

**DRAFT VERSION**

Country Profile  
**Macedonia F.Y.R.O.**



Prepared by: Jovan Poposki, March 2004

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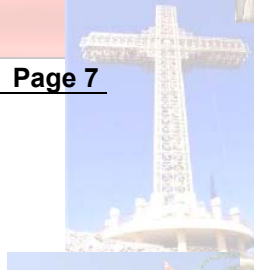
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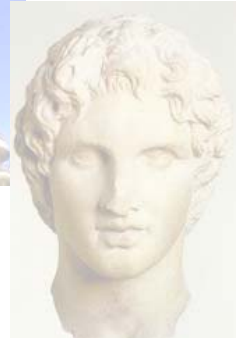
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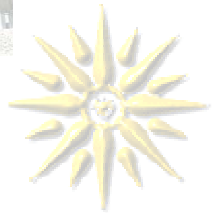
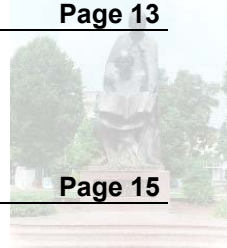
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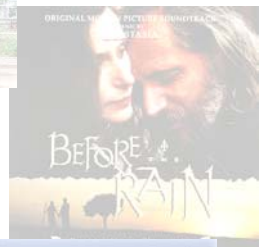
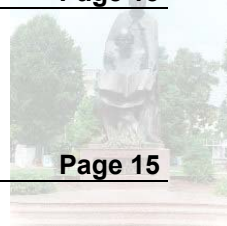
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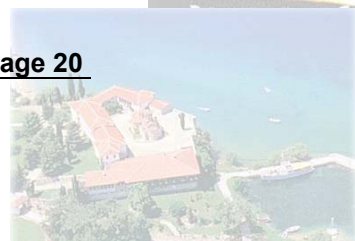
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## Introducing – Republic of Macedonia

Macedonia is located in the center of the Balkan peninsula and belongs to the group of so called South East Europe Countries. It's neighboring countries are Albania (West), Greece (South), Bulgaria (East), Serbia and Montenegro (North).

Macedonia has no access to the sea. The total land that it covers is 25.713 sq. kilometers. Most of the territory of Macedonia is mountainous covered with deep basins and valleys.



Today's Republic of Macedonia is one of the six countries that used to form the federation of Yugoslavia. After a very long period the Macedonian nation, that dates long before the founding of Yugoslavia, got its independent and sovereign country.

On 08<sup>th</sup> September 1991 a referendum was held on which the registered voters of Macedonia, with huge majority, declared their wish to leave the already disintegrating federation and claim independence.

International recognition of Macedonia's independence was delayed due to Greece's objections to the new states use of what it considered to be a Hellenic name and symbols. This dispute wind so far that Greece put a trade blockade, not even allowing petrol to enter

Macedonia. This blockade was finally lifted and the two countries agreed to normalize relations. As a result of this Macedonia accepted the conventional long form F.Y.R.O.M. (Formal Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) as a temporary solution. Relationship with Greece has been relaxed following the signing of the Interim Accord between the two countries. Normal transportation, economic and diplomatic communication have been established and the ties between Macedonia and Greece are becoming the intensive, especially in the economic field since the biggest investments in Macedonia come from Greece.

At independence in 1991, Macedonia was the least developed of the Yugoslavia republics, producing mere 5% of the federal output of goods and services. The collapse of Yugoslavia ended transfer payments from the center and eliminated advantages from inclusion in a de facto free trade area. An absence of infrastructure, UN sanctions on Yugoslavia – one of Macedonia's biggest markets and the Greek economic embargo postponed economic growth until 1996. After the elimination of these significantly bad circumstances GDP subsequently rose each year trough 2000. The leadership, of all governments that came after 1991, was committed to economic reform, free trade and regional integration and cooperation as the basic steps of the transitional road from communism to marked based economy. These efforts were undermined by the armed insertion from Kosovo in 2001. As a result of this the economy shrank by 4.5%. There were other significantly bad side effects that came from this such as massive decrease of trade, periodical border closure, increased deficit spending on security needs and investors uncertainty that till then started to slowly disappear. In 2002 growth barely recovered to 0.3% and then rose to 2.8% in 2003.

Unemployment at a rate of over one-third of the work force still remains the most critical economic problem.

### Fundamental values

"The Republic of Macedonia is a sovereign, independent, democratic and social state." This being the initial sentience of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, adopted on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1991, accurately defines the character of the state, from which its system of governing derives.

The Macedonian foreign policy is ruled by three basic priorities.

Development of friendly relations with all the neighboring countries, without establishing any special relationship with any of them - "policy of equidistance". A firm orientation towards integration into all European institutions and full membership in NATO.

The second priority is admission of Macedonia to the EU. This orientation was decided by national consensus, despite the understanding of it's being a slow process. The citizens of Macedonia consider them selves as Europeans and regard their integration to the European community as a natural process.

The third priority is affiliation to the NATO system of collective security. Macedonian membership in the programme of Partnership for Peace, which has already been accomplished is a confirmation for this orientation.

The domestic policy is oriented towards reform of the economical and political life in the country, the ultimate aim being a market economy and stable parliamentary democracy.

The reforms in the political system have been – in the whole – completed. The state administration has been depoliticized and the army placed under civil control. The judiciary has been established as an independent power.

## Finance

On 26<sup>th</sup> April 1992, Macedonia became monetary independent and Macedonian national currency, the Denar, has been introduced. Today Macedonia has a tax system very similar to those of the developed countries with market based economies. The expansion of the public sector has been restricted and also a higher degree of efficiency and simplicity of fiscal measures has been achieved.

### GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
GDP real growth rates	3.4 %	4.3 %	4.5 %	-4.5 %	0.3 %
GDP per capita in US\$	1781	1848	1924	1830	1835

### TOURISTS IN 2002

	Total	Domestic	Foreign
	422 000	319 000	123 000

www.stat.gov.mk

## Assembly

The Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia is the representative body of the citizens and therefore a central and most important institution of state authority. The Assembly is unicameral and is composed of 120 representatives elected at general, direct and free elections by secret ballot. The parliament members represents the citizens and makes decisions in the Assembly in accordance with his/her personal convictions. A Representative's mandate lasts for four years and it cannot be revoked.

The first multi-party elections of representatives for the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia were held 11 November and 23 December 1990.

The first multi-party Assembly of Macedonia was officially constituted on 8th January 1990. The president of the first Macedonian multiparty Assembly was Mr. Stojan Andov.

In 1993 the Assembly established a Council for Inter-Ethnic Relations. The Council consists of the President of the Assembly and two members of each from among the Macedonians, albanians, Turks, Vlachs and Gypsies. The Council considers issues of inter-ethnic relations in the Republic and makes appraisals and proposals for their solution.

At working bodies, the Assembly has several commissions. In addition to the opinion of the appropriate commissions for particular fields, in obtaining a visa for legislative projects, the opinion of the Legislative Commission is always important.

## Judicial Power

Of special importance for the development of the democratic society in Macedonia has been the constitution of the judiciary as the third autonomous sphere of power. All social actors agree on this, regardless of their ideological and political differences.

Judicial power is exercised by courts. They are autonomous and independent. Courts judge on their basis of the Constitution and laws and international agreements ratified in accordance with the Constitution. There is one form of organization for the judiciary. The Macedonian Constitution prohibits emergency courts.

A judge is elected without restriction of his/her term of office and cannot be transferred against his/her will. In order to protect the autonomy and independence of courts, the Constitution specifically enumerates the instances and reasons for which a judge may be discharged. Judges are granted immunity decided upon by the Assembly. The performance of a judge's office is incompatible with other public office, profession of membership in a political party. The intention is to apply strictly the principle of de-politicization of the judiciary.



The Public Judiciary building in Skopje

### **Judicial Council**

The draft of the new Courts Act defines the types, jurisdiction, establishment, organization and composition of courts, as well as court procedures. A European model of judiciary organization has been adopted, implementing the principle of the rule of law. For example, in addition to the abolition of what were known as Courts of Associated Labor - which had seriously undermined the judiciary system through incompetence and voluntarism - the new draft also envisages the abolition of the so-called Economic Courts. The cases which used to be within their jurisdiction are to be transferred to regular courts.

The new judiciary organization envisages 28 basic courts and 3 higher courts. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the country ensuring uniformity in the implementation of the laws by the courts.

The Republic's Judicial Council, as a new institution of the judiciary, is composed of seven members, elected from the ranks of outstanding members of the legal profession for a term of six years with the right to one reelection. This Council proposes to the Assembly the election and discharge of judges and determines proposals for the discharge of a judge's office in cases laid down in the Constitution, decides on the disciplinary answerability of judges and assesses the competence and ethics of judges in the performance of their office.

### **Constitutional Court of Republic of Macedonia**

The Constitutional Court of Macedonia is a body of the Republic responsible for the protection of constitutionality and legality. In May 1994 the Assembly elected new members to make up a new constitutional Court. The court is composed of nine judges whose term of office is nine years without right to reelection. It decides on the conformity of laws with the Constitution, protects the freedom and rights of individuals and citizens, and rules on conflicts of competencies among holders of legislative, executive and judicial offices. The Constitutional Court also rules on the answerability of the president. When analyzing the relatively large number of initiatives and the scope of work of the Constitutional Court, we must bear in mind the specific constitutional provisions in Macedonia. The constitutions of neighboring and some European countries allow only the president or other proponents of supreme power to dispute laws or regulations. The Macedonian Constitution, however, stipulates that every citizen may dispute a law, regulation or other general act independently of whether it concerns him or not. The very fact that in 1993 there were 188 citizens putting forward initiatives for the assessment of constitutionality and legality of acts, and the decisions passed by the Constitutional Court in this respect, imply that there is still a preference for group of professional protection, and that there is also a broad framework for the protection of human rights and freedoms. It is only to be expected that in the future the number of initiatives for the protection of individual rights and freedoms will grow, which is linked with the development of processes of ownership, economic and social differentiation in society.

### **President and Government**

The president of Republic of Macedonia is elected at general and direct elections, by secret ballot, for a term of five years. The president gives the mandate to form the government to the nominated candidate. President Boris Trajkovski tragically died in a plane crash in February 2004.

The executive power is vested in the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. The Government is elected upon the proposal of the mandator who, proposing the composition of the Government, also proposes a programme of its work. The government is elected by the Assembly.

The Government determines the policy of carrying out the laws and other regulations of the Assembly and is responsible for its execution. It proposes law, the Republic's budget and other general acts adopted by the Assembly and also adopts bylaws and other acts for the execution of laws.



Deceased President of Macedonia  
Mr. Boris Trajkovski

### **Religion and Ethnicity**

"The freedom of religious confession is guaranteed. The right to express one's faith freely and publicly, individually or with others, is guaranteed." – quote from The Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia.

In accordance with this basis, there are more than forty active religious communities in Macedonia which build relations of mutual respect and tolerance. Two-thirds of the population of Macedonia are

Orthodox Christians, 30% are Moslems, 0.5% Roman Catholics and 2.8% are of other religious affiliations.

The Macedonian Orthodox Church has played an important role in the long struggle of the Macedonian people for the preservation of its national identity, as well as in its education and culture. Its roots are ancient. The Archbishopric of Ohrid was the first autocephalous Slav Church. It was established by St. Clement and St. Naum, outstanding students of the brothers Ss. Cyril and Methodius. In 893 A.D., St. Clement of Ohrid became the first Slav archbishop.

Today the Macedonian Orthodox Church continues the traditions of St. Clement's of Ohrid. It is headed by the Archbishop of Ohrid and Macedonia and a Holy Synod of Bishops consisting of six bishops. The number of church eparchies in Macedonia is the same.

The last census in Macedonia was held in 2002. This census was of great importance because of the fact that it's results will define the usage of the "Frame-work agreement" that was a compromise solution – result of the talks after the armed insertion from Kosovo in 2001.

This agreement defines the status of the minorities of Macedonia. According to this agreement Macedonia is defined as a country in which live different ethnical groups. Every ethnical group that has more than 20% of the total population of Macedonia has the right to use its language in local institutions as well as the parliament of the Republic and other rights that were not well accepted by the Macedonians.

From political reasons the results of the last census have been delayed and the final results should be announced somewhere in June 2004.

According to the last census held in 1994, the ethnical structure of the citizens of Macedonia is as follows:



Main Orthodox temple in Skopje, Macedonia  
The church of St. Kliment of Ohrid

Total	Macedonians	Albanians	Turks	Roma	Vlachs	Serbs	Others	Not stated
<b>1945932</b>	1295964	441104	78019	43707	8601	40228	36427	1882
<b>100%</b>	66.598%	22.668%	4.009%	2.246%	0.442%	2.067%	1.872%	0.097%

[www.stat.gov.mk](http://www.stat.gov.mk)

## History

Although Macedonia is a young state which became independent in 1991, its roots run deep in the history. The name "Macedonia" is in fact the oldest surviving name of a country in the continent of Europe. Ancient Macedonia was located in the center of the Southern Balkans, north of ancient Greece, east of Illyria, and west of Thrace. The Macedonians are a distinct nation, ethnically, linguistically, and culturally different from their neighbors.

The influence of five centuries long rule of the Ottoman Empire in the forming of today's modern Macedonians state is also very significant.

### Ancient Macedonia

The history of the ancient Macedonian kingdom begins with Caranus, who was the first known Macedonian king, VIII century BC. Alexander I "Philhellene" (498-454 BC) extended the kingdom and by the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC the Macedonians had forged a unified kingdom. Alexander was a Persian ally in the Greek-Persian wars. As Macedonia appears on the international scene, the first coins with the king's name on them are made. Around the year 460, Herodotus travels through Macedonia and gives an *interpretatio macedonica* of the Greek-Persian wars.

Alexander's son Perdiccas II (453 - 413 BC) worked on starting a war between the Athens maritime power and Sparta. During this war, Perdiccas is one moment on the side of Athens and the next on the side of Sparta, depending on Macedonia's best interests, not wanting either of them to become too powerful, while keeping its country's sovereignty at the expense of the Greek quarrel.

It was Archelaus (413-399 BC) who made Macedonia a significant economic power. Archelaus made straight roads, built fortresses, and reorganized the Macedonian army. He moved the Macedonian capital Aigae to Pella and founded Macedonian Olympic Games in Dion, among other reasons also because of the fact that the Greek Olympic Games were forbidden to the barbarians, including the Macedonians.

Amyntas III reigned 393-370/369 BC and led a policy of exhausting and weakening of the Greek city states. One of his sons, Alexander II and Perdiccas III, reigned later only briefly. Alexander II however, had an expansionist policy and invaded northern Greece. In Thessaly he left Macedonian garrisons in the cities and refused to evacuate them. The Thebans who were at the time the most powerful militarily intervened and forced the removal of the garrisons. After the death of Alexander II, his other brother Perdiccas III took the throne. But Perdiccas III was killed with 4,000 of his Macedonian soldiers in a battle with the Illyrians, and Amyntas' third son, Philip II now became the next Macedonian king.

*Philip II (359-336 BC)* reunified Macedonia and turned it into the first European Power in the modern sense of the word - an armed nation with a common national ideal. He was a hostage of the Greeks at Thebes, between 368 and 365 BC. While in captivity there, he observed the military techniques of then the greatest power in Greece.

He used what he learned during his imprisonment after he came back to Macedonia. Philip provided his Macedonian soldiers in the *phalanx* (the name of his military) with sarissa, a spear which was long 6 meters. The sarissa, when held upright by the rear rows of the phalanx (there were usually eight rows), helped hide maneuvers behind the phalanx from the view of the enemy. When held horizontal by the front rows of the phalanx, it was a brutal weapon for people could be run through from 20 feet away.

Philip made the military a way of life for the Macedonian men. It became a professional occupation that paid well enough that the soldiers could afford to do it year-round, unlike in the past when the soldiering had only been a part-time job, something the men would do during the off peak times of farming. This allowed him to count on his men regularly, building unity and cohesion among his men. He subdued all of Macedonia's neighbors (Illyrians, Thracians, and Greeks). He demolished all of the major neighboring centers to the ground, including the major Greek center of Olynthus, and Stageira, Aristotle's birthplace, and sold the inhabitants to slavery. He managed to do this because of the divided Greek city-states called *polis*es. In 338, the Greeks unified to prevent Philip from penetrating southern Greece, but were defeated at the battle at Chaeronea.

Philip II was assassinated before he could lead the Macedonians in the conquest of the Persian Empire during the wedding celebrations of his daughter Cleopatra.

His son *Alexander III of Macedonia - also known as Alexander the great (356-323 BC)*, succeeded his father at the age of 20, and immediately put down the



Philip II 359 – 336 BC



Alexander the great  
356 - 323 BC

rebellions of the Thracians, Illyrians, and Greeks, who revolted upon hearing of Philip's death. Next, at the head of Macedonian and allied Greek, Illyrian, and Thracian troops, he invaded Persia.

Alexander's victories at Granicus, Issus, and Gaugamela put an end to the Persian Empire, which was then replaced by the Macedonian Empire stretching between Europe, Egypt and India. From this time until the arrival of Rome, the Macedonians will shape the events in this vast space for almost 3 centuries.

Alexander's death brought the Macedonian leading generals into a terrible conflict over the rule of the Empire.

By 300 BC, the Macedonian Empire was carved up between different dynasties. Under Antigonus II Gonatas (276-239), the grandson of Antigonus I, Macedonia achieved a stable monarchy. His grandson Philip V (222-179 BC), clashed with Rome which was now expanding eastwards, and fought the two "Macedonian Wars" against the Romans. After the Roman army defeated Philip in Thessaly, Macedonia lost the whole of Greece and was reduced to its original borders. In the third "Macedonian War", Rome finally defeated the Macedonian army under the last king the Philip's son Perseus (179-168 BC). Perseus died prisoner in Italy. The Macedonian kingdom ceased to exist, and by 146 Macedonia became a Roman province.

### **Roman Macedonia**

In 51 AD for the first time on European soil, in the then Macedonian towns Philippi, Thessalonica and Beroea, the *Apostle Paul preached Christianity*. In 52 and 53 he sent epistles to the people of Thessalonica; in 57 he came to Macedonia again, and in 63 he sent epistles (letter) to the people of Philippi.

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries because of the Gothic attacks the Macedonian towns built fortresses around them, Macedonia was divided into two provinces, Macedonia Prima and Macedonia Salutarus.

Since the east-west split of the Roman Empire in 395 AD, Macedonia was ruled by the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantine Empire). It is interesting to note that the *Emperor Justinian was born in Skopje, Macedonia*. In the 5<sup>th</sup> century Macedonia was divided again into Macedonia Prima and Macedonia Secunda. In the 6<sup>th</sup> century, an earthquake demolished Scupi (nowadays Skopje) and Slavs overrun both Macedonia and Greece and mixed with the ancient Macedonians and Greeks. Thus the foundations for the modern Macedonian and Greek nations were laid.

In the 7<sup>th</sup> century the Slavs and ancient Thracians who already lived there laid the foundations of the modern Bulgarian nation.

In the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the brothers Cyril and Methodius from the largest Macedonian city at that time – Solun (Today Tessaonica) created the first Slavonic alphabet and promoted Christianity among the Slavic peoples. Their disciples Kliment and Naum of Ohrid established the *first Slavonic University, the Ohrid Literary School*. 3,500 teachers, clergy, writers, and other literary figures emerged from this Ohrid Literary School. The establishment of the first Slavic bishopric, later to become an Ohrid Archbishopric during the reign of Samuel, marked the beginning of the Macedonian Orthodox Church. In the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the Bogomil teaching appeared in Macedonia. Bogomilism had grown into a large-scale popular movement and it spread through the Balkans and Europe. The 10<sup>th</sup> century also marked the beginning of the first Macedonian Slavic State, the Kingdom of *Tsar Samuel (976-1014)*. Towards the end of the 10th century, with the weakening of the Eastern Roman Empire, and with the first Bulgarian Empire apart, tzar Samoil created his medieval Kingdome with its center at Ohrid.

Samuel was defeated in 1014 by Basil II when the Byzantine army won the battle on Mount Belasica capturing 15,000 of his soldiers. All were blinded, except one in every one hundred, who were left with one eye to lead the rest back to Samuel who escaped death at Belasica. At the site Samuel suffered a stroke and died two days later on October 6, 1014.



Tzar Samoil  
976 - 1014

For four centuries after the fall of the kingdom, rebellions and frequent changes of rule disrupted Macedonia's development. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, there were two major uprisings against Byzantine rule, one led by Petar Deljan in 1040, Samuel's grandson, and the other by Gjorgji Vojteh in 1072. The 12<sup>th</sup> century saw the rise of the Macedonian feudal lords Dobromir Hrs in 1201, and Strez in 1211.

### **Ottoman Macedonia**

Despite the rebellions, and the short-lived Serbian and Bulgarian occupations in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, Macedonia remained a Byzantine territory until the Ottoman Turks conquered it in 1389. The Turks firmly established themselves not only in Macedonia, but in all of the Southern Balkans.

*Ottoman rule will last for five centuries.*

The first significant resistance movements against the Turkish occupation were the Mariovo-Prilep Rebellion (1564 - 1565), and the Karposh Uprising in 1689. In 1767 the Turks abolished the Ohrid Archbishopric, which had been keeping alive the spiritual soul of the Macedonians for centuries. In the 19th century the neighboring Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria freed themselves from the Ottoman Empire. The Macedonians strove to develop their own national consciousness and begun organizing themselves for fight against the Turks at the same time, a process that their neighbors tried everything to interrupt. Thus, the nineteenth century is a period of growing national awareness among the Macedonian people and their quest for free and independent Macedonia.

### The Independence Movement

Literacy and education flourished and the foundations of modern Macedonian literature were laid. The leading activists were Kiril Pejčinovich, Joakim Krčovski, Partenija Zografski, Georgija Puleski, Jordan Hadzi Konstantinov - Dzinot, Dimitar and Konstantin Miladinov, Grigor Prichev, and Kuzman Sapkarev. The second half of the nineteenth century was marked by the beginning of the national revolutionary struggle for the liberation of Macedonia.

The Razlovtsi and Kresna uprising, in 1876 and 1878 respectively, had a strong influence on the growth of Macedonian national awareness. Bishop Theodosius of Skopje started a campaign for an independent Macedonian Orthodox Church and tried to restore the Ohrid Archbishopric, which had been abolished in 1767 by the Turkish Sultan.

In 1893, the Macedonian revolutionary organization known as VMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization) was founded in the city of Thessaloniki, with Gotse Delchev as its leader. Its objectives were national freedom and the establishment of an autonomous Macedonian state with the slogan "Macedonia for the Macedonians". Delchev's famous words were "*I understand the world only as a field for cultural competition among the nations*". In 1903 a group of Macedonian revolutionaries known as "Gemidzii" carried out a series of attacks on a number of buildings in Salonica in order to draw the attention of the European public towards the situation of the Macedonian people.

Later on *August 2, 1903*, (today 2 August is the biggest national holiday in Macedonia) VMRO launched the Ilinden Uprising against the Turks and declared Macedonian independence. The revolutionaries liberated the town of Krushevo, and established the *Republic of Krushevo* with its own government. The uprising was brutally crushed by the Turks, but the Macedonian Question thereafter aroused intense international concern. The Great Powers made several attempts to impose reform on the Porte, including the sending of their own officers to supervise the gendarmerie - in effect, the *first international peacekeeping force*. And although the revolt was suppressed, Macedonians remember the brief victory as a key date in the country's history and the event is enshrined in Macedonia's constitution.

In the same year, 1903, Krste Misirkov from Pella (Postol), one of the most outstanding names in the history of Macedonian culture, and the founder of the modern Macedonian literary language and orthography, published his "Regarding the Macedonian Matters", in which he projected the principles for standardization of the Macedonian literary language.



Makedonium – Monument built in honor of the Ilinden Uprising

### World War II and the Liberation

With the World War II burning throughout Europe, Yugoslavia was invaded by the German army in April of 1941. On October 11, 1941, the Macedonians launched a war for the liberation of Macedonia from the occupation. By 1943, the anti-fascist sentiment lent support for the growing communist movement and soon thereafter, the Communist Party of Macedonia was established. In the same year, the first unit of the Army of Macedonia was founded. Bodies of government, such as national liberation councils, were formed over the whole territory of Macedonia. The Headquarters of the National Liberation Army (NOV) published the manifesto of the goals of the war of liberation. The first session of the *Anti-Fascist Assembly of the National Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM)* was held in the monastery of St. Prohor Pchinski on 2 August 1944 on the 41<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Ilinden uprising. Representatives from all parts of Macedonia, including the Pirin and the Aegean parts of the country, gathered for the occasion and decided on the *constitution of a modern Macedonian state* at that time as a member of the new Yugoslav federation under the name of Peoples Republic of Macedonia. The

ASNOM presidium was formed with Metodija Andonov Cento was its first President. On April 1945 the first Macedonian government was founded with Lazar Kolisevski as its first President. *The Ohrid Archbishopric was restored in 1958, and its autocephaly was declared in 1967.*

## Republic of Macedonia 1991 - ...

### 1991

- Majority of voters support independence in referendum.
- New constitution accepted by the parliament. Ethnic Albanian deputies are opposing the new constitution.
- Declaration of independence. International recognition slow because Greece objects to the use of the name Macedonia.

### 1992

- Government resigns after mass demonstrations for failure to win recognition for the country's independence.
- Federal Republic of Yugoslavia acknowledges Macedonia's secession.
- UN approves dispatch of troops to monitor inter-ethnic tension.
- **UN recognition**

### 1993

- Macedonia gains UN membership under the name Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia F.Y.R.O.M. (temporary conventional long form after the talks with Greece in New York).

### 1994

- Greece imposes trade restrictions, causing huge economic damage.

### 1995

- **Attempt for assassination of the President Mr. Kiro Gligorov.**
- Greece recognizes independence, lifts trade restrictions.

### 1996

- Macedonia becomes eligible for funding under the EU Phare programme

### 1997

- The EU Council of Ministers establishes political and economic conditionality for the development of bilateral relations.

### 1998

- Thousands of ethnic Albanians gather in Skopje in support of ethnic Albanians in Serbia.
- Elections bring into power a coalition government which is led by Ljubco Georgievski. Just like the previous governments this one also has Albanian representatives in the ruling coalition.

### 1999

- The EU proposes SAP (Stabilisation and Association Process) for SEE Countries
- NATO begins bombing campaign against Yugoslavia. The situation in Kosovo makes over 200.000 Albanians temporarily leave Kosovo and come to Macedonia.
- Yugoslavia accepts peace plan. Kosovo refugees start leaving Macedonia.

Between 1992 – 2000 Macedonia has received 475M Euros from the EC as assistance

### 2000

- Macedonian troops on high alert on border with Kosovo because of increasing violence.
- **Insurgency crisis. Armed militant groups enter Macedonia from Kosovo.**

### 2001

- NATO's KFOR peacekeeping troops in Kosovo promise to step up border patrols after incidents near frontier.

- **Macedonia is the first SEE country to sign the agreement for association and stabilization with the EU.**
- NATO urges government not to use force against terrorists occupying Tanusevci near Kosovo border.
- Further incidents of violence.
- Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and US back use of force against terrorists. Border with Kosovo closed.
- Macedonian army, backed by KFOR, launches offensive to flush out terrorists from Tanusevci.
- So called “National Liberation Army” (NLA) emerges, demanding equal rights for ethnic Albanians and voicing support for militants at Tanusevci.
- Democratic Party of Albanians (part of the ruling coalition) stages mass rally in Skopje.
- Fighting spreads in Tetovo town square.
- Mass demonstration in Skopje urging tougher action. Tanks enter Tetovo, terrorist’s positions hit by mortar fire. Government gives terrorists ultimatum to surrender or face all-out attack.
- Main political parties in Macedonia form government of national unity under PM Ljubco Georgievski which pledges to address minority grievances. Fighting continues.
- Massive riots in Bitola after killing of several Macedonian soldiers.
- Rebels take Aracinovo just outside the capital - Skopje. Days later NATO evacuates but does not disarm them.
- Protesters besiege parliament in Skopje, angry at what they see as leniency towards ethnic Albanian rebels.
- President Boris Trajkovski makes a national appeal for peace.
- **Peace returns**
- All significant political parties of the Macedonian and the Albanian political block sign western-backed peace agreement.
- NATO carries out month-long Operation called “Essential Harvest” to disarm rebels, exceeding target of collecting 3,300 mainly old and useless weapons.
- Government announces amnesty for former members of the so called “National Liberation Army” days after it disbands.
- Macedonian police begin entering villages previously controlled terrorists.
- Parliament approves new constitution incorporating reforms required by August peace deal. It recognizes Albanian as an official language and increases access for ethnic Albanians to public-sector jobs, including the police.
- Moderate Social Democrats leave government coalition.

## 2002

- Parliament cedes more power to local government to improve status of ethnic Albanians.
- Parliament amnesties former ethnic ones who handed in their arms during NATO-supervised weapons collection.
- International donors pledge more than \$500 million in aid to help recovery from 2001 fighting.
- Parliament passes new laws making Albanian an official language.
- **Elections:** Nationalist prime minister, Ljubco Georgievski, voted out of office. Social Democrats under Branko Crvenkovski become largest party. Mr. Crvankoski forms a ruling coalition with the Democratic Union for Integration – Albanian party that got the most votes at the elections, lead by the ex leader of the so called “National Liberation Army”
- EU takes over peacekeeping duties from Nato.

## 2004

- President Boris Trajkovski dies in a plane crash in Bosnia. He had been on his way to an investment conference in Mostar.
- Macedonia officially applies for EU membership.

The EC through the CARDS programme has allocated to Macedonia a budget of 173M Euros for the period of 2001 – 2004 to support Country’s efforts towards European Integration.

## National Symbols

The national symbols are of great importance for every nation. Macedonia has had some problems in the past ten years regarding the possibility and freedom of use of its national symbols. This comes due to disagreements with Greece on the subject of “belonging” of those symbols to the Macedonians or the Hellen’s. More specifically, one of the most popular symbol among the Macedonians is the sun with 16 rays. This sun was on the shields of the soldiers of the “Phalangs” the army of the great Macedonian King – Alexander the great. The Greek scholars claim that this symbol has Hellenic origins and therefore do not allow to be used by Macedonia. This is relevant because of the fact that the flag of Macedonia, after its separation from Yugoslavia, had this symbol. After the pressure from the Greek side Macedonia had to change the flag in to the one that is using today. But the Macedonian sun with 16 rays still remains to be one of the most popular and renowned Macedonian symbols.

Today, as mentioned earlier Macedonia has a flag that is red with a golden-yellow sun. The sun has eight rays, emerging from the sun-disk, thickening towards the end. The sun rays are crossing diagonally, horizontally and vertically. The diameter of the sun’s disk is equal to one-eighth of the length of the flag. The center of the sun coincides with the intersection of the diagonals of the flag. The ratio between the width and the length of the flag is one to two.



Symbol of the Macedonian King Alexander III the great



Current flag of Macedonia

### The Anthem

The National Anthem of the Republic of Macedonia is called “Today above Macedonia” (Denes nad Makedonija). It was composed & created in 1944, by Vlado Malevski, a poet from Struga. It was adopted as an anthem by the time when Macedonia got its independence from Yugoslavia.

After independence in 1992 Macedonia retained the coat of arms adopted in 1946 (by the Act on the Coat of Arms of the People’s Republic of Macedonia, adopted by the People’s Assembly of the People’s Republic of Macedonia on its second extraordinary session held on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 1946, later on altered by article 8 of the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia) as the emblem of the People’s Republic of Macedonia within Yugoslavia. A new law is to be proclaimed on adoption of a coat of arm that will have pure Macedonian symbols. It is very likely that the new coat of arms of Macedonia will have the old Macedonian symbol - a golden lion with two tails, that is standing on its two feet with red background.

### Language

The language is also one of the most important features of a nation. As far as the Macedonian people and its state are concerned, language is of extreme significance and offers confirmation of their historical continuity. As the official language of the Republic of Macedonia, Macedonian is written using the Cyrillic alphabet. The Macedonian is a modern European language, which according to its characteristics is different from the neighboring and other Slavic languages. Macedonian language has a rich history and has played a key role in the development of the spiritual culture, creative activity and the preservation of the distinctive national identify of the Macedonians. It developed from the dialect of the South Slavs who deeply penetrated the Balkan Peninsula. Located in the Slavic linguistic periphery within the sphere of Greek-Byzantine civilization and Roman-Balkan culture, the Macedonian language preserves numerous archaic features, such as the use of imperfect and aorist, and has made a number of innovations.

The Macedonian alphabet is consisted of 31 letters. Each letter has only one sound and it is easy to pronounce. The use of Macedonian language is relatively easy. The concept of one sound – one letter is being kept even now. That means that each word has as many symbols (letters) as it has sounds.

The pupils in Macedonia learn about the Cyrillic and the Latin alphabet.



The Macedonian Cyrillic Alphabet

## Education

The formal educational system in Macedonia is organized from kindergarten, primary school (8 years) and secondary school (3 and 4 years) to University studies whose length depends on the type of studies.

### Primary and Secondary Education

All of the primary schools in Macedonia are owned by the state.

The primary eight-year education is conducted in 344 schools and is compulsory. Macedonia is one of the few countries in the world that provides education in the languages of most of the minorities as well as in Macedonian. So, in Macedonia, one can attend primary education in Albanian, Turkish and Serbian – in places where there is a sufficient number of people speaking other language than Macedonian.

Classes in Macedonian are conducted in 331 schools

Classes in Albanian are conducted in 128 schools.

Classes in Turkish are conducted in 36 schools

Classes in Serbian are conducted in 12 schools.

The variety of possibilities for high school education is big. Most of the high schools in Macedonia are public but there is a growing number of accredited private high schools. In most of the cases these private schools are classical high schools in which the students attend the classes held in Macedonian or English.

The secondary education in Macedonia is conducted via curricula and programs for Classical high school, Vocational education, Art high school education and high school education for students with disabilities.

All of the classes can again be attended not only in Macedonian but also in Albanian, Turkish and Serbian.

Classes in Macedonian are conducted in 92 high schools

Classes in Albanian are conducted in 22 high schools.

Classes in Turkish are conducted in 4 high schools

Classes in Serbian are conducted in 12 schools.

Regardless of the fact that is a new and still financially unstable country, Republic of Macedonia is providing these expensive opportunities to minorities in order to make sure that their basic human right such as education in mother tongue are not being violated.

### Higher Education

Higher education is one of Macedonia's prides. During the IX century the first Slavic University was founded by St. Kliment of Ohrid, in Ohrid Macedonia (comparisons: Bologna University founded XI century; Oxford University founded XI century).

Today there are two state Universities in Macedonia, one of whom is the St. Kliment Ohridski University, with head quarters in Bitola nowadays. They offer a big variety of educational branches and faculties. But higher Education in Macedonia these days is an "expensive game" for these two Universities. They are being financed by the state and are now facing big financial problems and as a result to this the quality of education suffers. The situation is getting even worst since the government recently accepted as the third state University in Tetovo, that so far worked illegally and only performs its classes in Albanian. The low level of the quality of education there can be easily seen in the fact that out of 14 "faculties" at this "university" only 4 are accepted with the law that gives legal status to this.

Despite all these obstacles from 1948 up to now, more than 110,000 students have gained qualifications from the faculties and colleges in Macedonia. Nearly 1,000 doctoral theses have been defended at the St. Cyril and Methodius University since 1957, and the number of master's degrees granted in the same period has been almost 2,000.

There are few private colleges that offer quality education but only in the field of social sciences.

The University of SEE functions in Macedonia for two years. The creation the University of SEE was sponsored by the EU. It was suppose to solve the problem of lack of higher education for Albanians, but it proven to have much bigger capacities and potentials. The programmes and methods used at



University of St. Kiril an Metodij in Skopje

this university proved to be on a very high level meaning much higher than of the two state universities and therefore this educational institution has a very high reputation among both Macedonians and Albanians.

Today this very promising solution is being undermined with the recognition of the so-called Tetovo University.

The official statistics show that almost half of the of the students that have finished secondary education continue to Universities. The most popular faculties in Macedonia are Economy, Medicine and Law. There is also a big interest for Natural sciences, Architecture and Computer Engineering.

Because of the current situation in which education in Macedonia is, a big number of high school graduates decide to leave Macedonia and continue their education in foreign countries from the neighboring countries like Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia to Universities overseas in the USA and Canada.

Despite of all these problems there is slow up-going trend of development of the educational system in Macedonia.

Teaching at all levels of education is constantly being developed and modernized. The advantages of audio-visual methods are increasingly used. Technical innovations are becoming an inseparable part of instruction. The use of TV sets, video recorders computers etc. in the educational process is no longer a rarity.

Education in Macedonia has undergone several positive reforms. Currently it is the process of a radical reform which will unburden it of ideological connotations and will make it simpler and more compatible with education in Europe and the world.

There is a well-developed system of education for adults where they may complete their education and acquire special qualifications. Various institutions also organise a large number of courses, ranging from information science and computer operation to the study of foreign languages. Special educational courses have also been organised in the fields of management and business.

## Youth Issues

Regarding the overall standard of the citizens of the Balkan countries, the typical Macedonian youngster is no different than the young people in the countries that surround Macedonia (with exception of Greece).

Today's youth - let's say an average 20 year old - is in a situation when he has spend two parts of his life in two completely different communities. He does not remembers vividly the first community because he was around 10 when it just disappeared. Somehow, out of nowhere, all of the values that he was learning about at school and in his family turned out to be unsuitable and not functional. His parent's favorite topic all of a sudden became the rapid shrinking of their salaries and vacation mysteriously became a luxury. Ever since, he has been put in a new environment. In this new environment things are mixed. The old and clearly wrong "setup" of doctrines and ideologies needs to be literally amputated from the society and this needs to be done as painless and fast as possible.

By the time that he gets trough the middle of high school he has enlightened himself with the eye opener that the people that are in the position of doing this actually grew up learning hot to preserve the previous "setup"! This is completely inappropriate for the tasks that they have been given.

So, a chain of consequences result of this incompatibility.

While the University students of law of the United Kingdome and Sweden get their direct practical experience of successful and positive business by internships at companies like "British Airways" or "Ericsson", their colleagues in Macedonia have the pleasure to be directly introduced to the newest ways of avoiding problems with the law for corruption and best models of monopoly. At the same time, as the government of Finland is using the money, collected by taxes of its working citizens, for providing opportunities to it's current University students (by the way the level of these opportunities are called science fiction in Macedonia), the Macedonian government is struggling to collect the tax itself.

Finally, the harvest of the modest economy crops is done and the Swiss cheese called budget for the next year is defined. We are at leas in one thing same with western European governments - not a single one of the ministries is satisfied with what they got.

Then someone gets a very strange revelation and decides to "fix the borders" based on reasons clear only to him. Now the funds that the ministries got look much better to them since a significant amount is about to be deducted from their budget because more funds are needed for preserving the peace.

This is the kind of spinner in which the typical Macedonian youngster is stuck. But despite of all this, it is surprising that no negativity can be felt on the streets. The cafes are full of energetic youth that is slowly drinking their refreshment. Slowly because they can only afford one.

With an average pocket money of 1 Euro / 60 denars per day, or one sandwich in an average snack bar in Macedonia, the small, but fortunately growing, quantity of presented opportunities for better life seem appealing. The young people of Macedonia are swiftly driven by the breaks that youth based NGOs offer to them. The number of young people that are joining the new associations of citizens – legally correct but unpopular term for NGO – is ever growing because trough them they can spend some time abroad on workcamps or some other kind of voluntary activity.

After the crash of the communism the possibility for this kind of free grouping of people on any topic was accepted with enormous interest. Today the number of associations of citizens that function independently is around 11.000 (there is no official statistical number for this) and the number of fields that these NGOs are covered by is big. But still, even if this number looks notable, having under the consideration of the "magnitude" of Macedonia, the level of functioning of these organisations is questionable. There is only a handful of organisations that are active on national level and even less organisations that function or work on international level.

### Foundations in Macedonia

There are few foundations that have offices or function from Macedonia. However there are a number of foundations and programmes whose target area is Macedonia as a part of the South East Europe region.

One of the most popular foundations in Macedonia, that is more-or-less typical for this region, is the Soros foundation or the Open Society Institute Macedonia. This foundation provides support for projects that aim towards the building of infrastructure and institutions of an open society. It is the biggest donor in Macedonia as far as NGO work and policy is concerned.

[www.soros.org.mk](http://www.soros.org.mk)

One of the foundations that operate from Macedonia is the Balkan Children and Youth Foundation (BCYF). Founded in 2000, the BCYF, is an initiative aimed at improving the conditions and prospects for young people throughout the region. This foundations grew on basis of contacts among local and international NGOs, business, and government leaders as to how to strengthen, expand, and sustain current efforts to meet the needs of the region's young people.

The Balkan Youth Partnership Programme is a small grant scheme for study visits in the region designed for representatives from child and youth-serving NGOs to share information and technical expertise.

**[www.balkanyouth.org](http://www.balkanyouth.org)**

The Institute for Sustainable Communities is conducting the Democracy Network Program (DNP) in Macedonia. Main goal of DNP is to strengthen democracy in Macedonia by strengthening CSOs, through technical assistance, training and financial assistance.

ISC has a department for youth. It's aim is to help young people learn, through active participation in the relationships, events and institutions that affect their lives, to develop and apply their capacity to transform themselves and the communities in which they live and increase the awareness, skills, knowledge and attitudes in order to grow, to change and to gain control of their lives and in the society.

**[www.isc.org.mk](http://www.isc.org.mk)**

### **Networking**

One of the projects/network that is directly related to youth is the network of Macedonian NGO's "MaNGO". MaNGO is the most popular and currently most functional online network in Macedonia on national level concerning NGOs.

MaNGO Online News – possibility for online promotion of interesting projects.

MaNGO Online E Calendar - specific information about NGO events.

MaNGO E Bulletin – E Newsletter based on information provided by NGO's from all over Macedonia that use this web portal.

MaNGO Online Directory of NGO's – Online directory of NGO's that work in Macedonia. The directory so far contains information for around 250 organisations.

MaNGO Online Directory of Foundations - includes such details as, the name of the Foundation, Areas of Support, a link to the Foundations' website and the language of the website. Provide information that allow organisations to be able to research and hopefully source funding options for Projects.

This gives good opportunity to organisations for promotion, but the portal itself in not promoted as much as it should be. It was being developed for 6 moths and will be online for at least three years.

The portal can be viewed in Macedonian and English.

**[www.mango.org.mk](http://www.mango.org.mk)**

The citizen's association "MOST" (bridge) was formed in May 2002 by representatives of 20 nongovernmental organizations.

The MOST activities were directed to raise the public awareness of the citizens about the meaning of the elections and stimulate their active participation in the election process, as domestic observers. MOST recruited and instructed 3000 volunteers all ethnical structure and nationality, and succeed in deploying observers on more then half of the polling stations.

**[www.most.org.mk](http://www.most.org.mk)**

Eko.Net is an informal group for electronic communication, which basic idea is promotion of the Internet as a way for a fast and efficient communication between the environmental NGOs, and all of the interested citizens and institutions.

The main goal of Eko.Net is to enhance the influence of the environmental NGOs in their area, but also to improve them globally with the use of internet.

Eko.net provides the environmental NGOs with a possibility to promote their activities to the public. Also Eko.net is giving them the possibility to exchange information between each other, which will improve the access of environmental information's to everybody that is concerned.

**[www.eko.net.mk](http://www.eko.net.mk)**

### **Support**

The NGO Support Centres in Macedonia pursue their goal by supporting NGO organization and operation in local communities and by strengthening their capacities for cooperation with other NGOs,

local government, private sector and media. The Support Centres in Veles, Prilep, Stip and Kicevo do not have ethnic or sectoral focus. Also the direct support to political parties and their branches is precluded.

These centers offer trainings in various areas according to the needs of the NGOs such as project and financial management; NGO institutional development; partnership between NGOs, local government and private sector; public relations; english language course etc. They also offer Logistic and financial support and counseling.

The web page contains a list of 230 NGOs with contact details.

**[www.ngocenters.org.mk](http://www.ngocenters.org.mk)**

The Nansen Dialogue Centre -Skopje is created as a part of the idea to strengthen the links among participants from the region of former Yugoslavia who, since 1994 were part of the training program organized by the Nansen Academy in Lillehammer, Norway.

The NDC - Skopje is striving towards building, sustainable democratic community for all citizens, based on the rule of law and social welfare. Thus speeding up the process of integration on Republic of Macedonia to EU.

**[www.ndc.net.mk](http://www.ndc.net.mk)**

Macedonia is on of the 190 countries where the British Council works.

The aim of the British Council is to promote the United Kingdom through partnership with people in the countries where they work, and by emphasizing the mutual benefit of every activity.

In Macedonia, the British Council promotes the United Kingdom as a partner in the future development of Macedonia in Europe. The methods for achieving this work with young people and give them opportunities for creativity, education and self-expression, through contact with the UK. The main project of this kind is Blue Sky, but all the activities and services have similar objectives.

**[www.britishcouncil.org/macedonia](http://www.britishcouncil.org/macedonia)**

#### **Other Organisations**

As mentioned previously, the number of NGOs in Macedonia is around 11000. They all function on different level according to their capacities and finances.

The Student Associations are one of the most popular organisations in Macedonia and organisations with definitely the biggest number of members. The National Student Union of Macedonia (NSUM) exists with a purpose to unite students from the Student Unions of the two state Universities in Macedonia: "St. Cyril and Metody" –Skopje and "St. Kliment Ohridski" – Bitola. NSUM is a full member of the European Student Union with a central office in Brussels.

**[www.ssukm.org.mk](http://www.ssukm.org.mk)**

One of the first established organisation, that is still functioning on national level is the Macedonian Center for Multiethnic Cooperation (Makedonski centar za Multietnicka Sorabotka - MCMS). The MCMS has been working in Macedonia for more then 10 years. So far it is the most active NGO in the field of organising various trainings on topics like project management, partner and resource finding and other elements that are important for development of NGO work. This organisation is concentrated on linking NGO's from Macedonia to a functional network on national level.

**[www.mcms.org.mk](http://www.mcms.org.mk)**

Save the Children Macedonia has been constituted as a youth and voluntary non-governmental organization, in November 1992. Its main goal is the improvement of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Republic of Macedonia.

SCM has around 250 members and five local organizations in towns of Macedonia.

**[www.org.mk/scmk](http://www.org.mk/scmk)**

Youth Forum EYE is a relatively new organisation that works on several fields, but is most active on the field of youth. It has been functioning since 2001 and so far carried out several relevant projects on international level for promotion of the YOUTH programme of the EC in Macedonia with partners like ICYE, Eurodesk, SEEYN etc. It has set up the "seeyouth" web portal, as a part of the Large scale Info Project, whose purpose is to give information on how youth based NGOs from Macedonia can be included in Action 1, 2 and 5 of the YOUTH programme. Also on this web portal there are examples of good practice from previous projects from all over the SEE region.

Youth Forum EYE also offers to young people other possibilities like finding placements for long-term volunteering for volunteers from Macedonia as well as for volunteers from other countries that want to volunteer in Macedonia. From recently Youth Forum EYE started to organize international workcamps in Macedonia on different topics. In 2004 the first ecological workcamps on the lake of Ohrid will be carried out.

Having this in mind in 2004 it started with realizing the new project "Albert Einstein World Citizenship" whose goal is to get legal framework for volunteerism in the countries of South Eastern Europe and to research the possibility of introducing "volunteers visas". The final aim of the project is to strengthen the mobility of youth through intensifying voluntary service.

[www.seeyouth.info](http://www.seeyouth.info)

[www.youthforumeye.org.mk](http://www.youthforumeye.org.mk)

YMCA has its branch in Macedonia. The programmes of YCS YMCA Macedonia are focusing on many different fields of work which are structured in five different Programme Groups: SPORTS AND SCOUTING; ART AND SKILLS; SOCIAL ACTIVITIES; CHILDREN CARE AND COMMUNITY WORK. The structuring of the five Programme Groups is a result of the administrative needs and the vision for the Strategic Development of our YMCA.

The work included in the different Programme Groups is connected and through the different projects YCS YMCA Macedonia is using all its resources and capacities.

[www.ymca-macedonia.org.mk](http://www.ymca-macedonia.org.mk)

### **(Un)Employment of youth**

Unfortunately the word "job" seems to be slowly disappearing from the vocabulary of not only the youth of Macedonia but the overall population. This, slightly overstated conclusion, does not come as a result of the laziness of the complete population that lives in Macedonia, but as a result of the huge percentage of unemployed people. To be more accurate, the rate of unemployed people that live in Macedonia is on the verge of reaching over one third of the total work force.

The process of transition to a market based economy, that has been going on for too long, has put Macedonia in this situation. The lack of transparency of the privatization procedure, that was filled with suspiciousness as well as the lack of ideas for creating sustainable foundations for market based economy are the main reasons for this. The country gave signs of an unstable society that is incapable to provide suitable judicial system for illegal activities. This gave the "go ahead" for the Mafia that used this country as a road to transport illegal goods to Albania and then to Western Europe. These activities were more obvious in the western part of the country.

As a result of this the uncertainty in the country's economy grew. The factories that were functioning till 1991 were oriented towards supplying the market of the federation. As this market was all-of-a-sudden closed for them, they found themselves incapable to address the demands of the other European markets. The process of their adaptation to this was unorganized and too slow.

As a result of this and also as a result of the overall situation in the region, the foreign investors were highly discouraged in to position their capital in Macedonia. At the end of the 90's this negative "feeling" amongst the investors began to decrease. The first massive investments (again done with some dosage of corruption) occurred and it was believed that the influx of foreign capital has finally begun. But this was not for long as in 2001 the armed Albanian insertion from Kosovo happened. In the eyes of the world community the central Balkan was once again uninteresting area for business.

Today the labor market is filled with quality educated youth people that are simply unable to find a job adequate to their vocation. The process of job creation is very slow since there are no big companies opening production capacities in the country. There are several companies, that mainly work in the textile industry and whose capital is mainly domestic, that give jobs for people. Also the tourist industry is growing, despite of the tensions in the previous years. Almost all of the hotels of the summer and winter resorts in Macedonia work very good during the seasons and offer jobs to young managers. Foreign companies are interested in buying hotels in Macedonia because they do bring good profits. But this is still not enough, as there is still a large quantity of well educated young people in the field of Medicine, Electronics, Business Management, Law, Architecture etc. that are working as taxi drivers or sell food at the markets.

At the beginning of 2002 a new law was presented whose main aim was to stimulate the job growth of the country. This law gave a period of 12 months in which the employers that received new employees will get special benefits in the paying of some taxes to the state. Very big hopes were given to this law but the results of it were way behind the expectations. Yes, there was some increase in the people

that got jobs, if one compares this number to the average for this period of time, but still there was no possibility for further upgrade of this.

The well known effect of “brain-drain” is one of the consequences of this vast lack of jobs. The number of young Macedonians that go abroad to search for better life is ever growing. Western European countries are highly tempting for young Macedonians since they offer a much higher level of stability and quality of life.

### **Government**

Several of the Ministries of the Government of Macedonia such as the Ministry for Education and sport, Ministry of Culture cover the issue of youth. The government has also set up an agency for youth and sport. Never the less, there are several obstacles that are limiting the maneuvering capability of this - at the moment only - governmental body responsible for the youth of Macedonia. The lack of funding for realizing it's goals is definitely the biggest and most relevant one. But still, there are areas that do not rely on money and are yet not functioning as they could. The present lack of promotion of the YOUTH programme of the European Commission should not be explained with the fact that Macedonia is not a programme country, since three of the Actions are indeed opened (Action 1, 2 and 5) for organisations that work with youth in Macedonia.

This problem can easily be overcome just by better coordination and cooperation with the institutions setup by the European Commission for YOUTH, whose target group is Macedonia as part of the SEE region.

However there is a rising trend in the development of methods and approaches used for creating National Youth Strategy. In the past 12 years there have been a number of short term projects for this. In December 2003 on a workshop organised by the agency for youth and sport the last short term strategy was defined. This will be conducted in the period from February till September 2004 and it is supported by the World Bank. This should include a number of significant NGOs from this field as well as Ministries and Parliamentary Commissions.

After the finishing of this meeting a document was released that contained the results of this workshop. Still these results seems to lack concrete steps to be taken in this period. It is a mixture of good practice examples and some partially defined steps.

The strategy for youth of Macedonia is still in the process of defining a clear picture of the situation in which the youth is, its needs and youth trends. This is a basis that still needs to be identified. After that, based on this a National Strategy for Youth can be placed.

The number of young people at the age of 15 – 25 (according to the official results of the census in 1994) are 316 342. This makes 16,45% of the total population of Macedonia.

## Skopje

Skopje is the largest city and the capital of the Republic of Macedonia. It's located in the northwestern part of Macedonia. It lies on the both banks on the upper course of the Vardar river and is located on a major north - south Balkan route between Belgrade (320 km away) and Athens (490 km away). The road distance from Sophia (Sofija) is 170 km.

Skopje has been mentioned for the first time by Claudius Ptolomeius, under its ancient name Skupi. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC Scupi was founded by the Romans. In this period, the city experienced real bloom on several fields, it became a large religious center with its own bishop. In the year of 518 AD the city was destroyed by a disastrous earthquake. Wonderful architectonic buildings, numerous public baths and the ancient amphitheater built in a roman style, large basilica with mosaic floors have completely disappeared from the earth's face. Since then Scupi is not mentioned any more. During the 6<sup>th</sup> century, Slavonic tribes that migrated from north managed to occupy the area and the entire area around the city. The name Skopje was given by the Slavic tribe that lived there.

During the period of the rule of the Macedonian tzar Samoi, the city was a part of the Macedonian empire. In the year of 1392, the city was concurred by the Turks and for a long time was a part of the Ottoman Empire. The Turkish writer Dilger Zede who has visited the city in the 17<sup>th</sup> century says, "I traveled for a long time across that and I saw a lot of beautiful cities and I was amazed from the Allah blessings, but not one has impressed and delighted me so much as the heavens city of Skopje across which passes the river Vardar".

On its way towards the countries from the middle east, Napoleon has passed through Skopje. A lot of merchants with their endless caravans loaded with various goods have been passing through the city.

After the First World War on the right side of the river Vardar a modern city has been built. The city got so developed until the 26<sup>th</sup> of July 1963, date remembered as the longest day in the history of the city. Strong earthquake of two severe and a few weaker shocks, turned the city into ruins.

The city was leveled, paralyzed, almost wiped from the face of the earth. Only a few seconds were enough to turn the entire city into ruins. But the greatest damage was the irreparable loss of 1,066 human lives. More than 3,300 inhabitants of Skopje were lightly or badly wounded. Only 3 minutes after the first came another earthquake of the same intensity (8.5 degrees of the Mercalli scale), followed by hundreds of tremors of smaller intensity. It was that dark Friday, of July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1963. Clocks stopped with their mechanisms pointing to the fatal 5 o'clock and 17 minutes AM, marking the longest day in the history of this city. On that morning seismologists all around the world recorded an earthquake whose epicenter was in Skopje.

Today Skopje has a vital part in the cultural and the academic life of the Republic of Macedonia. It is the administrative, political and cultural center of the Republic of Macedonia.

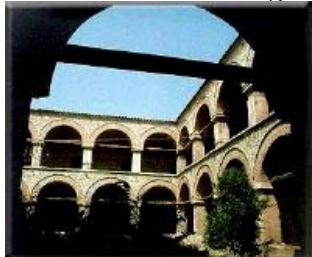
Since the year of 2000 the citizens of Skopje, from every part of the city can see the Millennium Cross, that symbolizes 2000 years of Christianity. It was built on top of the Vodno mountain, located south of Skopje, at an altitude of 1,066 meters above the sea level, with its dimensions 77 and 20 meters. It is unique building in the world. There should be built a monastery complex in its surroundings and a restaurant with a spectacular view of the city.

The Petrovec airport is just 17 km away from the city. You can reach Skopje by train, car or plane.

For info on cinema, theater, museums, restaurants, fast food, busses, taxi, rent-a-car, shopping, sports and other practical info on Skopje check [www.skopjeonline.com.mk](http://www.skopjeonline.com.mk)



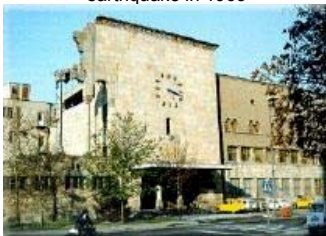
Main Orthodox Church in Skopje



Kursumliani in Skopje



Skopje's railway station before the earthquake in 1963



Old railway station today is a monument for the earthquake



The Antique aqueduct

## Bitola

Bitola is the second largest city in the country. It's located on 169 km from the capital Skopje, while from Ohrid is 66 km away. The city lies on an altitude of 600 meters above the sea level, at the foothills of the mountain Baba and it has 80,386 inhabitants, while the entire Bitola municipality counts over 100,000 people. It is the regional, economic and university center of south-western Macedonia.

The city was founded after the arrival of the Slavs in these areas, near the antique settlement of Heraklea Lynkestis.

Because of the numerous churches and monasteries that existed in the city and its surrounding, the city was named Obitel, which is the origin of the present name, Bitola.

During the reign of tzar Samoil, the city was included in the Macedonian state and was the seat of Bitola's bishop. From this period originates the first written record of Bitola, from 1014, when the city was first mentioned in the historical sources. Until the conquest of the turks, Bitola represented a significant center of trade in Pelagonija. After 1382, the city fell under Turkish rule.

It retained its role as a developed trading center for goods from Greece, Albania and the surrounding

locations. It also became an important Islamic religious center, and a religious high school existed in the city, until the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. According to the notes of the writer Evlija Čelebija, in this period in the city 70 mosques, several cafe-tea rooms, bezisten (old Turkish market) with iron gates, and 900 shops were built. Bitola exceeded the attractions of Skopje, with the developed trade, the beauty of the river Dragor, and its green areas. After the Austrian-Turkish wars, together with the other Macedonian cities, the trade development and the overall trading of the city was stifled. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, again, it became the biggest city in Macedonia and resumed the role as the main center for trade. The shops were filled with goods from Leipzig, Paris, Vienna, London and a lot of other European cities. The city is also known as "city of consuls", because Bitola used to be a diplomatic center with 12 consuls during the period 1878-1913.

Especially interesting and beautiful is the old-city architecture in Bitola. The Bitola Bazaar (Carsija), retains numerous old crafts workshops, and it represents one of the most interesting bazaars in Macedonia. On market days, the visitors may find various hand made garments, traditional for the Macedonian area.

Today, Bitola is an administrative, economical and cultural center in the south west of the country, with a developed network of institutions in all domains.

The economy potential of Bitola is immense. The Pelagonija agricultural combine is the largest producer of food in the country. The Strezevo water system is the largest in Macedonia and has the best technological facilities. The three thermoelectric power stations of REK Bitola produce nearly 80% of electricity in the state. Bitola also has significant capacities in textile and food industries. At the moment the city is turning into the second diplomatic center of Macedonia. France, Turkey and Italy have already opened consulates there.



View of the center



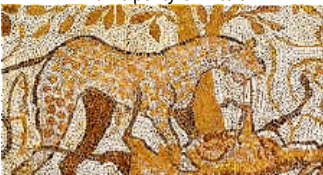
Main street with cafes and shops



Power plant in Bitola



Municipality of Bitola



mosaic from Heraklea

## Struga

Struga is situated on the northern part of the Lake Ohrid, on the both banks of river Crni Drim. The city is located on 171 km from the capital Skopje and from the nearby city Ohrid, is just 15 away.



It is believed that in the ancient times, there was a little town here called Etelion. The city was founded during the middle ages.

Struga is the capital of poetry and one of the cradles of the Macedonian spiritual revival in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, for it is the birthplace of the outstanding poets and educators, the brothers Dimitar and Konstantin Miladinov. Here, one is charmed by the river Crni Drim, which flows into Lake Ohrid and runs across it, only to emerge again with its clear and greenish water, and beautify the already delightful town of Struga.

This town is a famous tourist resort, and it is an eternal inspiration for poets from all over the world. Since 1962, each year at the second half of August, the Struga Poetry Evenings held in honor of brothers Miladinovci, have gathered poets from all the continents. The Struga Poetry Festival is one of the oldest, largest, and most renowned of its kind in the world. At the spectacular poetic event entitled "Bridges", poets read their works from the bridge under which the River Crni Drim flows out of Lake Ohrid, before an audience of some ten thousand people. Some of the greatest poets of the world are recipients of the Golden Wreath, the highest honor of the festival.



River Crni Drim



Streets near the river



Typical architecture



Mini-mall in the center of Struga

There are several cultural monuments in Struga and in its vicinity such as the Monastery of Kališta, a few kilometers away from the town center, laying on the very shores of Lake Ohrid. It is believed that it dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, with frescos from the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Church Sveta Bogorodica (Holy Virgin) in the village of Vraništa, is believed to be the one where Tzar Samoil was crowned. The church has many doors and the people call it also "the kings church". Another church St. George in the town, build on the foundations of the Samoil's church, has many icons from the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup> century. Near the village of Radolišta, a basilica from the 4<sup>th</sup> century has been discovered, with an extraordinary beautiful mosaic. In the cultural-historical monuments of Struga, can also be included its old architecture from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. The historical town of Ohrid, only 15 kilometers from Struga, is also situated on the shores of beautiful lake Ohrid.

The National Anthem of Republic of Macedonia was composed & created in period of (1943 - 1944) by Vlado Malevski, a poet from Struga. It was adopted as an anthem by the time when Macedonia got it's independence from Yugoslavia.

Today Struga is a developed city whose main economy branch is tourism. This small city has around 15 hotels both in and outside of the city. It offers various possibilities for lake tourism and the main preoccupation of the current local authorities is bringing foreign tourists as well as foreign investors.

For more info for Struga you can check [www.youthforumeye.org.mk](http://www.youthforumeye.org.mk) or [www.webcast.com.mk](http://www.webcast.com.mk)

## Ohrid

Ohrid is located in south-western part of Macedonia. It is the cultural capital and leading summer tourist center of the Republic of Macedonia. It is located on the shore of the lake of Ohrid, and it's located on 174 km from the capital Skopje, from the nearby city Struga, is just 15 away, from Bitola 66 km.



According to the legends, the city was founded by Kadmos 2400 years ago. Ohrid presents a true archeological treasury. There are many archeological sites from the Neolithic period in this region. The oldest recorded mention of the city Lichnydos - the ancient name of Ohrid, occurs in connection with Philip II of Macedonia (353 BC). Ohrid is one of the rare cities in the Balkans that survived the decline of the classical civilization and continued to live under their new names till the present time.

The soil of this ancient city has seen numerous changes of civilization achievements followed by the inevitable falls and rises. The contemporary city of Ohrid is a successor of the antique town of Lychnidos.

Lychnidos was located by the Via Egnatia, the oldest and most important Roman roadway in the Balkans.

Long before the Romans came into the region this route had been used as a communicational link between the coast and the internal parts of Macedonia. Via Egnatia was the shortest route from Rome

to the Eastern Empire. The first indicators of the political character of the region relate to the V century BC. The arrival of the Macedonian King Philip II the throne of the ancient Macedonian Kingdom made Lychnidos one of the most important areas in the Kingdom.

In the III century BC Rome expressed its aspiration towards the Balkans. The Roman Empire lead three wars against Macedonia. The whereabouts of these defeats are not precisely known. Perhaps they even happened in the region of Lychnidos.

It is certain that towards the end of the VI century the Ohrid region was exposed to a mass Slavic colonization. Ever since the end of the VI and the beginning of the VII century radical ethnic changes occurred in the region of Ohrid. The devastated and robbed town of Lychnid was then named by a pure Slavic name of Ohrid.

The monarch Samuel managed to develop a large army and well-trained soldiers so that by the end of X century the Macedonian state was also covering wide territory. After obtaining the Pope's blessing, Samuel promoted the Macedonian Church to the rank of a patriarchate. Ohrid then became the ecclesiastical center of the Macedonian State and grew into a true medieval metropolis. The town consisted of two territorially adjoining parts: the fortress, i.e., acropolis, and lower town. These two sections formed the entire urban dwelling at that time known as polis.

In the fall of 1015 the Byzantine emperor Vasileus II succeeded in seizing Ohrid.

At the XIV century the Ottoman empire spread all over the Balkans. Ohrid was also a part of it. The traveler Evli Chelebi in one of his documents states that Ohrid had seven primary schools, 77 baths, and three public canteens. In XVII century downtown Ohrid covered a large part of the lower town. It had all the buildings necessary for carrying out craft and trade activities. Apparently, there were 150 shops, three free of charge taverns, and three inns, as well as seven well-equipped cafés. Few records exist concerning the development of Ohrid in XVIII century, however it is evident that the town was expanding. Thus, at the end of the same century the foundations of Dolno(lower) and Gorno(upper) Vlasko communities were established.

In 1967 the Autocephalous Macedonian Orthodox Church was founded again after it's stopping in 1767 in Ohrid.

Today Ohrid has around 40000 citizens. It is a major summer tourist center in Macedonia and in summer a huge number of people all over the world visit Ohrid. This makes the people present in Ohrid during the summer



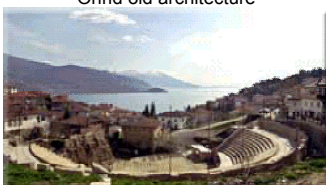
Beach outside of Ohrid - Ljubanista



St. John Kaneo church in Ohrid



Ohrid old architecture



Antique Amphitheater in Ohrid



Beach outside of the city



around 100000. The new modern part of the city, with the old part creates a synthesis between the past and the future.

The tradition of Ohrid being a cultural centre, still lives today. Top names in art from all over the world gather in this city during the summer period. The Music-Scene Festival Ohrid Summer from 12 July to 20 August - a event held for 32 year now, includes guests from various different fields: directors,

musicians, artists, writers, painters of world fame. At the beginning of the summer, the Balkan festival of songs and plays is held, with ensembles participating from the Balkan and other nearby countries.

Each September, Ohrid is the host of the musical - folklore festival - Ohrid songs of the old city.

In honor of the famous poet Grigor Prlicev in April, there is the "Days of Prichev" event, and Macedonians from all over the world gather in August in Ohrid, for the seminar of the Macedonian Language, Literature and Culture..

The offer of places for accommodation and food in Ohrid is considerable. There are various possibilities where one can enjoy its stay from fancy hotels to private room accommodation. The typical cuisine can be found in every restaurant all over the city but also there are restaurants that offer other cuisine's like Italian, Mexican etc.

There is a big offer of art galleries in which you can find art of any kind. Most of the Macedonian artist make their displays in the summer during the time when Ohrid is full of people. You can find contemporary as well as old art. Make sure you visit the museum in Ohrid. There you can see the oldest of the tree golden masks that have been found in the fortress in Ohrid. The golden mask and the golden glove were used for burring important people during the rule of the Macedonian king Samoil. The other two golden masks have been found in the pervious century and they are in museums in Serbia and Bulgaria.

At the end of the IX century, much earlier than the Bologna University, the first Slavic University was founded in Ohrid by the Macedonian scholar St. Kliment Ohridski. This was the first source of the Slavic literacy and culture.

The university of St. Kliment Ohridski is functioning even today. Its main building now is in Bitola, but it has a few branches in Ohrid like tourism management, insurance, customs, freight-forwarding etc.

Here are some concrete suggestions for accommodation in Ohrid:

B&B and camps>

**Ljubabusata car camp** Phone + 389 46 5 88 11

**Gradiste car camp** Phone + 389 46 264 418

**Elesec car camp** Phone + 389 46 22 023

**Desaret** Phone +389 46 263 240

**Park** Phone + 389 46 260 061

**Donco** Phone + 389 46 262 610

Fancy>

**St. Naum Hotel** Phone + 389 46 76 524

(litle bit away from the city but an exelent place)

**Metropol Hotel** Phone + 389 46 260 660

**Palace Hotel** Phone + 389 46 260 440

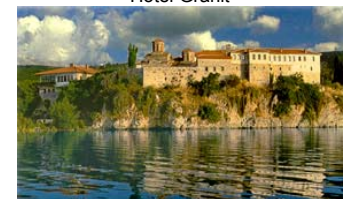
For info on theater, museums, restaurants, business, rent-a-car and other practical info on Ohrid check [www.ohrid.org.mk](http://www.ohrid.org.mk) or [www.ohridonline.com.mk](http://www.ohridonline.com.mk)



Hotel Bellevue



Hotel Granit



The St. Naum monastery



inside a Macedonian restaurant



Fish restaurant in Ohrid

## Practicalities – Macedonia

### Basics:

<u>Official Name:</u>	Republic of Macedonia (FYROM conventional long form)
<u>Official Language:</u>	Macedonian (based on the Cyrillic script); Albanian (in areas where the concentration of this ethnic group is bigger then 20%)
<u>Territory Coverage:</u>	25,713 sq km;
<u>Population:</u>	2,038,000 (2003);
<u>Ethnic Groups:</u>	Macedonians (66%), Albanians (23%), Turks (2%), Serbs (2%), Vlachs (1%) & other;
<u>Religion:</u>	Macedonian Orthodox Christians (70%), Muslim, Roman Catholic.
<u>Position:</u>	South-eastern Europe, at the heart of the Balkan Peninsula. The climate is predominately continental (hot, dry summers & cold winters). In higher regions summers are cool & winters are cold, with a lot of snow.
<u>Time Zone:</u>	Central European Time (GMT +1). Daylight saving time (one hour ahead) is used in spring and autumn.

### National Holidays:

1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> of January	New Year
7 <sup>th</sup> January	Orthodox Christmas
April	Easter
1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> of May	Labor Days
2 <sup>nd</sup> of August	National Holiday of Ilinden
8 <sup>th</sup> of September	Independence Day
11 <sup>th</sup> of October	Anti - fascistic rebelion

### Working Hours:

The above mentioned days and each Sunday in the week, are holidays. Nevertheless, as well as most of the restaurants of bars, work even during the holidays. In all working days, the shops are opened from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm. Only in Saturdays they work from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm (there are usually extended working hours in tourist areas during the season. Institutions and offices: Monday to Friday 8:00 am, Saturday 9 am to 5 pm.

Banks: Monday to Friday 8am to 7 pm, Saturday 8 am to 12 am (you can expect extended working hours at the airports).

“Market days” are one of the characteristic things that you will find in Macedonia. Every city has its “market” day when the local bazaar is full of people that sell mainly fresh vegetables and craftsmen’s handmade products but other goods as well. On these days the prices of all food offered at the local bazaars is cheaper then the other week days (because of the magnitude of the offer) and you can also haggle.

Try it!!!

### Visa requirements

Citizens from these countries can enter Macedonia without visa for 3 months	Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Croatia, Cuba, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holy Sea, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdome, United States of America
Citizens from these countries can enter Macedonia without visa for 60 days	Serbia and Montenegro, Turkey
Citizens from these countries can enter Macedonia without visa for 1 month	Malaysia

Having in mind the frequent changes in the visa regime of the Republic of Macedonia it is advisable directly to call the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or any diplomatic-consular establishment of the Republic of Macedonia before making the trip or check [www.mnr.gov.mk](http://www.mnr.gov.mk).

Macedonians need visas for all Shengen States, non Shengen EU States and also for all the new states that join the EU on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004. Also a big number of other non-European countries require visas for holders of Macedonian Passport.

In fact, it is much better and more practical to put here the states for which holders of a Macedonian Passport do not need visas.

<p>Holders of a Macedonian Passport can enter these countries without visa</p>	<p>Barbados, Botswana, Bulgaria, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Japan, Serbia and Montenegro, Cyprus (Turkish part), Cuba, Malesia,</p>
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### Money & Banking:

The monetary unit in the Republic of Macedonia is the DENAR (MKD – International code). Foreign visitors can convert foreign funds into local currency in all banks or private exchange offices, which abide by the exchange rates recommended by the National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia. One Euro is being exchanged for 61.2 MK Denars (February 2004).

There are not too many places where you can pay with credit cards especially not small stores. There are however a significant number of places where one can use its card for paying in the capital. You can lift money from card in all of the bigger banks, which you will find in all of the cities in Macedonia. Upon entering Macedonia you should declare the amount of money you are carrying.

### Places to visit:

The lakes of Ohrid, of Prespa, of Dojran & of Treska and the canyon Matka.

The National parks Mavrovo, Peliste & Galicica.

In winter, the winter tourists centers: Zare Lazarevski, in the Mavrovo national park, Popova Sapka, above Tetovo in the Šar mountain & Pelister, above Bitola on the foothills of Baba mountain.

The historical cities, like:

Ohrid                      The capital of the feudal Macedonian state, where you will find 365 churches,

Krusevo                    Where the Macedonians in 1903 held an uprising against the Ottomans,

Struga                      Capital of poetry – every August the festival of poetry is being held.

Bitola                        The town of the consuls

For checking the plane schedule to and from Macedonia you can check [www.airports.com.mk](http://www.airports.com.mk)

### Dialing Numbers:

International code for Macedonia	+389
Skopje	02
Kumanovo, Kratovo, Kriva Palanka	031
Štip, Radoviš, Sveti Nikole	032
Kočani, Delčevo, Berovo	033
Strumica, Gevgelija, Dojran	034
Gostivar, Mavrovo	042
Veles, Kavadarci, Negotino	043
Tetovo	044
Kičevo, Makedonski Brod	045
Ohrid, Struga, Debar	046
Bitola, Resen	047
Prilep, Kruševo	048

### Climate

Republic of Macedonia is characteristic of three different climates:

- Changed Mediteranean
- Mountaneous
- Mildly Continental

The changed Mediterranean climate is represented in the Gevgelija-Valandovo ravine, the Dojran and the Strumica-Radovis ravines. It can also go as north as Skopje following the flow of the Vardar river.

This climate is characterized with long and dry summers and mild and rainy winters. The spring and the fall are not very noticable. The fall is longer and warmer and the spring is shorter and colder. The average temperature in the hottest month - July, is about 25 degrees Celsius. Demir Kapija is the hottest town in the country with a summer temperature that can get up to 40 degrees Celsius. The average temperature in the coldest month - January, is relatively high with about 3 degrees Celsius.

The average yearly rainfall in the areas with changed Mediterranean climate is fairly low. The average yearly rainfall by the Vardar river is less than 500 mm., and it is one of the driest regions in the country. In the other areas of the changed Mediterranean climate the average rainfall is 600-750 mm. Snowfall is very rare for these areas.

The mountainous climate, as its name suggests, is found in the high mountainous regions of the country. It is characterized with long and snowy winters and short and cold summers. The spring is colder than the fall.

The temperature in the mountainous climate decreases with the increase of the elevation. That is why the lowest temperatures are found in the highest parts of the mountains. The Sar Planina, for example, has negative average temperatures in four months of the year, and it is also similar with the other high mountains.

The coldest months are January and February, and the warmest July and August. However, even in the warm months there can be big weather changes and even snowfalls.

As for the precipitation, the regions from the mountainous climate have the highest yearly precipitation in the country with as much rain and snowfall as 1,000 mm. The precipitation decreases as you go east and in the Eastern part of the country it is 600-700 mm. The average period that the snow stays on the mountains is from November to April, but in the higher mountains the snow can stay until the end of May.

The mildly continental climate is the most characteristic for Republic of Macedonia, since it covers the biggest area of the country. It is characterized with relatively cold and humid winters and warm and dry summers. The spring is colder than the fall.

There are differences in the average temperatures in the regions of the mildly continental climate. This is because of the differences in the regions' geographic latitude, elevation, etc. The average July temperature is highest in the Ovcepole, Kocani, and Skopje ravines. The average January temperature is lowest in the Malesevo ravine.

The yearly precipitation also differs, ranging from 490 mm., in the Ovcepole ravine, to 760 mm., in the Prespa ravine. Apart from rain and snow, there is also hail-fall in these regions.

#### **Did you knew that...**

- Mother Teresa was born in Skopje, the capital of Macedonia.
- In Ohrid, Macedonia in the mysticism of the middle ages, using his talent and genius, St. Kliment of Ohrid established the first Slavic university where 3500 students completed their education.
- There are 365 churches in Ohrid.
- The new symbol of the capital of Macedonia is the Millenium cross that is over 70 meters with it's dimensions 77 and 20 meters.
- Macedonia has 34 mountain peaks exceeding 2 000 meters. The highest one is Mount "Golem Korab".
- Macedonia wineries produce more then 135 million liters of wine and over 150 million liters of natural brandy, while breweries produce about 850 million liters of beer annually.
- 500 000 tourists visit Macedonia every year.
- Vardar is the longest river in Macedonia (388km)
- 729 BC was the year when King Perdica 1<sup>st</sup> founded the Macedonian Kingdom.
- There are 25 glacial and 15 artificial lakes in Macedonia
- More than half of Macedonian inhabitants live in urban areas (58,1%)
- The first Multi party parliament of Macedonia was elected in 1990.
- On April 8<sup>th</sup> Macedonia was accepted as the 181<sup>st</sup> member of the United Nations.
- About 35 000 children are born each year in Macedonia.
- The town of Ohrid and the Ohrid Lake are udner the protection of UNESCO as outstanding environments.
- The town of Krusevo is the highest one 1350 meters, and Gevgelija is the lowest one with only 45 meters above the sea level.
- About 700 000 tourists spend more then 2.3 million nights annually visiting Macedonia's lakes, mountains, spas and other tourist destinations.
- The first railway on the Balkans was the railway between Solun (Tessalonika) and Skopje.
- There are 22 museums in Macedonia with annual number of visitors that exceeds 400 000.
- There are 33 cultural clubs overall in the municipal centers, where more then 6500 performances and events are held, attended by more then million visitors annually.
- The first opera by Macedonian composer "Goce" was performed on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1954, and the first Macedonian Ballet was "A Macedonian Story" performed for the first time in 1953.

- There are about 900 000 hectares of land under forest, or about 35% of the total area of the Republic of Macedonia.
- In the course of one year, each Macedonian eats an average of 119kg bread, 89kg vegetables, 50kg fresh fruit, 31kg fresh or processed meat, 3,5kg meat, 61l milk, 9kg cheese, 120 eggs etc.
- About 1 650 tons of fish are being caught in the waters of Macedonian lakes and rivers. The most popular and the most required is the Ohrid trout.
- In 1905, the brothers Milton and Janaki Manaki shot the first filmed material in the Balkans in their native town of Bitola and thus laid the foundation of “the seventh art” in this region.
- The Skopje ZOO is the first established in the Balkans.