E.	N.	U.
223	Protocol amending the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data Signature: 05/12/2019	10/10/2018		E.	N.	

Annex 2: Global ranking of North Macedonia against key indicators

SN	Index	Organization	Rank	Year	Rank	Year
1	Doing Business	World Bank Group	10	2019 ²³³	30	2015 ²³⁴
2	Logistics Performance Index ²³⁵	World Bank Group	81	2018	117	2014
3	Index of Economic Freedom ²³⁶	The Heritage Foundation	71.1	2019	67.1	2015
4	Sovereign Credit Rating ²³⁷	S&P, Fitch	BB- (S&P)	2020	BB+ (Fitch)	2020
5	Country Risk Classification ²³⁸	OECD	5	2020	5	2015
6	Open Budget Index ²³⁹	International Budget Partnership	37/100	2017		
7	Rule of Law Index	World Justice Project	56/126	2019 ²⁴⁰	44/102	2015 ²⁴¹
8	The Corruption Perception Index	Transparency International	35 ²⁴²	2019 ²⁴³	42 ²³⁵	2015 ²⁴⁴
9	Democracy Index	Economist Intelligence Unit	77	2019 ²⁴⁵	78	2015 ²⁴⁶
10	Worldwide Press Freedom ²⁴⁷	Reporter Without Borders	95	2019	117	2015
11	Global Innovation Index	WIPO	59	2019 ²⁴⁸	56	2015 ²⁴⁹
12	E Government Development Index	UN	79	2018 ²⁵⁰		2015
13	Global Competitiveness Index	World Economic Forum	57.3	2019 ²⁵¹	60	2015 ²⁵²
14	Competitive Industrial Performance Index ²⁵³	UNIDO	74	2017	79	2015
15	Statistical Capacity Indicators ²⁵⁴	World Bank Group	75.5	2019	83.3	2015
16	Human Development Index	UNDP	0.759	2019 ²⁵⁵	0.747	2015 ²⁵⁶
17	Sustainable Development Goals	SDSN/UNDP	70	2019 ²⁵⁷		
18	Political Stability and Absence of Violence / Terrorism ²⁵⁸	World Bank Group	39.5	2018	35.7	2015
19	Government Effectiveness	World Bank Group	55.8	2019	58.7	2015
20	Voice and Accountability Index	World Bank Group	45.3	2018	40.9	2015
21	Rule of Law Index	World Bank Group	43.8	2018	49.5	2015
22	Regulatory Quality Index	World Bank Group	71.6	2018	67.8	2015
23	Control of Corruption Index	World Bank Group	42.3	2018	50	2015

²³³ [DOING BUSINESS 2019](#)

²³⁴ [Doing Business 2015](#)

²³⁵ [Aggregated LPI](#)

²³⁶ [Country Rankings: World & Global Economy Rankings on Economic Freedom](#)

²³⁷ [Sovereigns Ratings List 2020](#)

²³⁸ <https://www.oecd.org/trade/topics/export-credits/documents/cre-crc-historical-internet-english.pdf>

²³⁹ [Open Budget Index Rankings | Open Budget Survey | IBP](#)

²⁴⁰ [WJP Rule of Law Index 2019](#)

²⁴¹ [Rule of Law Index @ 2015](#)

²⁴² Score (not rank)

²⁴³ [Macedonia \(FYR\)](#)

²⁴⁴ <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2015#results-table>

²⁴⁵ [Democracy-index-2019](#)

²⁴⁶ [Democracy Index 2015 Democracy in an age of anxiety](#)

²⁴⁷ [World press freedom index | RSF](#)

²⁴⁸ [Global Innovation Index 2019](#)

²⁴⁹ [The Global Innovation Index 2015](#)

²⁵⁰ https://publicadministration.un.org/Portals/1/Images/E-Government%20Survey%202018_FINAL%20for%20web.pdf

²⁵¹ [The Global Competitiveness Report 2019](#)

²⁵² <http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-report-2015-2016/economies/#economy=MKD>

²⁵³ [UNIDO Statistics Data Portal](#)

²⁵⁴ <https://databank.worldbank.org/reports.aspx?source=Statistical-capacity-indicators>

²⁵⁵ [2019 Human Development Index Ranking](#)

²⁵⁶ [Human Development Report 2015](#)

²⁵⁷ [Table 3 | The 2019 SDG Index](#)

²⁵⁸ [Worldwide Governance Indicators](#), SN 18-23

Annex 3: CCA development process & methodology

In the second half of 2019, the UN Country Team (UNCT) in North Macedonia started developing the 2021-2025 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (SDCF), a key strategic document to guide the work of the UN System in North Macedonia over the period of five years. This process commenced when the global UN Development System reform was in full swing and during a sensitive period in the country, as described above.

Recognizing the need for a reformed UN that is agile, cohesive and responsive to North Macedonia priorities and people's needs, SDCF will serve as a core accountability tool between the UNCT and the Government, as well as between and among UNCT members for collectively owned development results.

The CCA was prepared in a participatory manner with the following oversight and coordination mechanisms in place:

- A Joint UN/Government Steering Committee, co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, that will provide strategic guidance and endorsement at key stages of the process (including the selection of key strategic priorities and approval of final UNSDCF document).
- CCA/CF task team - main body that carried out the work of the CCA. The team is composed of staff members from all UN entities with activities in the country (both resident and non-resident), as nominated by the Heads of Agencies.

The following agencies participated in the development of the CCA, listed in alphabetical order: FAO, IAEA, ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNDRR, UN DPPA-DPO, UNECE, UN Environment, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UNOPS, UN Women and WHO.

The process was led by the UN Resident Coordinator, supported by the RC Office staff, with UNCT oversight and endorsement of all key steps and products.

The following key national counterparts participated in the process:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (co-owner and co-lead of the process)
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs and Sustainable Development (SDGs focal point)
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for EU Affairs and coordination of donor-assistance (EU IPA coordination unit)
- Relevant line ministries
- The Office of the President
- SSO
- Units of local-self government

Methodology

The UN CCA was developed in a three-stage participative process, as follows:

- Data collection
- Data analysis
- Review and validation

The analysis was undertaken in the period from November 2019 to February 2020, by the CCA/CF Task team with analytical support solicited from a team of local experts. The CCA report was consolidated and quality assured by an independent international consultant.

The applied approach for the analysis is integrated and systemic, based on primary and secondary data. It combines quantitative and qualitative analysis methods based on data and information from different sources, triangulated to strengthen the validity of findings.

- A **desk review** of existing strategic documents, from both UN and non-UN sources, other key policy, programmatic and legal frameworks, such as the country reviews undertaken by the different UN human rights mechanisms, country program document evaluations conducted by various UN agencies, various integrated response plan such as the Partnership for Sustainable Development (PSD) terminal evaluation, and the UN entities' country programme evaluations (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, ILO).
- **National consultations**, which reached beyond traditional formulas (meetings with organizations), using innovative approach to collect data and input from the general public. Specifically, one of the tools that was used is an *ethnographic field research* to understand people's priorities and validate the findings from the desk review. This narrative research has been extensively used in various sectors and industries. It was the method chosen for this assessment because:
 - it relies on personal, first-hand narratives to access contextualized knowledge and experiences;
 - it makes the research process more agile and reflective of the evolving country context;
 - it directly validates the findings of the desk review and consultations undertaken to support the CCA process;
 - ultimately, it ensures that the CCA is a 'real-time', core analytical function of the UN agencies.

By studying people's perceptions and narratives around what is most important for them, the research aimed to:

- Identify root causes of emigration and their implications of country situation;
- Identifying any groups of people left behind which have not been covered by any current or previous actions;
- Providing information on priorities in defining programs to be implemented in the country, in domains such as: i) strengthening the capacities of the state in decision-making processes related to social development; ii) strengthening local support measures; and iii) improving policy support programs at the national level.

The topic of emigration and population dynamics as the overarching topic for the survey was selected in participatory manner, including through a one-day workshop on 19 November 2020, with over 30 participants from UN and all UN partners, because:

- It is the highest-level development challenge in the country, directly caused by all other development challenges, policies and strategies;
- The topic is close to the hearts of the people, that everyone can associate with, it stimulates story-telling and qualitative insights.

The survey was conducted in February 2020 on a representative sample of 1096 respondents from across the country. The sample was selected carefully to reflect the demographic structure of the country, but also to ensure coverage of the population left behind. The research was undertaken in partnership with the Faculty of Philosophy, involving 30 students in social sciences, using innovative mobile-based data collection tool (Sense-Maker®) and computer-based analysis tool. The structure of respondents by age group, origin from rural/urban area and region, as well as persons with disabilities (PwD) was the following:

Gender	Structure of respondents by age group						Total
	Under 18	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55 and older	
Female	12	130	158	97	41	13	451
Male	15	107	237	173	82	26	640
Other			04	1			5
Total	27	237	399	271	123	39	1096
Persons with disabilities (PwD)							54 (4.9%)

Region	Respondents
Urban (city)	865
Rural (village)	231
<i>Per Region</i>	
Vardarski	108
East	75
Southwest	128
Southeast	128
Pelagoniski	145
Poloshki	128
Northeast	104
Skopski	280
Total	1096

Usage of this methodology ensures that the CCA is not a one-off event, but a “real-time” core analytical function of the UN System. Repeating the collection of stories regularly throughout the implementation of the Cooperation Framework makes the process more agile and reflective of the evolving country context.

Beyond this survey, recent agencies’ conducted surveys were taken into consideration, as well as their consultations processes to inform various programme or project designs.

The analysis was done in close cooperation with a team of local experts, some representing other international organizations. The partnership with the local experts enabled us to benefit from their expertise, and *sets of primary data that they have collected for different researches*, including few citizens surveys on trust in governance entities, country-wide social needs survey, quality of life survey, etc. Numerous consultations and validation meetings were done in person or by phone with different stakeholders’ groups.

The insights collected during the interviews with more than 50 stakeholders and beneficiaries, conducted during the PSD evaluation were also used to inform the analysis. CCA Validation meeting with donors and international partners, including EU and World Bank, was held on 11 March.

Unfortunately, the formal CCA validation workshop, that was scheduled for 12-13 March 2020, expected to be attended by over 50 non-UN participants was cancelled due to the COVID19 pandemic, one day earlier. Few meetings were thereafter carried out online, including with the so-called EU sector working group – as the key government led national consultation mechanism, where the UN discussed and validated the CCA findings as well as the proposed CF strategic priorities.

Over 1500 people were involved in the preparation of North Macedonia CCA between November 2019 and October 2020.