

European  
Policy  
Institute.  
Skopje

# SHADOW REPORT FOR

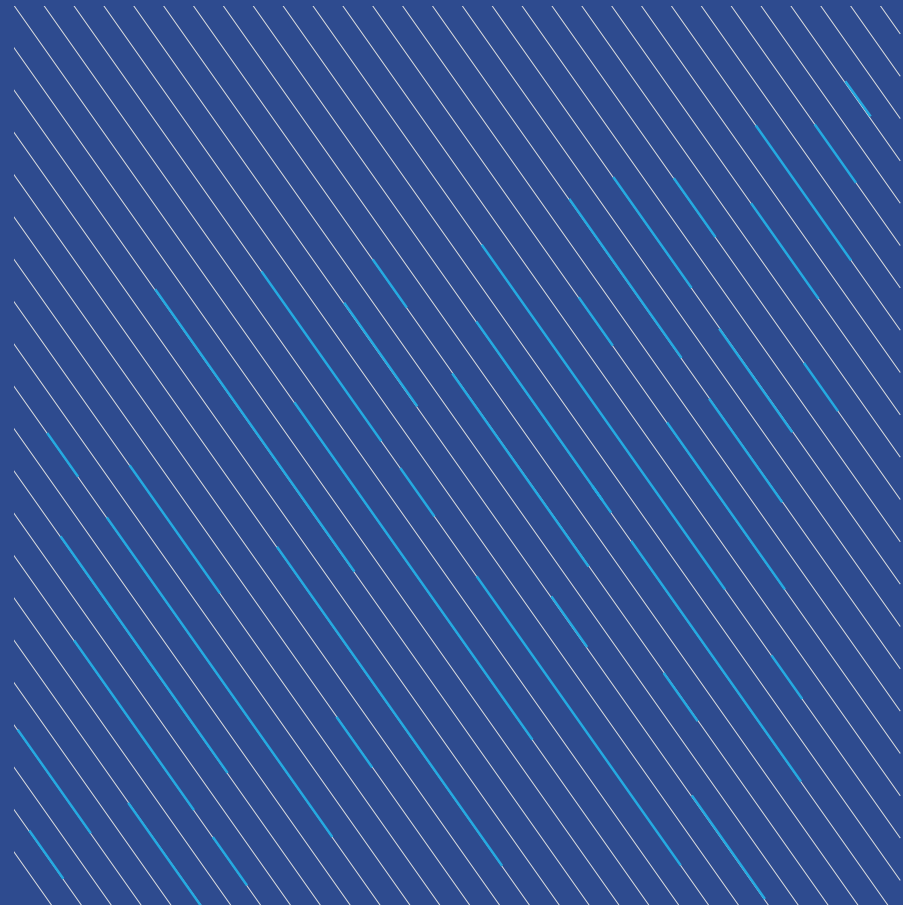
## CHAPTER 23

FOR THE PERIOD BETWEEN APRIL 2020 AND SEPTEMBER 2021



# SHADOW REPORT FOR CHAPTER 23

FOR THE PERIOD BETWEEN APRIL 2020 AND SEPTEMBER 2021



# SHADOW REPORT FOR CHAPTER 23

FOR THE PERIOD BETWEEN APRIL 2020 AND SEPTEMBER 2021

Original title of the publication:

Извештај во сенка за Поглавје 23 за периодот април 2020 - септември 2021 година

**Publisher:**

European Policy Institute - Skopje

**About the publisher:**

Simonida Kacarska, PhD

**Editors:**

Simonida Kacarska, PhD

Ardita Abazi Imeri, PhD

Biljana Kotevska, PhD

**Authors:**

Iva Conevska Vangelova, LL.M

Ismail Kamberi, LL.M

**Language editor:**

Dejan Vasilevski

**Translation from Macedonian to English:**

Blerina Starova Zlatku

**Graphic design:**

Relativ

Skopje, 2021

CIP – Каталогизација во публикација  
Национална и универзитетска библиотека “Св. Климент Охридски”, Скопје

347.96/.99.047(497.7)“2020/2021”(047)

343.85:343.352(497.7)“2020/2021”(047)

342.72/.73.037(497.7)“2020/2021”(047)

CONEVSKA Vangelova, Iva

Shadow report for Chapter 23 [Електронски извор] : for the period between April 2020 and September 2021 / [authors Iva Conevska Vangelova, Ismail Kamberi ; translation from Macedonian to English Blerina Starova Zlatku]. - Skopje : European policy institute, 2021

Начин на пристапување (URL): <https://epi.org.mk/post/20044?lang=en>. - Превод на делото: Извештај во сенка за Поглавје 23 : за периодот април 2020 - септември 2021 година. - Текст во PDF формат, содржи 106 стр. - Наслов преземен од екранот. - Опис на изворот на ден 31.12.2021. - Фусноти кон текстот. - Библиографија: стр. 82-106

ISBN 978-608-4702-53-5

1. Kamberi, Ismail [автор]

а) Правосудство -- Реформи -- Македонија -- 2020-2021 -- Извештаи б) Корупција -- Спечување -- Македонија -- 2020-2021 -- Извештаи в) Човекови права и слободи -- Заштита -- Македонија -- 2020-2021 -- Извештаи

COBISS.MK-ID 56033797



This publication was supported by the CIVICA Mobilias Program. The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of CIVICA Mobilias, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and its implementing organizations.

## List of abbreviations

AAVMS	Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services
ACCMIS	Automated court case management information system
AJPP	Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors
GRECO	Group of States against Corruption
DPDP	Directorate for Personal Data Protection
SSO	State Statistical Office
SLI	State Labour Inspectorate
SCPC	State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ENER	National electronic Register of Regulations
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
AJM	Association of Journalists of Macedonia
LPPD	Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination
ICT	Information communication technology
CPT	European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
LGBTI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex communities
MOI	Ministry of Interior Affairs
MISA	Ministry of Information Society and Administration
MRT	Macedonian Radio Television
MLSP	Ministry of Labor and Social Policy
OSCE	OSCE - Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
BPPOPOCC	Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption
RM	Republic of Macedonia
RNM	Republic of North Macedonia
USA	United States of America
SDSM	Social Democratic Union of Macedonia
MECM	Media Ethics Council in Macedonia
SPO	Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecution of Criminal Offenses Related to and Arising from the Content of Illegal Interception of Communications (Special Public Prosecutor's Office)
JCRNM	Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia
UBK	Bureau for Security and Counterintelligence
EPI	European Policy Institute
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
BPP	Basic Public Prosecution
CEPEJ	European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice
CSW	Center for Social Work

# Content

Introduction	7
Methodology	8
1. Judiciary	9
Strategic documents	10
Governing bodies	13
Independence and impartiality	19
Liability	26
Professionalism and competence	29
Quality of justice	34
Efficiency	37
2. Fight against corruption	41
Institutional framework	42
State Commission for Prevention of Corruptiona	42
The Public Prosecutor's Office	44
Legal framework	47
3. Fundamental Rights	49
Case law of the European Court of Human Rights	50
The Ombudsperson	51
Torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment	53
Prison and detention facilities	54
Personal data protection	56
Freedom of thought, conscience and religion	59
Freedom of expression	60
Implementation of legislation / institutions	60
Pressure on journalists	61
Public broadcasting service	62
Economic Factors	63
Internet 2.	64
Professional organizations / professional conditions	65
Vulnerable groups and principle of non-discrimination	66
Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination	66
Gender	68
Hate speech	72
Hate crimes	74
LGBTI +	75
Roma	77
Persons with disabilities	79
References	82

## Introduction

This shadow report brings together in a single coherent whole all the findings, conclusions and recommendations that have emerged from the monitoring of the areas contained in Chapter 23 - Judiciary and Fundamental Rights. This is the sixth such report published by the European Policy Institute - Skopje (EPI), taking into account the comments and opinions of NGOs. The previous four reports covered the following periods: October 2014 - July 2015<sup>1</sup>, July 2015 - April 2016<sup>2</sup>, May 2016 - January 2018<sup>3</sup> and June 2018 - March 2019<sup>4</sup>, April 2019 - March 2020<sup>5</sup>.

The report covers the period from the beginning of April 2020 until the end of September 2021. The report presents data that are relevant before April 2019, if they were needed for contextualization or clarification of the novelties of the current reporting period, and which are relevant for the reporting period. The reporting period corresponds to the reporting period of the European Commission (EC) for the Republic of North Macedonia (RNM, North Macedonia). This report follows the structure of Chapter 23, in line with the EC report. At the end of each area, we have singled out in a frame the recommendations and the main conclusions.

During the reporting period, the country faced a veto from Bulgaria, opposing the draft negotiating framework with North Macedonia and no compromise was reached on opening the first intergovernmental conference. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic a state of emergency was declared and the early parliamentary elections were postponed.<sup>6</sup> This put to the test the institutions that in this extremely dynamic period had to deal with the crisis caused by the pandemic, and put the health of citizens foreground, and at the same time continue with other reforms.

This shadow report was prepared as part of an institutional grant from the European Policy Institute funded under the CIVICA Mobilitas Program.

- 1 Неда Чаловска и др., „Правосудството и темелните права во Република Македонија“ (Хелсиншки комитет за човекови права на Република Македонија, 2015) (Neda Chalovska et al., „Judiciary and Fundamental Rights in the Republic of Macedonia“) (Helsinki Committee on Human Rights in the Republic of Macedonia), 2015) <[https://epi.org.mk/docs/Analiza\\_Mreza.pdf](https://epi.org.mk/docs/Analiza_Mreza.pdf)>. <[https://epi.org.mk/docs/Analiza\\_Mreza.pdf](https://epi.org.mk/docs/Analiza_Mreza.pdf)>
- 2 Неда Чаловска, Воислав Стојановски и Александар Јовановски, „Извештај во сенка за Поглавје 23 за периодот од јули 2015 до април 2016 година“ (Хелсиншки комитет за човекови права на Република Македонија, 2016) (Neda Chalovska, Voislav Stojanovski and Aleksandar Jovanovski, „Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the period from July 2015 to April 2016“ (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia, 2016) <[https://epi.org.mk/docs/lzvestaj\\_mk.pdf](https://epi.org.mk/docs/lzvestaj_mk.pdf)>.
- 3 Велимир Деловски и др., „Извештај во сенка за Поглавјето 23 за периодот од мај 2016 до јануари 2018 година“ (Хелсиншкиот комитет за човекови права на Република Македонија, 2018) (Velimir Delovski et al., „Shadow Report on Chapter 23 for the period from May 2016 to January 2018“ (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia, 2018) <[https://epi.org.mk/docs/Mreza23\\_izvestaj%20vo%20senka\\_2018.pdf](https://epi.org.mk/docs/Mreza23_izvestaj%20vo%20senka_2018.pdf)>.
- 4 Ива Цоневска и др., „Извештај во сенка за Поглавјето 23 за периодот јуни 2018 – март 2019 година“ (2019), (Iva Conevska et al., „Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the period June 2018 - March 2019“ (2019).)
- 5 Iva Conevska and Ismail Kamberi, „Shadow Report on Chapter 23 for the Period June 2019 – Marth 2020“ (Извештај во сенка за Поглавјето 23 за периодот јуни 2019 – март 2020 година) (European Policy Institute – Skopje 2020) <[https://epi.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/lzvestaj\\_vo\\_senka\\_2020.pdf](https://epi.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/lzvestaj_vo_senka_2020.pdf)>.
- 6 Early parliamentary elections were held on 15 July.

## Methodology

This report was prepared with the application of the monitoring methodology of areas in the focus of the "Network 23" - Judiciary, fight against corruption and fundamental rights,<sup>7</sup> developed in 2015 and already applied to previous reports. It included desk research of the official sources of the state and judicial institutions, analysis of the media coverage of certain developments in these areas, numerous analyzes and reports developed by civil society organizations.

For the preparation of this shadow report, written (electronic) consultations were made with civil society organizations and institutions. Consultations were first made to submit relevant analyzes, reports and research related to Chapter 23. A focus group with representatives of civil society organizations was conducted on June 29 on the situation with the protection of fundamental rights.

7

Наталија Шикова (уред.), „Методологија за мониторинг и евалуација на јавните политики од Поглавјето 23 – правосудство и фундаментални права од законодавството на Европската унија“ (Natalija Shikova (ed.), "Methodology for monitoring and evaluation of public policies from Chapter 23 - Judiciary and fundamental rights from the legislation of the European Union") (Центар за управување со промени) <[https://epi.org.mk/docs/Methodologija\\_mk.pdf](https://epi.org.mk/docs/Methodologija_mk.pdf)>.



# 1. Judiciary

During the reporting period, the implementation of the reforms in the judicial sector provided in the Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 with the Action Plan (Strategy). However, the unexpected situation with the pandemic caused by COVID-19 has contributed to the adjustment and prioritization of the reform process. A positive aspect in the past period is the intense work on the process of digitalization of the judiciary, which consisted of the adoption of a digitalisation plan for the judiciary, providing full digitalization of 34 courts and over 120 courtrooms.<sup>8</sup> It is expected that this plan will be fully implemented in the coming period due to its importance. The financial aspect of the reforms and the staffing and technical staffing of the courts and prosecutors' offices remain a challenge.

The most dynamic and uncertain period was in the area of access to justice during the three-month state of emergency, decreed by the President on March 18, 2020. In this regard, the work of the courts was regulated by the Decision on the courts in the Republic of North Macedonia in a situation of increased danger from Covid-19 adopted by the Judicial Council of RNM<sup>9</sup>, as there was no legal act regulating the work and procedures of courts and judicial authorities during a state of emergency. Moreover, the Government of the RNM, with a Decree with legal force on the deadlines in court proceedings during the state of emergency and the proceedings of courts and public prosecutor's offices, stopped the legal and preclusive deadlines for filing lawsuits in litigation and criminal proceedings and administrative disputes. and stopped the deadlines for presenting regular and extraordinary remedies during the state of emergency.<sup>10</sup>

8 Влада на Р. Северна Македонија, „Заедничка прес-конференција на премиерот Заев, министерот Маричиќ и судијата Нанев: Дигитализација на судството за зголемување на ефикасноста и пристапот до правда“ (Government of R. North Macedonia, "Joint press conference of Prime Minister Zaev, Minister Maricic and Judge Nanev: Digitalization of the judiciary to increase efficiency and access to justice" (26 April 2021).

9 The decision was taken on March 17, 2020.

10 Natali Petrovska and Zarko Hadzi- Zafirov, 'Правни Импlications Врз Судските Постапки За Време На Вонредна Состојба (Legal Implications for Court Proceedings during a State of Emergency)' (2021) <<http://blueprint.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/%D0%9F%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%BD%D0%B8-%D0%B8%D0%BC%D0%BF%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D0%B8-%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%B7-%D1%81%D1%83%D0%B4%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BF%D0%BA%D0%B8-%D0%B2%D0%BE-%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%BD%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D1%81%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%BE%D1%98%D0%B1%D0%B0.pdf>> accessed 5 August 2021.

## Strategic documents

Despite the pandemic, the Ministry of Justice of the RNM, continued to work on the implementation of the legislative agenda provided in the Reform Strategy of the Judicial Sector 2017 - 2022 with an Action Plan. According to the latest analysis<sup>11</sup> on the implementation of the Strategy, developed by the Blueprint Justice Group, the entire process of implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan for 2020 was partially transparent and inclusive, while the time frame for adoption of laws, despite the adoption of the revised action plan, was for the most part exceeded. The first monitoring report of the Blueprint Justice Group produced a similar assessment,<sup>12</sup> covering the first half of 2021.

Given the context in which the reforms took place, some of the laws<sup>13</sup> that were not adopted by the previous parliament, and which are key in the field of justice, during the reporting period were finalized by working groups established in the Ministry of Justice. They also worked on the drafting of new laws and legal amendments provided for in the Strategy<sup>14</sup>, and part of the draft laws and draft amendments provided for in the Strategy are in parliamentary procedure<sup>15</sup>. The Assembly of the RNM adopted the Law on International Cooperation in Criminal Matters in April 2021.

Regarding the implementation of the other activities of the Strategy, according to the latest data of the Ministry of Justice,<sup>16</sup> 130 activities out of 227 were fully completed. Part of the activities related to training, harmonization of court practice, technical and other staffing are being implemented and will continue until the end of the implementation of the Strategy for the Judicial Sector Reform 2017 - 2022. Some experts<sup>17</sup> think that the fulfillment of the Strategy should not be seen only from the aspect of the number of implemented activities. There are several activities and measures that depend not only on the Ministry of Justice, but from the allocated funds for reforms. These funds will make reforms much easier to implement, regardless of the commitment and efforts of the Ministry of Justice. This is the reason why the Ministry of Finance is also included in the Strategy as one of the competent institutions, since a lot of reforms depend on the funds allocated.

11 Жарко Хаџи-Зафиров и др., „Анализа на примената и спроведувањето на Стратегијата за реформа на правосудниот сектор (2017-2022) за 2020 година“ (2021), (Analysis of the Application and Implementation of the Strategy for Reform of the Judicial Sector (2017-2022) for 2020) <<http://blueprint.org.mk/2021/04/21/%D0%b8%D0%b7%D0%b2%D0%b5%D1%88%D1%82%D0%b0%D1%98-%D0%b7%D0%b0-%D1%81%D0%bF%D1%80%D0%bE%D0%b2%D0%b5%D0%b4%D1%83%D0%b2%D0%b0%D1%9a%D0%b5-%D0%bD%D0%b0-%D1%81%D1%82%D1%80%D0%b0%D1%82%D0%b5%D0%b3%D0%b8/>> accessed 3 July 2021.

12 Blueprint Judiciary Group „Следење на спроведувањето на Стратегијата за реформа на правосудниот сектор 2017-2022 година (период на следење јануари 2021 – јуни 2021 година)“ (Blueprint Judiciary Group, “Monitoring the Implementation of the Judicial Sector Reform Strategy 2017-2022 (monitoring period January 2021 – June 2021)”) (August 2021) <<http://blueprint.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/%D0%9F%D1%80%D0%B2-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%BB%D1%83%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%88%D0%B5%D0%BD-%D0%BC%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B3-%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B8%D1%84-2021-3.pdf>> Accessed 9 September 2021

13 The draft-Law on the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors and Draft-Law on Mediation were not adopted by the previous parliamentary composition and were re-drafted by the working groups established by the Ministry of Justice.

14 The Law on Criminal Procedure, Law on Justice of the Children, Law on Court Budget, Law on Expertise are being drafted by the working group.

15 The following laws are in Parliamentary Procedure: Draft - Law on Civil Procedure, new draft - Law on the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors, new draft - Law on Mediation, draft - Attorney's Law (adopted by the Government in July 2021), draft - Law on support and financial compensation to crime victims, draft amendments to the Criminal Code (adopted by the Government in July 2021).

16 „Дијалог за политики ‘Имплементација на Стратегијата за реформа на правосудниот сектор 2017-2022 година со Акциски план – До каде сме и што понатаму?’“, (Policy Dialogue ‘Implementation of the Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 with Action Plan - How far are we and what next?’) <<https://www.facebook.com/EPI.Skopje/videos/408804293926251>> accessed 15 September 2021.

17 Ibid.

Following the guidelines of the European Commission, the Council for Monitoring the Implementation of the Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform was established to monitor the implementation of the Strategy at the state level.<sup>18</sup> Some experts<sup>19</sup> believe that the current the format of the Council does not reflect the real idea and need for the existence of this council. The Strategy<sup>20</sup> provides that this Council should be led by the Prime Minister of the Republic of North Macedonia, including the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Finance and other government representatives and representatives of relevant authorities. The purpose of this council is not to lead the reforms, but to monitor the implementation of the Strategy, enabling the competent institutions to coordinate with each other to implement the activities in the Strategy, especially in those parts where funds are needed. Therefore, the Minister of Finance should have a key role in this council. However, under public pressure in May 2019, the Prime Minister of the Republic of North Macedonia resigned from chairing the Council and this position was taken over by the Minister of Justice.<sup>21</sup>

The Council for Implementation of the Strategy for the Judicial Sector Reform, in 2019, had five sessions, where representatives of stakeholders discussed the results and issued recommendations for the future implementation of the Strategy. In 2020, due to the situation with COVID-19, the early parliamentary elections, and the fact that there was a technical Government in place, the first session of the Council was held at the end of December 2020.<sup>22</sup> At the session, it was found that out of a total of 227 activities set out in the Strategy for the Reform of the Judicial Sector, 114 were fully implemented, 35 activities are ongoing, 13 activities had a later implementation deadline, 15 activities are late, 44 activities have a continuous implementation deadline, while 6 depend on the previous adoption of the envisaged legal reforms. This Session also recommended consistent implementation of the adopted legal solutions, overcoming the obstacles that contribute to delays in the activities provided in the Action Plan and Strategy, as well as the adoption of bylaws by the Council of Public Prosecutors regarding the work of public prosecutors.<sup>23</sup>

It is necessary to start timely preparation of the next Judicial Strategy, first by forming a team that will prepare it, which according to the announcements from the Ministry of Justice should cover a period of four years, starting from 2023. This is extremely important because in the absence of a relevant Judicial Strategy for more than 10 years, the team drafting the current Judicial Strategy 2017-2022 had only three months to do it prior to the adoption.<sup>24</sup>

In February 2019, the Ministry of Justice adopted the Strategy for Information and Communication Technology in the Judiciary for 2019-2024 (revised strategy). The Strategy provides for a continuous of the implementation of the activities, which are under the responsibility of the Council for Information and Computer Technology (ICT). On the positive side, this Council may, inter alia, foresee the revision of the Strategy and the Action Plan following the identified needs.<sup>25</sup> "The ICT Council was established with the amendments to the Law on Courts.<sup>26</sup> The

18 „Стратегија за реформа на правосудниот сектор 2017-2022 со Акциски план“ (Министерство за правда, 2017) („Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 with Action Plan“ (Ministry of Justice, 2017)).

19 „Дијалог за политики ‘Имплементација на Стратегијата за реформа на правосудниот сектор 2017-2022 година со Акциски план – До каде сме и што понатаму?’“, (Policy Dialogue ‘Implementation of the Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 with Action Plan - How far are we and what next?’) <<https://www.facebook.com/EPI.Skopje/videos/408804293926251>> accessed 15 September 2021.

20 „Стратегија за реформа на правосудниот сектор 2017-2022 со Акциски план“ (n 18), (‘Strategy for the Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 With Action Plan’ (n 18).)

21 Влада на Република Северна Македонија, „Од 134. седница на Владата“ Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, (‘From the 134th Government Session’) (5 August 2019) <<https://vlada.mk/node/17749>> .

22 Ministry of Justice, “Response to a request for free access to public information”.

23 Ibid.

24 „Дијалог за политики ‘Имплементација на Стратегијата за реформа на правосудниот сектор 2017-2022 година со Акциски план – До каде сме и што понатаму?’“, (Policy Dialogue ‘Implementation of the Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 with Action Plan - How far are we and what next?’) <<https://www.facebook.com/EPI.Skopje/videos/408804293926251>> accessed 15 September 2021.

25 Стратегија за информатичко-комуникациска технологија во правосудството за 2019-2024 година (ревизирана стратегија), (Strategy for information and communication technology in the judiciary for 2019-2024 (revised strategy)) 2019.

26 „Службен весник на Република Северна Македонија“, бр. 96/2019; Закон за изменување и дополнување на Законот за судовите 2019, ( Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 95/2019; The Law amending and supplementing the Law on Courts 2019).

ICT Council shall propose, create, implement and provide ICT solutions, which aim to increase the efficiency and transparency of the judicial system, and the centralization of the information systems established in the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, all courts and prosecutor's offices, the Ministry of Justice, the Directorate for Execution of Sanctions and penitentiary and correctional institutions and the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors, to ensure fast, automated and uninterrupted access to data, and interoperability.<sup>27</sup> The ICT Council held its constitutive session<sup>28</sup> on November 6, 2019. "Since the adoption of the Plan for digitalization of the judiciary, the ICT Council continuously holds sessions.<sup>29</sup>

In the next period, it is necessary to take measures and activities for proper implementation of the ICT Strategy, the Plan for digitalization of the judiciary and monitoring of their implementation by all relevant stakeholders.

“ Since the adoption of the Strategy for the Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022, and the Action Plan, the reforms related to the change of the legal framework, implementing the Urgent Reform Priorities, the recommendations of the Venice Commission and the recommendations given by the expert group, led by Priebe, have been largely implemented. In addition to the efforts to implement the legislative agenda set out in the Strategy, there is a delay in the implementation of certain activities, despite the revised Action Plan. Therefore, it is necessary to overcome the obstacles that contribute to delays in the activities provided in the Action Plan and the Strategy, above all, allocation of funds for the implementation of certain reforms provided in the Strategy for the Judicial Sector Reform with the Action Plan. It is necessary to timely adopt bylaws for the implementation of reform laws and amendments to laws provided in the Strategy.

We expect that in the next period the focus will be on consistent implementation of laws and amendments to laws in the field of justice, timely adoption of all bylaws and their proper implementation, which will increase the efficiency and independence of the judiciary, and consequently the citizens' trust in the justice system.

We expect to see the continuation and strengthening of the practice of inclusion in relation to the establishment and operation of working groups for drafting laws, as well as increased debates and proposals regarding certain solutions that are extremely important for citizens.

It is necessary to start timely preparation of the next Judicial Strategy, first of all by forming a team that will prepare it, which according to the announcements from the Ministry of Justice should cover a period of four years, starting from 2023.

In the next period, it is necessary to take measures and activities for proper implementation of the ICT Strategy, the Plan for digitalization of the judiciary and monitoring of their implementation by all relevant stakeholders. A particularly positive step forward in terms of information and computer technology in the judiciary, especially courts, is the adoption of the plan for digitalization of the judiciary, which we expect to be fully implemented in the next period. “

27 Министерство за правда, „Совет за ИКТ, Министерство за правда“ (Ministry of Justice, "ICT Council, Ministry of Justice") <<https://www.pravda.gov.mk/toc1/1958>> accessed 9 September 2021.

28 Академик, „Конституиран советот за координирање на ИКТ во правосудството“ ("Council for Coordination of ICT in the Judiciary Constituted") (August 11, 2019) <<https://akademik.mk/konstituiran-sovetot-za-koordinirane-na-ikt-vo-pravosudstvoto/>>

29 Министерство за правда, „Совет за ИКТ, Министерство за правда“ (n 27) (Ministry of Justice, "ICT Council, Ministry of Justice") (n 27).

## Governing bodies

To promote independence and impartiality of the judicial system, as measures for the implementation of the Strategy for Reform of the Judicial Sector<sup>30</sup>, a new Law on the Judicial Council and the Law amending the Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors were adopted.

The Law on the Judicial Council was positively assessed by the Venice Commission<sup>31</sup>, however there are still disagreements from the judiciary regarding the organizational set-up of the Council.<sup>32</sup> Regarding the organizational set-up, the judiciary and some non-governmental organizations have objections to the provision of the law, according to which the President of the Judicial Council is elected by the members elected by the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia. In this regard, in April 2021, the Constitutional Court initiated a procedure<sup>33</sup> regarding the legal provisions for the election of the President of the Judicial Council for the constitutionality of Article 8 paragraph 3: "...elected by the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia."

Regarding the implementation of the law on election of council members, during the reporting period (April 2020 - June 2021), according to the new Law on Judicial Council, one council member shall be elected from among the judges from the appellate area of Bitola.<sup>34</sup> The voting took place on 26.08.2020, in accordance with the protocols for protection from COVID-19, as it was done during a pandemic. Despite the indication from the Commission that by doing so the Judicial Council violates the legal obligation, the selection was not broadcasted directly and a recording of the process was not available on the Council's website, due to lack of technical and human resources to do it.<sup>35</sup> Within the election process, the Judicial Council of RNM made a decision to establish a commission for the election of a member of the Judicial Council and in accordance with Article 14 of the Law on the Judicial Council of RNM<sup>36</sup> one member and deputy member were elected from among the representatives of the associations and foundations working for more than five years in the field of human rights and the rule of law.

30 „Стратегија за реформа на правосудниот сектор 2017-2022 со Акциски план“ (n 18), („Strategy for the Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 With Action Plan“ (n 18).)

31 Richard Barrett, Philip Dimitrov and Ciril Ribičič, „Opinion on the Draft Law on the Judicial Council, Adopted by the Venice Commission at Its 118th Plenary Session“ (Venice Commission 2019) Opinion No. 947/2019 <[https://www.venice.coe.int/web-forms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2019\)008-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/web-forms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2019)008-e)>.

32 According to the speech of the President of the Judicial Council given at the public policy dialogue. Source: Институт за европска политика, „Извештај од следење на Стратегијата за реформа на правосудниот сектор 2017-2022 година – за 2020 година“ (2019) (European Policy Institute, „Report from the monitoring of the Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 - for 2020“) (2019) <<https://epi.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/%D0%94%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B3-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D1%98%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B8-%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B8%D1%84.pdf>>

33 akademik.mk, „Уставниот суд поведе постапка за законските одредби за избор на претседател на Судскиот совет“, („The Constitutional Court initiated a procedure for the legal provisions for the election of the President of the Judicial Council“) (29 April 2021) <<https://akademik.mk/ustavniot-sud-povede-postapka-za-zakonskite-odredbi-za-izbor-na-pretседател-na-sudskiot-sovet/>> accessed 9 September 2021.

34 Судски совет, „Врз основа на сумирањето и утврдувањето на резултатите од гласањето за избор на член на Судски совет на Република Северна Македонија од редот на судиите од апелациското подрачје Битола, избрана е Мери Радевска, судија на Основниот суд Битола“ Judicial Council, („Based on the summing up and determination of the voting results for the election of a member of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia from the ranks of judges from the appellate area of Bitola, Meri Radevska, Judge of the Basic Court Bitola was elected“) (August 27, 2020) <<https://urlzsm.com/d6eyh>> .

35 Blueprint Justice Group (n 12).

36 „Службен весник на Република Северна Македонија“, бр. 102/2019; Закон за Судскиот совет на Република Северна Македонија 2019, (102/2019, Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no Law on the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia 2019.)

In December 2020, the Assembly elected Pavlina Crvenkovska as a new member of the Judicial Council from among prominent lawyers.<sup>37</sup> In April 2021, Ms. Crvenkovska was unanimously elected President of the Judicial Council of the RNM.<sup>38</sup> This is the first election of a President of the Council under the new Law on the Judicial Council. In May 2021, shortly after the election of the new President of the Judicial Council, the SCPC initiated a case against her.<sup>39</sup> The opposition party VMRO - DPMNE<sup>40</sup> and Eurostandard Bank clients reacted against her election. The President of the Judicial Council responded to such accusations that she will perform her function impartially and that when the Council will decide on a case related to the bank, she will exempt herself from the process.<sup>41</sup> In her first address as President of the Judicial Council, Crvenkovska promised that this composition of the Council, under her leadership, will make every effort to raise the dignity of the judicial system and for at least one degree of trust of citizens in the judiciary.<sup>42</sup>

The report from the monitoring of the Strategy for the Judicial Sector Reform for 2020 of the Blueprint Judiciary Group<sup>43</sup> notes again that the 2019 practice for members of the Judicial Council of RNM proposed by the Assembly or by the President of RNM, and elected by the Assembly of RNM, to elect candidates who have work experience in the executive and judicial power, and that the attached CVs do not show that they fulfill legal requirement of being a prominent lawyer. Although the law clearly defines the criteria that must be met by prominent lawyers, members of the Judicial Council, it also provides proposals on who can be elected as a member of the JCRNM, listing university law professors, lawyers, former judges of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, international judges and other prominent lawyers. This clearly shows the intention of the legislator for the desired profile of members of the Judicial Council.<sup>44</sup>

In order to implement the new Law on Judicial Council, the Judicial Council, by exceeding the deadline, at the end of 2019 adopted the Rules of Procedure of the Judicial Council of RNM,<sup>45</sup> Rulebook on the manner of ranking candidates for judges from the Academy of Judges and Public Prosecutors, which was adopted on 26.12.2019, which regulates the manner of ranking the candidates from the list of candidates submitted by the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors who have applied for election of a judge of the basic court.<sup>46</sup> During 2020, the Judicial Council also adopted a Methodology for evaluating the work of a judge based on the qualitative criteria for judicial work and a Form for evaluating and scoring the meeting of the qualitative criteria for the work of a judge, Methodology for qualitative evaluation of court presidents and the Form for Qualitative Evaluation of Court Presidents and the Guidelines to

37 „Судски совет на Република Северна Македонија – Претседател“ (“Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia - President”) <<https://urlzs.com/Xh1aZ>>

38 „За претседателка на Судскиот совет на Република Северна Македонија е избрана Павлина Црвенковска – прв избор на претседател според новиот закон за Судски совет“ (“Pavlina Crvenkovska elected President of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia - the first election of a President under the new law on the Judicial Council”) (April 20, 2021) <<https://urlzs.com/4Nq6W>>

39 360 степени, ‘ДКСК Отвори Предмет За Новата Претседателка На Судскиот Совет’ (6 May 2021), (SCPC Initiated a Case against the New President of the Judicial Council) <<https://360stepeni.mk/dsk-otvori-predmet-za-novata-pretседателka-na-sudkiot-sovet/>>.

40 Ibid.

41 360 степени, „Некому му пречи мојот избор па сака да ме дискредитира, вели новата претседателка на Судскиот совет за обвинувањата од оштетени штедачи во Еуростандард банка“ (29 април 2021), (360 degrees, “Someone is bothered by my selection and wants to discredit me, says the new President of the Judicial Council on the accusations of damaged depositors in Eurostandard) Bank <<https://360stepeni.mk/nekomu-mu-prechi-mojot-izbor-pa-saka-da-me-diskreditira-veli-novata-pretседателka-na-sudkiot-sovet-za-obvinuvana-od-oshteteni-shtedachi-vo-eurostandard-banka/>>.

42 „Ќе направиме сè за барем еден степен да ја подигнеме довербата на граѓаните во судството, вели новата претседателка на Судскиот совет“ (29 април 2021) (“We will do everything to raise for at least one degree the level of citizens’ trust in the judiciary, says the new President of the Judicial Council”) (April 29, 2021) <<https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/ke-napravime-s-za-barem-eden-stepen-da-ja-podigneme-doverbata-na-graganite-vo-sudstvoto-veli-novata-pretседателka-na-sudkiot-sovet-pavlina-tsvenkovska/>>.

43 Blueprint Justice Group (n 12).

44 Ibid.

45 Објавен во „Службен весник на Република Северна Македонија“, бр. 274/2019, (Published in the “Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia”, no. 274/2019.)

46 The adoption of these bylaws was also noted in the previous shadow report, Conevska and Kamberi (n 5).

calculate effective working hours. The Judicial Council also adopted the Work Program of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia for 2021 and an internal plan for monitoring and evaluation of the work of courts, judges and court presidents for the period from 01.01.2021 to 31.12.2021.<sup>47</sup>

The case complexity methodology was adopted by the Judicial Council in September 2021. The Judicial Council also adopted certain strategic documents for its work in 2020<sup>48</sup>, such as the Functional Analysis of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Strategic Plan of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia with an Action Plan for 2020-2022 containing the same activities provided in the action plan from the previous year, Strategic Communication Plan of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, Human Resources Strategy for the Judicial Network. It is extremely important that in the next period the Human Resources Strategy for the court network is consistently implemented.

The previous report noted that,<sup>49</sup> "although the provision provided in the Law on Judicial Council is good, enabling the extension of the right of access to the Judicial Council and for every citizen to submit a request for establishing the liability of a judge, still the share of the Judicial Council in this segment of its jurisdiction is huge and it risks to be unable to respond to the other competencies provided by the Law on the Judicial Council." However, the Judicial Council encourages citizens to report injustices in the judiciary, without delay, as the deadline is six months.<sup>50</sup> Out of a total of 724 complaints filed against judges from all over the country last year, the Judicial Council decided that only four were founded, and for two semi-founded. The average number of complaints received as of several years ago remains the same. "Annually, barely two were accepted as founded. A large part of the complaints from citizens against judges were rejected due to the expiration of the 6-month deadline they had to report the case. "For complaints and petitions from citizens, there is no deadline for submission.

The Judicial Council of the RNM was noted to have played a pro-active role in dealing with the crisis caused by COVID 19. In the absence of any legal act regulating the work and procedures of the courts and judicial bodies during a state of emergency, the work of the courts was regulated by the Decision of the Judicial Council of the RNM on the courts in the Republic of North Macedonia in conditions of increased danger from the COVID-19 virus.<sup>51</sup> This decision was amended on May 7, 2020 and May 29, 2020, while on October 29, the Judicial Council issued a statement<sup>52</sup> that the Decision for the courts in the Republic of North Macedonia is still in force in conditions of increased danger from the COVID-19 virus adopted by the Council on 17.03.2020, as well as the amendments of 07.05.2020 and 29.05.2020 and they need to be applied by the presidents of the courts and judges. The Judicial Council also adopted a Recommendation for the use of annual leave from the calendar year 2019 (adopted on 07.05.2020) and a Recommendation for donating part of the salary of judges for the months of April and May 2020 to the Fund for Assistance and Support for the Management of the Crises caused by COVID-19.<sup>53</sup>

47 All bylaws and other documents are published on the website of the Judicial Council. Судски портал на Република Северна Македонија, Судски совет на РСМ (Judicial Portal of the Republic of North Macedonia, Judicial Council of the RNM) <[48 Court portal of the Republic of North Macedonia \(n 47\).](http://sud.mk/wps/portal/ssrm/sud!/ut/p/z1/hY49D4lwFEV_!wOj7eOrVrcuYtSEiYhvMUBqJaGUQLXx31tHEw13u7nnJlciLsk01b-NTle3MUPW-XSHdWJYkwe9wzskcgijygm0P-6goYnpZAtDP8CcCvI9LyJFiV2viGk2A8DBO44izNikSvmHh56EY6grip08y-0lO5DH5462147wLIADnHFHGqF65xugAfimtm50tv0k66hLWWL-cWK3eVbdaWg!!/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/></a>></p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

49 Conevska and Kamberi (n 5).

50 Сакам да кажам, „Судскиот совет ги охрабрува граѓаните да пријавуваат неправди во судството, но да не чекаат многу, рокот е 6 месеци“ (Sakam da Kazam "The Judicial Council Encourages Citizens To Report Injustices In The Judiciary But Not Wait Too Long, The Deadline Is 6 Months") (23 September 2021) <<https://urlzs.com/rdc75>>.

51 The decision was taken on March 17, 2020.

52 Судски совет на Република Северна Македонија, „Соопштение за јавност“ (The Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, "Press Release") (October 20, 2020) <<https://urlzs.com/HgtjN>> accessed 9 September 2021. <<https://urlzs.com/HgtjN>> accessed 9 September 2021.

53 Court portal of the Republic of North Macedonia (n 47).

Before the dissolution of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia in February 2020,<sup>54</sup> after a delay of almost a whole year, the Assembly adopted the amendments to the Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors<sup>55</sup>. As a result, during the reporting period it adopted the Rules of Procedure of the Council of Public Prosecutors<sup>56</sup> and the Rulebook on determining the manner of supervising the work and conduct of public prosecutors<sup>57</sup>. The Council of Public Prosecutors of RNM in May 2021 adopted the Code of Ethics of Public Prosecutors<sup>58</sup> upon the proposal of the Association of Public Prosecutors. This Code was criticized by the professionals, and it was emphasized that certain provisions of the code can contribute to the isolation of the Public Prosecutor's Office and they are contrary to the Law on Public Prosecutor's Office and the efforts for transparency.<sup>59</sup> The provision that provoked most of the reactions was the one stating that "Public Prosecutors shall not comment in public on the decisions made by the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia". Some professionals thought that this provision was made promptly after a public appearance of a public prosecutor who reacted to the lack of transparency during the recent election of public prosecutors.<sup>60</sup>

In July 2020, a member of the Council whose term had expired was replaced by a new member elected in December 2020.<sup>61</sup> In September 2021 Antonio Jolevski was unanimously elected as the new president of the Council of Public Prosecutors.<sup>62</sup>

In the transparency section, as noted in the previous Shadow Report on Chapter 23<sup>63</sup>, "the new Law on the Judicial Council<sup>64</sup> sets the basis for improving the accountability and transparency of the Judicial Council. The Judicial Council's hearing is also public. The public can be excluded only if certain legal requirements are met when it comes to protecting the integrity of the judge. But even when the public is excluded, the President of the Judicial Council must give reasons for excluding the public. Moreover, when electing judges, each member of the Judicial Council is required to publicly defend his/her decision, why he/she voted for a certain judge and give relevant reasoning." In this regard, the President of the Judicial Council was the main point

54 Собрание на Република Северна Македонија, „135. седница на Собранието на РСМ“ („135. Session of the Assembly of RNM“) (February 16, 2020) <<https://www.sobranie.mk/sessiondetails.aspx?sessionDetailsId=960776a1-bef0-4c2b-a514-a325b5a6b7b9&date=16.2.2020>> .

55 The previous Shadow Report contains more details on these changes, Conevska and Kamberi (n 5)..

56 "Official Gazette of the RNM", Rulebook of the Council of Public Prosecutors 2021 (No. 118/2021).

57 Council of Public Prosecutors, "Website – Laws and bylaws" <[http://sjorm.gov.mk/%d0%b7%d0%b0%d0%ba%d0%be%d0%b-d%d0%b8-%d0%b8-%d0%bf%d0%be%d0%b4%d0%b7%d0%b0%d0%ba%d0%be%d0%bd%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%b8-%d0%b0%d0%ba%d1%82%d0%b8/="">Bylaws"</http:>](http://sjorm.gov.mk/%d0%b7%d0%b0%d0%ba%d0%be%d0%b-d%d0%b8-%d0%b8-%d0%bf%d0%be%d0%b4%d0%b7%d0%b0%d0%ba%d0%be%d0%bd%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%b8-%d0%b0%d0%ba%d1%82%d0%b8/)

58 Council of Public Prosecutors, "Code of Ethics of Public Prosecutors in the Republic of North Macedonia" (May 20, 2021) <[https://sjorm.org.mk/news/%d0%b5%d1%82%d0%b8%d1%87%d0%ba%d0%b8-%d0%ba%d0%be-%d0%b4%d0%b5%d0%ba%d1%81-%d0%bd%d0%b0-%d1%98%d0%b0%d0%b2%d0%bd%d0%b8%d1%82%d0%b5-%d0%be%d0%b1%d0%b2%d0%b8%d0%bd%d0%b8%d1%82%d0%b5%d0%bb%d0%b8-%d0%b2/="">](https://sjorm.org.mk/news/%d0%b5%d1%82%d0%b8%d1%87%d0%ba%d0%b8-%d0%ba%d0%be-%d0%b4%d0%b5%d0%ba%d1%81-%d0%bd%d0%b0-%d1%98%d0%b0%d0%b2%d0%bd%d0%b8%d1%82%d0%b5-%d0%be%d0%b1%d0%b2%d0%b8%d0%bd%d0%b8%d1%82%d0%b5%d0%bb%d0%b8-%d0%b2/) accessed on 9 September 2021.

59 The public opinion reacted strongly to the provisions of the Code that stipulated that "Public prosecutors are required to refrain from making statements in public or privately that could raise doubts about their impartiality, and in particular should not comment on the cases in which they are involved or could be involved" and "Public prosecutors when receiving instructions to act on certain cases from a higher public prosecutor shall refrain from informing or commenting with others." According to some professionals, this is contrary to Article 3 of the Law on the Public Prosecution, "(1) The Public Prosecution is organised following the principles of hierarchy and subordination. (2) The Public Prosecution is an independent state body. (3) The compliance with the principles from paragraph (1) of this article shall not endanger the independence and responsibility of any public prosecutor in performing his/her duty."

60 „Дијалог за политики 'Имплементација на Стратегијата за реформа на правосудниот сектор 2017-2022 година со Акциски план – До каде сме и што понатаму?'", (Policy Dialogue 'Implementation of the Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 with Action Plan - How far are we and what next?) <<https://www.facebook.com/EPI.Skopje/videos/408804293926251>> accessed 15 September 2021.

61 Совет на јавни обвинители, „Годишен извештај за работата на Советот на јавни обвинители на Република Северна Македонија за 2020 година“ (Council of Public Prosecutors, "Annual Report on the Work of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia) (2021)" <<http://sjorm.gov.mk/%d0%b3%d0%be%d0%b4%d0%b8%d1%88%d0%b5%d0%bd-%d0%b8%d0%b7%d0%b2%d0%b5%d1%88%d1%82%d0%b0%d1%98/>>.

62 „Советот на јавни обвинители избра нов претседател“, ('The Council of Public Prosecutors Elects the New President') (29 September 2021) <<https://360stepeni.mk/sovotot-na-javni-obviniteli-izbra-nov-pretседatel/>>.

63 Conevska and Kamberi (n 5).

64 Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 102/2019, Law on the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia 2019.



of contact with the media and the public was regularly informed of the ongoing work through press releases.<sup>65</sup> The novelty introduced by the new Law on Judicial Council to ensure increased transparency is positive, providing that the public is not excluded from the sessions for election of judges and presidents of courts.<sup>66</sup>

During this reporting period, the Judicial Council<sup>67</sup> and the Council of Public Prosecutors<sup>68</sup> made efforts to improve transparency and accountability in their work. Increased transparency and the publication of all decisions, press releases and bylaws were particularly observed in the Judicial Council. However, in order to inform the public more easily and quickly with the decisions from the sessions, the public releases should be more detailed, containing more information, in order to avoid any confusion, ie to avoid speculations in the public. "The Judicial Council should publish anonymised detailed decisions on procedures that could serve to establish the impartiality and independence in decision-making."<sup>69</sup> Such a practice of publishing anonymised decisions should also exist with the Council of Public Prosecutors. The Council of Public Prosecutors should open its sessions to the media and NGOs. To improve transparency, the Memorandum of Co-operation between the Judicial-Media Council of the Judges' Association of the RNM and the Council of Public Prosecutors of the RNM was signed on 12 February 2021. According to the memorandum, the Council nominates members<sup>70</sup> to further enhance cooperation and greater transparency of judges and public prosecutors.<sup>71</sup>

Both Councils should explain in detail the decisions for (non) election of judges and public prosecutors, to preserve the authority of the Councils in the judiciary and the prosecution and of course in order to restore the trust of citizens in the justice sector.

Although the Council of Public Prosecutors from 2021 has a new budget, the funds are below the minimum necessary level to provide normal functioning.<sup>72</sup>



The implementation of the new Law on the Judicial Council and amendments to the Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors has begun. Both Councils started adopting bylaws for implementation of the new Law on the Judicial Council and amendments to the Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors, although some of the acts were adopted in excess of the legal deadline. During the reporting period, the President of the Judicial Council was elected for the first time, under the new Law on the Judicial Council.

Regarding the organizational set-up, the judiciary and some non-governmental organizations have objections to the provision of the law, according to which the President of the Judicial Council is elected by the members elected by the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia. Regarding the implementation of the legal provisions of the Law on the Judicial Council, the non-governmental organizations working in the field of justice call for a consistent respect of the "prominent lawyer" criterion for the election of members of the Judicial Council of RNM proposed by the Assembly or the President of RNM, and elected by the Assembly of RNM.

65 Blueprint Justice Group (n 12).

66 Ibid.

67 Court portal of the Republic of North Macedonia (n 47).

68 Council of Public Prosecutors <<http://sjorm.gov.mk/><http://sjorm.gov.mk/=>Prosecutors.

69 Blueprint Justice Group (n 12).

70 The President of the Council Mr. Aco Kolevski and the Vice President of the Council Mr. Arber Isaku were nominated

71 Советот на јавните обвинители на Република Северна Македонија, „Записник од 21. седница на Советот на јавните обвинители на Република Северна Македонија“ (Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, "Minutes of the 21st session of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia."). (February 12, 2021) <<http://sjorm.gov.mk/%d0%b7%d0%b0%d0%bf%d0%b8%d1%81%d0%bd%d0%b8%d0%ba-2/>>.</http:>

72 Совет на јавни обвинители, „Годишен извештај за работата на Советот на јавни обвинители на Република Северна Македонија за 2020 година“ (Council of Public Prosecutors, "Annual Report on the Work of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia) (2021)" <<http://sjorm.gov.mk/%d0%b3%d0%be%d0%b4%d0%b8%d1%88%d0%b5%d0%bd-%d0%b8%d0%b7%d0%b2%d0%b5%d1%88%d1%82%d0%b0%d1%98/>>.

In addition to the improved legal framework for the competencies of the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors of RNM, the adequate and consistent practical application of the legal provisions by both councils is of great importance. Further monitoring of the work by the civil organizations working in this area is also needed.

During this reporting period, the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors made efforts to improve their transparency and accountability. Increased transparency and the publication of all decisions, press releases and bylaws were particularly noticeable in the Judicial Council. However, for easier and faster information of the public about the decisions from the sessions, the press releases should be more detailed, with more information, to avoid confusion and speculation in the public. "The Judicial Council should publish anonymized reasoned decisions on the procedures enabling the assessment of the impartiality and independence of the decision-making." Such a practice should also be applied to the Council of Public Prosecutors. Moreover, The Council of Public Prosecutors should open its sessions to the media and non-governmental organizations.

Both Councils should explain in detail the decisions for (non) election of judges and public prosecutors, to preserve the authority of the Councils in the judiciary and the prosecution and of course to restore the trust of citizens in the justice sector.

Although the Council of Public Prosecutors from 2021 has a new budget, the funds are below the minimum necessary level to provide normal functioning. 

## Independence and impartiality

Ensuring the independence and impartiality of the judiciary is a necessary to maintain the rule of law. As noted in the previous Shadow Report on Chapter 23<sup>73</sup>: „Part of the activities and measures set out in the Judicial Sector Reform Strategy regarding independence and impartiality have been implemented with the adoption of the third set of amendments to the Law on Courts and the new Law on the Judicial Council. The draft Law on the Public Prosecutor’s Office and the draft Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors are also aimed at enhancing the independence of the justice system”. The third set of amendments to the Law on Courts and the new Law on the Judicial Council are particularly contributing to the implementation of the recommendations of the expert group led by Pribe<sup>74</sup> and the recommendations made by the Venice Commission.<sup>75</sup> Despite the established legal framework which together with the Constitution of the RNM guarantee above all the independence of the judiciary and the principle of separation of powers, the trust of the citizens in the judiciary is not at the highest level. The trust in the Public Prosecutor’s Office is not high either.

Surveys conducted by the International Republican Institute - IRI for the Republic of North Macedonia<sup>76</sup>, show that citizens’ trust in the judiciary is very low, ie only 23 percent of citizens said they trusted the judiciary, compared to 76 percent who said they do not. The last survey<sup>77</sup> with citizens - participants in court proceedings regarding trust in the courts, showed that 48.3% of respondents trust the courts (35.2% mostly trust, and 13.1% trust), while 43.3% still show distrust in the courts (19.8% do not trust, and 23.5% mostly do not trust), and about 8% do not know, ie do not have an answer. Regarding the trust in the Public Prosecutor’s Office, 36.9% stated that they have shaken trust in the Public Prosecutor’s Office (19.5% do not trust, and 17.4% mostly do not trust), 33.2% of them have relative trust (24 , 8% mostly trust them, and 8.4% trust them) and 29% do not know or do not have an answer. The factors that affect the fall of trust in each of the institutions are numerous, but the respondents mostly cite suspicions of corruption and political influence. However, citizens’ trust in the judiciary in 2021 has increased compared to 2020. Citizens’ trust increased mostly in the courts (by 12.4%), followed by the Public Prosecutor’s Office (by 7.2%).<sup>78</sup> According to the latest survey by Balkan Barometer<sup>79</sup>, 81.1% of citizens in our country consider the judiciary to be the most corrupt. However, this percentage is less than the percentage in 2019, where 89% of citizens had such a perception. Despite such perceptions, a recent State Department report noted that the government showed greater respect for judicial independence and impartiality.<sup>80</sup>

The legislature, the executive, the media and the Judicial Council have a key role to play in strengthening citizens’ trust in the judiciary, by fostering the transparency of court proceedings, the enforcement of judgments, and thus maintaining public confidence in the independence

73 Conevska and Kamberi (n 5).

74 Senior Experts’ Group, “The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Recommendations of the Senior Experts’ Group on Systemic Rule of Law Issues Relating to the Communications Interception Revealed in Spring 2015” (2015) <[https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/news\\_corner/news/news-files/20150619\\_recommendations\\_of\\_the\\_senior\\_experts\\_group.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/news_corner/news/news-files/20150619_recommendations_of_the_senior_experts_group.pdf)>; Senior Experts’ Group, “The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Assessment and Recommendations of the Senior Experts’ Group on Systemic Rule of Law Issues 2017” (2017) <[https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/2017.09.14\\_seg\\_report\\_on\\_systemic\\_rol\\_issues\\_for\\_publication.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/2017.09.14_seg_report_on_systemic_rol_issues_for_publication.pdf)>.

75 Barrett, Dimitrov and Ribičić (n 31); Richard Barrett and others, “Opinion on the Draft Amendments to the Law on Courts, Adopted by the Venice Commission at Its 117th Plenary Session” (Venice Commission 2018) Opinion No. 944/2018 <[https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2018\)033-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2018)033-e)>.

76 International Republican Institute, “North Macedonia” <<https://www.iri.org/search/node/north%20macedonia>>.

77 “Report from the second annual survey on the satisfaction of users of the courts” (Association “Zenit”, 2021).

78 Ibid.

79 ACIT and EPIK Institute, “Balkan Barometer 2021 Public Opinion Analytical Report” (<[file:///C:/Users/Angel%20EPI/Downloads/Balkan\\_Barometer\\_Public\\_opinion\\_2021v4%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Angel%20EPI/Downloads/Balkan_Barometer_Public_opinion_2021v4%20(1).pdf)>).

80 State Department, “North Macedonia 2020 Human Rights Report” (2021) <<https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/north-macedonia/>>.

and impartiality of the judiciary.<sup>81</sup> One of the key factors to the independence and autonomy of the judiciary is the Judicial Council. In this regard, the Judicial Council should continue with the right to defend judicial independence noted in the previous Shadow Report<sup>82</sup>. The transparency of the Council and the explanation of decisions to elect judges, court presidents, and decisions to dismiss judges<sup>83</sup> are key to restoring citizens' trust. The Judicial Council will maintain the authority within the judicial, and will also contribute to the return of citizens' trust.<sup>84</sup> The Judicial Council meets the basic conditions for public and transparent operation of its sessions, but other facilities and technical conditions available to the Judicial Council, still remain insufficient, which can prevent the presence of interested members of the public. The main session hall cannot accommodate a large number of people, as an audience.<sup>85</sup> The latest analysis by the All for A Fair Trial Coalition of the judicial council's session shows that decisions are being made to elect and dismiss judges without argumentation and behind closed doors.<sup>86</sup> The explanation of the Decisions of the Council of Public Prosecutors regarding the election and dismissal of public prosecutors is of utmost importance for restoring citizens' trust in the public prosecutor's office.<sup>87</sup> The public opinion reacted mostly<sup>88</sup> regarding the election of public prosecutors on April 22, 2021, regarding the explanation given by the Council of Public Prosecutors for the non-election of a candidate in a higher public prosecutor's office.

The active role and efforts of the Association of Judges in promoting the independence and impartiality of the judiciary should continue. The Judicial-Media Council<sup>89</sup> and the implemented activities and workshops of the Council in the past period are of exceptional importance for promoting the transparency of the judiciary. To improve transparency, a Memorandum of Co-operation between the Judicial-Media Council of the Judges' Association of the RNM and the Council of Public Prosecutors of the RNM was signed on 12 February 2021. According to the memorandum, the Council nominates members<sup>90</sup> to further enhance cooperation and greater transparency of judges and public prosecutors.<sup>91</sup> During the reporting period, some courts in the country have shown increased transparency and openness.

During the reporting period, investigations were opened and court proceedings were initiated on current senior state officials. During the reporting period, the Prosecutor's Office for the Prosecution of Organised Crime and Corruption opened an investigation into the procurement of traffic violation software against Rashkovski – Secretary General of the Government of the

81 Lady Biancu [Lady Bianku] and Hannah Smith, "Independence and Impartiality of the Judiciary – Review of the Relevant Case-Law of the European Court of Human Rights" (2021) <<https://www.rolplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/independence-and-impartiality-of-judiciary-mkd.pdf>>

82 Conevska and Kamberi (n 5).

83 Part of the expert public criticized the dismissal of judges without disclosing more details about the reasons for dismissal, giving unprofessional and negligent work as an explanation without detailed elaboration of the reasons, see more 'Dialogue on Policies "Implementation of Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 with Action Plan - How far are we and what next?" (N 16).

84 Ibid.

85 Натали Петровска и Дарко Аврамовски, Влијание На Мерит Системот Врз Судската Независност и Професионалност Во Северна Македонија' (2021) (Natali Petrovska and Darko Avramovski, 'Impact of the Merit System on Judicial Independence and Professionalism in North Macedonia') (2021) <<https://all4fairtrials.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/%D0%90%D0%B-D%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%94%D0%B5%D0%BC%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BC-%D0%9C%D0%9A%D0%94.pdf>> .

86 "What is even more impressive is that before each session, the members of the Council, hold a meeting, which is of course closed to the public. These meetings last quite long before the sessions when it comes to the election of judges, or the election of judges in higher courts, which together with the absence of more detailed explanations of the decisions of the Council, and the fact that not all members of the Council are involved in discussions, may leave the public in doubt that these meeting are in fact a time when members agree behind closed doors on what will be discussed at the session", see more at *ibid*.

87 „Дијалог за политики 'Имплементација на Стратегијата за реформа на правосудниот сектор 2017-2022 година со Акциски план – До каде сме и што понатаму?“, (Policy Dialogue 'Implementation of the Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 with Action Plan - How far are we and what next?) <<https://www.facebook.com/EPI.Skopje/videos/408804293926251>> accessed 15 September 2021.

88 Фактор.мк, „Ленче Ристовска била многу млада за да работи како виш јавен обвинител“ (април 2021) ("Lence Ristovska is allegedly too young to work as a senior public prosecutor") (April 2021) <<https://faktor.mk/lenche-ristovska-bila-mnogu-mlada-za-da-raboti-kaj-ruskovska>>.

89 "Judicial-Media Council – Website <<https://sudskomediumski.mk/>>"

90 The President of the Council Mr. Aco Kolevski and the Vice President of the Council Mr. Arber Isaku were nominated

91 The Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia (n 72).

RNM<sup>92</sup> and has been in custody since April 2021.<sup>93</sup> At the same time, the SCPC, on its own initiative, opened the case for Rashkovski.<sup>94</sup> According to the senior government officials, this is a proof that everyone is equal before the law.<sup>95</sup>

The public also reacted to the possibility that Mijalkov could escape, as he appeared only two days after the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption, the Basic Criminal Court - Skopje issued a decision for a house detention and 24 hour video and audio surveillance, appeared in court.<sup>96</sup>

The "Extortion racket" case should be taken as a reminder of the importance of the election and integrity of judges and public prosecutors for the independence of the judicial system. It is extremely important for the applicants to take the psychological test and the integrity test when entering the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors.<sup>97</sup> It is extremely important to take the psychological test and the integrity test when entering the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors.<sup>98</sup> The "extortion racket" case was resolved in June 2020, where the former Special Public Prosecutor was sentenced to seven years in prison for abuse of office and authority. The Skopje Court of Appeals upheld the verdict on July 21, making it final.<sup>99</sup>

As stated in the previous shadow report,<sup>100</sup> the financial independence is an important aspect of the independence of the judicial system. However, we still face the fact of insufficient funding of the judiciary. Namely, financial independence and salary increases in the judiciary for many years have been a subject of discussion. Financial independence is reflected in both organizational capacity and the efficient performance of tasks within respective judiciary functions,<sup>101</sup> and the increase in salaries in the judiciary goes hand in hand with increasing responsibility and efficiency of judges.<sup>102</sup>

The amount of funds needed for the functioning of the beneficiary units of the court budget is determined in the amount of at least 0.8% of the gross domestic product in accordance with the Law on Court Budget. The Law on Judicial Budget stipulates that in case of a budget rebal-

92 „Рашковски и сопственикот на 'Инвока' во куќен притвор" ("Rashkovski and the Owner of 'Invoka' in House Detention) (16 April 2021).

93 In July 2021, the court froze the property of Rashkovski and his children. Pravdiko.mk, „Судот им го замрзна имотот на Рашковски и на неговите деца" (6 јули 2021) pravdiko.mk, ("The Court Froze the Property of Rashkovski and His Children") (6 July 2021) <<https://www.pravdiko.mk/sudot-im-go-zamrzna-imotot-na-rashkovski-i-na-negovite-detsa/>>.

94 Руџица Фотиновска, „ДКСК отвори предмет за набавката на софтвер од Драги Рашковски", (Rušica Fotinovska, "SCPC opened a case for the procurement of software by Dragi Rasskovski") (24.mk, 10 March 2021) <<https://www.24.mk/details/dksk-otvori-predmet-za-nabavkata-na-softver-od-dragi-rashkovski-1>>.

95 Влада на РСМ, „Заев: Нема недопирливи, а во исто време никој не е виновен додека не се докаже спротивното, имаме правна држава која брзо ги расчистува случаите", (Government of the RNM, "Zaev: No one is untouchable, and at the same time no one is guilty until proven otherwise, we have a rule of law that quickly clears up cases") (April 16, 2021) <<https://vlada.mk/node/24906>> accessed on 9 September 2021.

96 Академик.мк, „Јавното обвинителство: Сашо Мијалков во попладневните часови се јави во Обвинителството" (23 февруари 2021), (Akademik.mk, "The Public Prosecutor's Office: Sasho Mijalkov reported to the Prosecutor's Office in the afternoon") (February 23, 2021).

97 Институт за европска политика, „Дијалог за политики: Ветингот како вонредна мерка ќе создаде вонредни проблеми" (European Policy Institute, "Policy Dialogue: Vetting as an emergency measure will create emergency problems") (June 3, 2020) <<https://epi.org.mk/post/14608>>.

98 "Policy Dialogue 'Implementation of the Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 with Action Plan - How far are we and what next?'" (N 16).

99 Тамара Дичоска, „Апелација ја потврди пресудата за 'Рекет': 9 години затвор за Боки, 7 за Јанева", (Tamara Dichoska, "Appeal upholds verdict for 'Racket': 9 years in prison for Boki, 7 for Janeva") (24.mk, July 21, 2021 <<https://24.mk/details/apelacija-ja-potvrdi-presudata-za-reket-9-godini-zatvor-za-boki-7-za-janeva>>.

100 Conevska and Kamberi (n 5).

101 Александар Гоџо and Оливер Митов, 'Функционална Анализа На Судскиот Совет На Република Северна Македонија' (Aleksandar Godzo and Oliver Mitov, 'Functional Analysis of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia') (April 2020 <[http://www.vsrn.mk/wps/wcm/connect/ssrm/d905f12b-310c-4552-ac69-95539c6cfb13/%D0%A4%D0%A3%D0%9D%D0%9A%D0%A6%D0%98%D0%9E%D0%9D%D0%90%D0%9B%D0%9D%D0%90+%D0%90%D0%9D%D0%90%D0%9B%D0%98%D0%97%D0%90+%D0%9D%D0%90+%D0%A1%D0%A1%D0%A0%D0%A1%D0%9C-%D0%A4%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BD%D0%B0.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE.Z18\\_L8CC1J41L-0B520APQFKICD0CR4-d905f12b-310c-4552-ac69-95539c6cfb13-kZ5emCU](http://www.vsrn.mk/wps/wcm/connect/ssrm/d905f12b-310c-4552-ac69-95539c6cfb13/%D0%A4%D0%A3%D0%9D%D0%9A%D0%A6%D0%98%D0%9E%D0%9D%D0%90%D0%9B%D0%9D%D0%90+%D0%90%D0%9D%D0%90%D0%9B%D0%98%D0%97%D0%90+%D0%9D%D0%90+%D0%A1%D0%A1%D0%A0%D0%A1%D0%9C-%D0%A4%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BD%D0%B0.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE.Z18_L8CC1J41L-0B520APQFKICD0CR4-d905f12b-310c-4552-ac69-95539c6cfb13-kZ5emCU)>.

102 Академик.мк, „Се зголемуваат платите на судиите" (14 јуни 2021), (Akademik.mk "Judges' salaries raised") (June 14, 2021) <<https://akademik.mk/se-zgolemuvaat-platite-na-sudiite/>> accessed 9 September 2021.

ancing, the funds intended for financing the judiciary cannot be reduced. Under the law, these provisions guarantee financial independence. “On one hand, in practice, the judiciary can boast of having a guaranteed amount of funds expressed in GDP as a budget, but, on the other hand, in practice exercising this right is challenging. Namely, in the past years, the 0.8% of GDP has never been fully allocated to the judiciary”.<sup>103</sup>

For that purpose, in accordance with the Work Program of the Judicial Budget Council for 2020 and in accordance with the Strategy for Reform of the Judicial Sector 2017-2022, the Judicial Budget Council, in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice as the holder of the Strategy and in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance in within the activity of the strategic goal number 2.1 Independence and impartiality, prepared a draft-amendment to the Law on Court Budget. In May 2021,<sup>104</sup> a notification was published on ENER for the drafting of amendments to the Law on Court Budget, stating that these amendments will remedy inconsistencies in the application of certain provisions of the Law on Court Budget.

The judiciary cannot be completely independent if it does not have the financial independence and freedom to decide on spending, current activities, and procurement. In our country, the judiciary receives more than twice less funds than provided by law, and is required to obtain an approval from the Ministry of Finance for all procurement and employment.<sup>105</sup> “Judges agree that the judiciary should have its own budget and its own treasury system with a body that will decide on employments and other needs in the judiciary. This would give it greater independence, while procurement and ongoing employment would be carried out without the approval of the executive power.<sup>106</sup> The last revision of the alignment of institutional capacities of the beneficiary units of the judicial power for the execution of competencies<sup>107</sup>, notices a violation of the legal provision of the Law on Court Budget for allocating a percentage of the GDP for the judiciary, lack of funds in the judiciary and failure to provide appropriate technical conditions.

Additionally, the Government and the Association of Judges reached an agreement to increase the salaries of judges by 15% by 2022, where the Government stated that the funds for the agreed salary increase in the judiciary are already provided in the court budget.<sup>108</sup> It is expected that such commitments will be fully met in the next period, primarily taking into account that the last promises<sup>109</sup> for salary increase were not fulfilled.<sup>110</sup> In addition to increasing the salaries of judges, it is necessary to increase the salaries of judicial and public prosecutors staff. In this regard, it is necessary to amend the Law on Judicial Service to improve the status and income of court staff. In March 2021, the Minister of Justice signed the decision for increasing salaries from 8% to 18%.<sup>111</sup> An increase in the salaries of public prosecutors is also expected, as well as a further tendency to increase the salaries of judges in 2023 to reach the desired 20%.<sup>112</sup>

103 Godzo and Mitov (n 102).

104 ENER, “Draft-law Amending the Law on Court Budget” (May 10, 2021) <[https://ener.gov.mk/Default.aspx?item=pub\\_regulation&subitem=view\\_reg\\_detail&itemid=67287](https://ener.gov.mk/Default.aspx?item=pub_regulation&subitem=view_reg_detail&itemid=67287)> .

105 Центар за правни истражувања и анализи, „Финансиската независност на судството“ ( Center for Legal Research and Analysis, “Financial Independence of the Judiciary”).

106 Ibid.

107 Државен завод за ревизија, „Институционални капацитети на единките корисници на судска власт за реализација на надлежностите“, (State Audit Office, “Institutional capacities of the beneficiary unites of judicial power for the execution of Competencies”) (15 May 2020) <<https://dzr.mk/mk/200515-revizija-na-usoglasenost-2019-institucionalni-ka-paciteti-na-edinkite-korisnici-na-sudska>> .

108 Akademik.mk, “Judges’ salaries are increasing” (n 103).

109 An increase in judges’ salaries was expected since September 2019. “Policy Dialogue ‘Implementation of the Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 with Action Plan - How far are we and what next?’” (N 16).

110 Ibid.

111 Правдикo, „Маричиќ потпиша правилник за зголемување на платите на судската полиција“ „Маричиќ потпиша правилник за зголемување на платите на судската полиција“, (Praviko: “Maricic signed a Regulation on increasing the salaries of the court police”) (March 5, 2021) <<https://www.pravdiko.mk/marichik-potpisha-pravilnik-za-zgolemuvane-na-platite-na-sudskata-politsija/>> .

112 Фактор.мк, „Платите на судиите ќе се зголемат за 15 отсто до 2022 година“ (Factor.mk, “Judges’ salaries will increase by 15% by 2022”) (June 14, 2021) <<https://fokus.mk/platite-na-sudiite-ke-se-zgolemat-za-15-otsto-do-2022-godina/>> .

There is a need to increase the funds allocated to the Public Prosecutor's Office, as a key body for combating crime and corruption. The Law on Public Prosecution<sup>113</sup> stipulates that the amount of funds for the operation of the Public Prosecution should be at least 0.4% of the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia. This provision does not correspond at all with the commitment to guarantee minimum financial resources, nor to a significant increase of the already determined amount. In order to ensure successful operation and guarantee the independence of the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Council of Public Prosecutors should have a special budget that will independently manage and decide on the needs and conduct of public procurement for public prosecutors.<sup>114</sup> The lack of sufficient financial resources allocated to the Public Prosecutor's Office undermines the secrecy of the investigation as prosecutors are required to turn to the executive for additional funds for expertise in conducting investigations into capital criminal cases.<sup>115</sup>

## ACCMIS AND DIGITALIZATION OF THE JUDICIARY

The process of digitalization of the judiciary and a new or upgraded ACCMIS system are two of the most visible reform processes related to the judiciary. These processes will contribute to the promotion of impartiality, increase the transparency and efficiency of the judiciary, and will certainly contribute to greater economy in spending the funds from the court budget.<sup>116</sup> The digitalization plan was adopted by the Government in April 2021. According to this plan, the protection of the system will be improved, as well as the cooperation with other institutions, international organizations and the cooperation with other countries.<sup>117</sup> "187 courtrooms will be equipped with state-of-the-art digital equipment for a smooth online trial. In this process of digitalization, special emphasis is put on the public participation and the possibility to follow trials. Analyzes show that distance trials or online trials increase efficiency and transparency by 60%. This additionally reduces costs. With only 15 institutions connected to the interoperability system, 15 million euros will be saved annually."<sup>118</sup>

The first courts to be digitalized according to the plan are the courts in Stip, Kavadarci and Strumica. The issuance of electronic certificates from the criminal records will start by October 2021. According to this plan, the courts will be connected not only with each other, but also with the public prosecutor's offices, the Ministry of Justice and other relevant institutions.<sup>119</sup> The digitalization of the judiciary and the public prosecutor's office saves time in the implementation of proceedings, facilitates the electronic movement of documents through courts, prosecutors' offices and other institutions that carry out criminal prosecution and will improve the overall connection of these institutions, and fully establish e-delivery. Digitization will prevent the abuse of the rights of the participants in the court proceedings by delaying the proceedings, through digitization of the files. At the same time, the digitalization will enable faster access to justice of the citizens and increased transparency of the judicial bodies and will enable online trials for certain cases that are simpler.<sup>120</sup> The first online trial in our country was held in the Basic Court in Kavadarci.<sup>121</sup>

113 Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 42/2020; Law on Public Prosecution.

114 Блупринт група за правосудство, „Анализа на капацитетите и ресурсите на Јавното обвинителство во Република Северна Македонија“ (2020), (Blueprint Judiciary Group, "Analysis of the Capacities and Resources of the Public Prosecutor's Office in the Republic of North Macedonia") (2020) <<https://epi.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Resursi-kapaciteti-jo-2020.pdf>>.

115 "Policy Dialogue 'Implementation of the Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 with Action Plan - How far are we and what next?'" (N 16).

116 Институт за европска политика, „Дигитално судство – Нова ера на реформите на македонскиот правосуден систем“, (European Policy Institute, "Digital Judiciary - A New Era of the Reforms of the Macedonian Judicial System") <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vVowUkt0\\_68](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vVowUkt0_68)>.

117 Влада на Р. Северна Македонија, „Заедничка прес-конференција на премиерот Заев, министерот Маричиќ и судијата Нанев: Digitalization of the judiciary to increase efficiency and access to justice“ (n 8).

118 Ibid.

119 European Policy Institute, "Digital Judiciary - A New Era of the Reforms of the Macedonian Judicial System", (n 117).

120 Ibid.

121 Академик.мк, „Онлајн судење за разбојништво во Основниот суд Кавадарци“, (Akademik.mk, "Online robbery trial in the Basic Court Kavadarci") (April 2020) <<https://akademik.mk/onlajn-sudene-za-razbojnishтво-vo-osnovniot-sud-kavadartsi/>>.

The ACCMIS system is soon expected to be fully upgraded and the plan for digitalization of the judiciary to be fully implemented. Additionally, to consistently implement the plan and work with the new ways of technology, trainings will have to be held through the AJPP of all relevant stakeholders. A way should be found to preserve the IT staff in the courts and prosecutor's offices, primarily by increasing their salaries.<sup>122</sup> It is necessary in the next period to work on equipping the prosecutor's offices with appropriate equipment to timely and efficiently perform their responsibilities.<sup>123</sup>

The digitalization of the institutions, and thus of the courts and prosecutor's offices, is also regulated by the Law on Electronic Governance and Electronic Services,<sup>124</sup> which creates an obligation to join the national platform for interoperability. As of September 2020, the new Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Identification and Confidential Services started to be implemented. This law regulates the creation, storage and processing of electronic documents, electronic identification, and confidential services.<sup>125</sup> The ICT Council is continuously working on the implementation of the digitalization plan and actively contributes to the amendment of procedural laws and other aspects related to the judiciary, to comply with the provisions, above all, of the Law on Electronic Government and Electronic Services. The first law that is fully harmonized is the draft Law on Civil Procedure, which is in Parliamentary procedure, and then a set of provisions will be added to the Law on Criminal Procedure<sup>126</sup>. The court rules of procedure are also being amended to contain the technical steps for online hearings.<sup>127</sup>

Regarding the abuses of the ACCMIS system, as noted in the previous report, during the inspection of the functioning of the ACCMIS system and the application of the court rules, irregularities were noticed in the use of ACCMIS by some courts, after which,<sup>128</sup> The Basic Public Prosecution Skopje on July 8, 2019 filed a draft indictment for the crime "Abuse of official position" against the former president of the Basic Criminal Court - Skopje, as a result of which, in April 2020 he was sentenced to three years and six months in prison.<sup>129</sup> During the reporting period, the Judicial Council dismissed a judge for abuse of the ACCMIS system.<sup>130</sup>

122 European Policy Institute, "Digital Judiciary - A New Era of Macedonian Judicial System Reforms", (n 117).

123 Ibid.

124 "Official Gazette of RM" and "Official Gazette of RNM", the Law on Electronic Government and Electronic Services.

125 Академик.мк, „Стапува во примена Законот за електронски документи, електронска идентификација и доверливи услуги“, (Akademik.mk, "The Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Identification and Confidential Services enters into force") (September 1, 2020) <<https://akademik.mk/stapuva-vo-primena-zakonot-za-elektronски-dokumenti-elektronска-идентификација-i-doverlivi-uslugi/>>.

126 They will refer to the electronic delivery, preparation of electronic documents, introduction of electronic evidence, inspection of documents will be redefined enabling the submission of electronic evidence. Online hearings will be an exception, ie participants will be allowed to attend the trial online under justified reasons. Submission of recordings of electronically undertaken actions will also be provided.

127 European Policy Institute, "Digital Judiciary - A New Era of Macedonian Judicial System Reforms", (n 117).

128 Министерство за правда, „Извештај од извршен увид во функционалноста на информатичкиот систем и надзор над примената на одредбите од судскиот деловник во судовите“, (The Ministry of Justice, 'Report on the Executive Inspection of the Functionality of the Information System and Supervision over the Application of the Provisions of the Court Rulebook in the Courts') (2018) <<https://www.pravda.gov.mk/Upload/Documents/%D0%90%D0%9A%D0%9C%D0%98%D0%A1%20%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%98.pdf>>.

129 The Skopje Court of Appeal reduced his prison sentence to two years and six months. Телма, „Намалена казната за екс судијата Владимир Панчевски на две и пол години затвор“ (Telma, "The sentence for ex-judge Vladimir Pancevski reduced to two and a half years in prison") (September 28, 2021) <<https://telma.com.mk/2021/09/28/%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%B-C%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%B5%D0%BA%D1%81-%D1%81%D1%83%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0-%D0%B2%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B4/>>.

130 dw.com, „Забрзано се проветрува судството, 'надна' уште една судијка поради злоупотреби“, (dw.com, 'The Judiciary is being Refreshed Rapidly, Another Judge' Fell 'Due to Abuses') (20 January 2021) <<https://www.dw.com/mk/%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%BE-%D1%81%D0%B5-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%82%D1%80%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B0-%D1%81%D1%83%D0%B4%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%BE-%D0%BF%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D1%83%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B5-%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D1%81%D1%83%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%BA%D0%B0-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B8-%D0%B7%D0%BB%D0%BE%D1%83%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B1%D0%B8/a-56293653>>.



“ Despite the established legal framework which together with the Constitution of the RNM guarantee above all the independence of the judiciary and the principle of separation of powers, the trust of the citizens in the judiciary is not at the highest level. The trust in the Public Prosecutor’s Office is not high either. The legislative power, the executive power, the media, and the Judicial Council have a key role to play in strengthening citizens’ trust in the judiciary, by fostering the transparency of court proceedings, the enforcement of judgments, and thus maintaining public confidence in the independence and impartiality of the judiciary.

The Council meets the basic conditions for public and transparent sessions; however, it is noted that decisions are made for the election and dismissal of judges without reasoning and behind closed doors. The explanation of the Decisions of the Council of Public Prosecutors regarding the election and dismissal of public prosecutors is of utmost importance for restoring citizens’ trust in the public prosecutor’s office.

The budget of the judiciary and the public prosecutor’s office needs to be increased. The measures provided by the Strategy for the increase of the court budget are not applied. The Law on Court Budget regarding the allocation of GDP to the judiciary has not been implemented for years. Judges agree that the judiciary should have its own budget and its own treasury system with a body that will decide on employments and other needs in the judiciary. This would provide the judiciary with greater independence, and procurement and employments would be done without the approval of the executive”. We expect that the following amendments to the Law on Judicial Budget will fully address the need for funding of the judiciary and will be consistently applied in practice.

It is necessary to increase the salaries of judges, prosecutors and professional staff in line with their position and competencies.

The process of digitalization of the judiciary and a new or upgraded ACCMIS system are two of the most important reform processes related to the judiciary. The ACCMIS system is soon expected to be fully upgraded and the plan for digitalization of the judiciary to be fully implemented. It is also necessary to create and establish a software solution for automated case management in the Public Prosecutor’s Office that will improve the efficiency in handling criminal charges, monitoring the investigation and prosecution process and will enable data access and processing. Additionally, to consistently implement the plan and work with the new ways of technology, trainings will have to be held through the AJPP of all relevant stakeholders. A way should be found to preserve the IT staff in the courts and prosecutor’s offices, primarily by increasing their salaries. It is necessary in the next period to work on equipping the prosecutor’s offices with appropriate equipment to timely and efficiently perform their responsibilities.



## Liability

The amendments to the Law on Courts,<sup>131</sup> regarding the ground of liability of judges, are aimed at strengthening the independence of judges and the judiciary. The changes are in line with the implementation of the recommendations given in the GRECO report<sup>132</sup> and the measures set out in the Strategy for Reform of the Judicial Sector. Moreover, these amendments have been approved by the Venice Commission.<sup>133</sup> They assess the grounds for dismissal,<sup>134</sup> considering the severity of the violation and the guilt of the judge. The analysis of the legal provisions shows that the concept of severe punishment of judges by dismissal due to their inefficient and unprofessional work has been abandoned. The Law on the Judicial Council implements the recommendations given by the Venice Commission in the area of liability.<sup>135</sup> It defines the procedure for determining the liability of presidents and judges, as well as the grounds for disciplinary proceedings for a member of the Council and the procedure itself.<sup>136</sup>

However, despite the established legal framework, the latest research<sup>137</sup> of the Coalition All for a Fair Trial shows that judges think that the decisions of the Judicial Council to establish disciplinary liability or dismissal of a judge are not easily available, and are not sufficiently reasoned. Moreover, “it is difficult to determine whether the criteria for establishing disciplinary liability or dismissal of a judge are sufficiently standardized, and whether the procedures for determining liability are sufficiently predictable. This inevitably affects the legal certainty enjoyed by judges appearing as parties to these proceedings, which is largely a cause for concern. The judges point out to the issue that several judges were dismissed for a relatively short period of time, although the Judicial Council had not taken similar steps and activities for a long time. Judges consider that the Judicial Council does not use a clear methodology, and especially does not use clear criteria for gradation of the weight of the imposed measure, so in several different cases the Judicial Council decided to dismiss the judges directly, without first applying a lighter disciplinary measure.<sup>138</sup>

There is additional concern among some judges regarding the efficiency of the appeals system at the Appeals Council in the Supreme Court<sup>139</sup>, ie their perception is that the Appeals Council<sup>140</sup> at the Supreme Court always upholds the decisions of the Judicial Council. According to the new Law on the Judicial Council, a total of 16 judges have been dismissed due to unprofessional and negligent performance of the judicial function.<sup>141</sup> In 2020 six appeals were filed by judges for under procedure, while the Appeals Council made five decisions rejecting the appeals, and the decisions of the Judicial Council of RNM were upheld. Unlike 2020, in 2019 seven appeals were filed, while the Appeals Council made one decision rejecting the appeal, and the decision of the Judicial Council of RNM was upheld, while in two cases decisions were made revoking the decisions of the Judicial Council and the cases are returned for retrial.

131 Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 96/2019; The Law on amending and supplementing the Law on Courts (n 26).

132 Adopted by GRECO at its 80th plenary session, “Fourth Round of Evaluation - Prevention of Corruption in relation to MPs, Judges and Prosecutors, Second Compliance Report, Republic of Macedonia” (2018) <<https://rm.coe.int/-80-18-22-/16808cc861>> .

133 Barrett and others (n 76).

134 Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 96/2019; The Law on amending and supplementing the Law on Courts (n 26).

135 Barrett, Dimitrov and Ribičić (n 31).

136 Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 102/2019, Law on the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia 2019.

137 Petrovska and Avramovski (n 86).

138 Ibid.

139 “It is strange that such decisions are always upheld by the Supreme Court, which leaves a dilemma as to how effective such appeals are. “As far as I know, there are judges who are sanctioned and who do not appeal the decision because they do not think that this will make any difference”, excerpt from *ibid*.

140 The Appeals Council is provided for in the new Law on Judicial Council.

141 “Policy Dialogue ‘Implementation of the Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 with Action Plan - How far are we and what next?’” (N 16).

The Law on Public Prosecution<sup>142</sup> defines the grounds for termination, dismissal and disciplinary liability of public prosecutors. On the positive side, as with the amendments to the Law on Courts, this draft-law gradates the grounds for dismissal, more precisely it ranges from a minor form of violation to a more serious disciplinary violation, with a disciplinary measure imposed on the public prosecutor, instead of dismissal. Regarding the grounds for dismissal of the public prosecutors, the gravity of the committed violation and the guilt of the public prosecutor are taken into account.<sup>143</sup> The law sets out the required majority by which the Council of Public Prosecutors can dismiss prosecutors. Regarding the procedure, the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia shall adopt the Regulation on the manner of conducting the procedure for determining the liability of the public prosecutor, upon the proposal of the Public Prosecutor of the Republic of North Macedonia<sup>144</sup>

Unlike the Law on Judicial Council<sup>145</sup>, where anyone can file a request to establish the liability of a judge or president of a court, the Law on Public Prosecution<sup>146</sup> stipulates that a public prosecutor may be dismissed for a more serious disciplinary violation and membership in a political party. Whereas, the procedure for establishing a liability of the public prosecutors for a disciplinary violation is carried out upon a reasoned proposal of the public prosecutor of the Republic of North Macedonia for all public prosecutors and upon a reasoned proposal of a senior public prosecutor of the higher public prosecutor's office for public prosecutors in the higher public prosecutor's office, for the basic public prosecutor of the basic public prosecutor's office and for public prosecutors in the basic public prosecutor's office, ex officio or upon receiving information about a committed violation. Upon the proposal for initiating a disciplinary procedure, the submitter is required to submit evidence of the committed disciplinary violation.<sup>147</sup> Unlike the Law on Judicial Council where the procedure is conducted in the Council, in the Public Prosecutor's Office, the procedure for determining the responsibility of the public prosecutor in performing the public prosecutor's office is conducted by a commission of five members or their deputies, one of each being from the higher public prosecutor's office and one from the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia elected by the collegiums of those prosecutor's offices.<sup>148</sup> Due to the lack of public prosecutors, such disciplinary proceedings are slow.

There is an upward trend in the complaints filed to the Council of Public Prosecutors, ie in 2019, 160 complaints were filed and in 2020, 200.<sup>149</sup> Most of the complaints are for alleged failure to act or untimely action on filed criminal charges and failure to receive notifications from them in the long run, and individuals and legal entities are particularly dissatisfied with the decisions to reject criminal charges, which in a large percentage are appealed to higher public prosecutors.<sup>150</sup> In 2020, a total of four appeals were filed with the Council of Public Prosecutors against the decision of the Disciplinary Commission in the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia and the Council is conducting a second instance disciplinary procedure against them. Despite the number of complaints filed, the Council of Public Prosecutors in 2020 has not made decisions on dismissal of public prosecutors.<sup>151</sup> The situation is different in the judiciary, where the Judicial Council actively conducts disciplinary proceedings against judges and has dismissed judges under the new Law on the Judicial Council.

142 Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 42/2020; The Law on the Public Prosecution.

143 Ibid.

144 Ibid.

145 Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 102/2019, Law on the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia 2019.

146 Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 42/2020; The Law on Public Prosecution.

147 Article 93 of the Law on Public Prosecution.

148 Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 42/2020; The Law on Public Prosecution.

149 "Policy Dialogue 'Implementation of the Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 with Action Plan - How far are we and what next?'" (N 16).

150 The Council of Public Prosecutors, 'Annual Report on the Work of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia for 2020' (n 62).

151 Ibid.



However, despite the established legal framework regarding the procedure and grounds for liability of judges, judges think that the decisions of the Judicial Council to determine disciplinary liability or dismissal of a judge are not easily available, and are not sufficiently reasoned. Judges think that the Judicial Council does not use a clear methodology, and especially does not use clear criteria for gradation of the weight of the imposed measure, and in several different cases the Judicial Council decided to dismiss the judges directly, without first applying a lighter disciplinary measure.

There is an upward trend in the complaints filed to the Council of Public Prosecutors, ie in 2019 there were 160 complaints, while in 2020 the Council received 200 complaints. However, due to the reduced number of public prosecutors, disciplinary proceedings were slow. Despite the number of complaints filed, the Council of Public Prosecutors in 2020 has not made decisions on dismissal of public prosecutors.



## Professionalism and competence

As noted in the previous shadow report for Chapter 23<sup>152</sup>, the adoption of the latest amendments to the Law on Courts<sup>153</sup>, the new Law on Judicial Council<sup>154</sup>, the Law on Public Prosecution<sup>155</sup> and the amendments to the Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors<sup>156</sup> created a legal framework largely in line with international standards regarding the selection of judges and public prosecutors based on a merit system. Among other things, recommendation ix from the GRECO report<sup>157</sup> was implemented, referring to the increase of the qualitative and quantitative criteria for the assessment of judges with the adoption of the new Law on the Judicial Council.<sup>158</sup> The admission to the judiciary and the public prosecutor's office is through the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors, which implemented the Priebe recommendations<sup>159</sup>. Moreover, the latest amendments to the Law on Courts and the new Law on the Judicial Council of the RNM were done in consultation with and received a positive opinion from the Venice Commission<sup>160</sup>. With regard to the legal protection of judges for certain measures taken against them, the right to appeal to the Appeals Chamber of the Supreme Court<sup>161</sup> is introduced as a kind of safeguard, both in relation to the (non) election of judges and presidents of courts, and in relation to the assessment decision.

The established legal framework, and the guarantees for the correct application of the merit system, are only one way of meeting the benchmarks in the area of justice as part of Chapter 23. However, consistent implementation of these provisions is necessary, by monitoring the implementation of these Laws, both at the state level and by NGOs.

Regarding the implementation of the Law on Judicial Council in the area of selection and promotion of judges, the Judicial Council adopted the Rulebook on the manner of ranking candidates for election to a higher court<sup>162</sup>, the Rulebook on the manner of ranking candidates for judges from the Academy of Judges and Public Prosecutors, which was adopted on 26.12.2019, which regulates the manner of ranking the candidates from the list of candidates submitted by the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors who have applied for election of a judge of

152 Conevska and Kamberi (n 5).

153 Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 96/2019; The Law on amending and supplementing the Law on Courts (n 26).

154 Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 102/2019, Law on the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia 2019.

155 Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 42/2020; The Law on Public Prosecution.

156 Council of Public Prosecutors, "Website - Laws and Bylaws" (n 58).

157 Adopted by GRECO at its 80th Plenary session (n 133)

158 Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 102/2019, Law on the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia 2019.

159 Senior Experts' Group, "The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Recommendations of the Senior Experts' Group on Systemic Rule of Law Issues Relating to the Communications Interception Revealed in Spring 2015" (n 75); Senior Experts' Group, "The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Assessment and Recommendations of the Senior Experts' Group on Systemic Rule of Law Issues 2017" (n 75).

160 Barrett, Dimitrov and Ribičić (n 31); Barrett and others (n 76).

161 Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 102/2019, Law on the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia 2019.

162 Судски совет на Република Северна Македонија, „Правилникот за начинот на рангирање на кандидатите за избор на судија во повисок суд“ (The Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, "Regulation on the manner of ranking candidates for election of a judge in a higher court") (February 4, 2020) <[29](http://sud.mk/wps/wcm/connect/ssrm/c7213a55-036c-4a1f-88ff-3f52ab8290d2/Pravilnik+%D0%B7%D0%B0+%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%87%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%82+%D0%BD%D0%B0+%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B3%D0%B8%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%9A%D0%B5+%D0%BD%D0%B0+%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%B4%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5+%D0%B7%D0%B0+%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%80+%D0%BD%D0%B0+%D1%81%D1%83%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0+%D0%B2%D0%BE+%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%BA+%D1%81%D1%83%D0%B4.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE.Z18_L8CC1J41L0B520APQFKICDOCR4-c7213a55-036c-4a1f-88ff-3f52ab8290d2-kZargVg>.</a></p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

the basic court. During 2020, the Judicial Council also adopted a Methodology for evaluating the work of a judge based on qualitative criteria and a Form for evaluating and scoring the fulfillment of qualitative criteria by judges, Methodology for qualitative evaluation of court presidents and the Form for Qualitative Evaluation of Court Presidents and the Guidelines to calculate effective working hours. The Methodology for Case Complexity, as of June 2021, was not adopted.<sup>163</sup>

Despite the established legal framework, the monitored sessions of the Judicial Council, and the opinions of the judges, raise doubts and dissatisfaction with the way the Council elects judges, judges in higher courts and presidents of courts.<sup>164</sup> Inadequate or no reasoning for the election or non-election of judges, judges in higher courts and presidents of courts, giving generic and abstract explanations at Council sessions and very rarely referring to candidates' CVs are some of the reasons that cast doubt on the independence of the Judicial Council and the absence of influence in the election, both for the general public and for the judges themselves.<sup>165</sup>

Regarding the election of new judges, the members of the Council do not give any explanations when they vote against. This can lead to the selection of candidates who are ranked lower on the ranking list than the candidates who have not been selected. In such cases it would be extremely important to provide an explanation of both the selection of specific candidates and the reasons why other, higher ranked candidates were not elected. Members always adhere to this rule of mandatory oral explanation of votes for the election of a judge, but in practice there are a number of abstract sentences used in the explanations, summary sentences or sentences repeated by all candidates or extremely short explanations summarized in one sentence.<sup>166</sup> "As such explanations are repeated for several different candidates, and expressed by different members of the Council, accompanied by the absence of reasoning on the written decisions for election of judges, the absence of any explanations for the candidates who did not receive votes, and the extremely rare reference to specific personal qualifications or experiences from the CVs of the candidates, in practice this leaves the impression of rather frivolous approach by the Council in the election of new judges".<sup>167</sup> The judges are of the opinion that these decisions are published and available in a timely manner, but not properly reasoned.<sup>168</sup> Although the Law explicitly stipulates that the members of the Council are required to orally explain their decision, it is recommended that the explanations of the members be attached to the written decisions for the election of new judges. This is especially important if we take into account that the sessions of the Council are not always attended by the public, so the public has limited opportunities to get acquainted with the reasons for the election of new judges.<sup>169</sup>

The procedures are conducted in a relatively similar way in terms of the selection of judges in higher courts, so that insufficient argumentation has the same impact on the perceptions of judges and the public about the proper application of the merit system and the selection of the best candidates.

The analysis of the Coalition "All for a Fair Trial" noted that observers think that there is no satisfactory level of discussion among the members of the Judicial Council also regarding the election of court presidents. Having in mind that according to the Law on the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia<sup>170</sup>, each member of the Council is required to orally explain his/her decision for election, the members give a short explanation, but only if they voted "for" the election, but not if they voted "against".<sup>171</sup>

163 The Judicial Council of RNM adopted it in September 2021.

164 In line with the latest analysis of the Coalition for a Fair Trial, made with the data obtained from observers who follow the sessions of the Council, and based on the opinions of judges, see more Petrovska and Avramovski (n 86).

165 Ibid.

166 Ibid.

167 Ibid.

168 Ibid.

169 Ibid.

170 Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 102/2019, Law on the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia 2019.

171 Petrovska and Avramovski (n 86).

The same analysis<sup>172</sup> comments on the (non) election of certain presidents of courts. It is about the (non) election of the President of the Basic Court Gostivar at the public session held on 15.02.2020, where none of the candidates for President of the Court was elected, and no explanation was provided. A similar situation was detected in relation to the election of the President of the Basic Court Vinica<sup>173</sup>, where at three consecutive announcements none of the registered candidates for President of the Court was elected, but apart from the statements by several members of the Council that the President of the Court will need to be elected very soon, no explanation was offered as to why the election could not be made so far, and why none of the candidates had been elected. This significantly increases the unpredictability of these selection procedures, the criteria for selection of a judge and court president are not clear, neither the necessary competencies, qualifications, professional and personal qualities of the candidates. The analysis states that such situations “inevitably leave the impression of other factors in the election of judges and presidents of courts, as well as possible influences on the Judicial Council, precisely because of the absence of public debate with clear argumentation of Council’s decision.”

Finally, the satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the Council’s actions can be seen in the appeals system that was introduced to provide guarantees to judges, which in practice has failed, especially for the (non) election of a court presidents. During 2020, the Judicial Council elected 8 presidents of basic courts in Struga, Kavadarci, Kocani, Ohrid, Kratovo, Radovich, Strumica and 3 for presidents of the appellate courts in Stip, Bitola and Gostivar. <sup>174</sup> Nine decisions were also made to appoint acting court presidents. As of April 2021, the President of the Supreme Court and President of the Basic Court of Debar were appointed.<sup>175</sup> Moreover, despite the fact that some vacancy announcements for election of court presidents failed, where several candidate judges applied, no appeal was filed neither in 2019 nor in 2020 with the Appeals Council of the Supreme Court,<sup>176</sup> according to Article 51 of the Law for the Judicial Council.<sup>177</sup>

The appeal mechanism is not sufficiently used even by the candidates who have not been elected as judges in accordance with Article 49 of the Law on the Judicial Council. Namely, in 2019 only one complaint was submitted, while in 2020 three. In all cases, the Appeals Council issued a decision rejecting the appeal and upholding the decision rendered by the Judicial Council.<sup>178</sup> In 2020, the Council elected a total of 14 judges to the basic courts, at the 332nd session under announcement no. 08-1886 / 2 dated 22.11.2019, for the basic courts in Bitola, Kumanovo, Tetovo, Stip, Ohrid, Sveti Nikole, Basic Criminal Court Skopje, Basic Civil Court Skopje. At the 351st session of the Council, a judge of the Basic Court in Kavadarci was elected. Six judges of the Skopje Court of Appeals were elected on February 10, 2020, in accordance with the old selection criteria under the Law on Judicial Council that was in force at the time of the announcement. On February 10, four judges were also elected to the Supreme Court of the RNSM, of which two for the criminal area and two for the civil area.<sup>179</sup> On April 4, 2021, three judges were elected to the Criminal Court and three judges to the Civil Court.<sup>180</sup>

Regarding the referral of judges to another court and reassignment to another department, in accordance with the amendments to the Law on Courts, a judge may be referred or reassigned for a period of one year, but not more than once in a period of five years.<sup>181</sup> These guarantees were introduced on the proposal of the Venice Commission in case of referral of judges to another court or placement in a lower court. Namely, a restriction is introduced on the definition

172 Ibid.

173 Ibid.

174 Court portal of the Republic of North Macedonia (n 47).

175 Ibid.

176 Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, „STI no. 18/2021 - Decision on the request for free access to information “(May 2021).

177 Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 102/2019, Law on the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia 2019.

178 Court portal of the Republic of North Macedonia (n 47).

179 Blueprint Justice Group (n 12).

180 Court portal of the Republic of North Macedonia (n 47).

181 Conevska et al. (n 4).

of this one year in which the judge can be referred or assigned. According to the proposed solution, the transfer may be done only once in a 5 year period. This solution prevents referrals and placements from being used as a form of pressure.<sup>182</sup> The Judicial Council of RNM in 2020 has made 17 decisions<sup>183</sup> for temporary referral of a judge. The provisions for temporary referral need to be consistently implemented in practice and no judge should be referred for more than one year. A review of the Judicial Council's website shows that there have been judges who have been placed to another court for more than a year. The Judicial Council has also made 34 decisions<sup>184</sup> for the extension of the mandate of the judges who have submitted statements for the extension of the mandate, in accordance with the labor relations regulations.

The Law on Public Prosecution<sup>185</sup> provides the grounds for election of public prosecutors, while the election procedure is regulated by the Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors.<sup>186</sup> From April 2020 to April 2021, 11 public prosecutors were elected, and 3 acting prosecutors were appointed.<sup>187</sup> The reasoning behind these decisions is of exceptional importance to restore the trust of the citizens in the Public Prosecutor's Office.<sup>188</sup> The public opinion reacted mostly<sup>189</sup> regarding the election of public prosecutors on April 22, 2021, regarding the explanation given by the Council of Public Prosecutors for the non-election of a candidate in a higher public prosecutor's office.

The only point of entry for the judiciary and the public prosecutor's office remains the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors. In April 2021, the last six judges were elected out of a total of 37 candidates from the sixth generation of AJPP.<sup>190</sup> AJPP in June 2020, after a one-year process followed by appeals to the Administrative and Higher Administrative Court, prepared the final ranking list for the admission of 60 new candidates to the initial training for the seventh generation. Out of a total of 673 applicants, 643 applicants met the formal requirements and thus received the status of candidates for the initial training. The initial training for the seventh generation started in September 2020.<sup>191</sup> Part of the theoretical section of the initial training was followed by the attendants of the 7th generation online in accordance with the Covid 19 safety protocols.<sup>192</sup> The announcement for the 8th (eighth) generation was published on September 24, 2020, for 97 positions.<sup>193</sup> A total of 497 candidates applied. Candidates completed the admission exam in June 2021<sup>194</sup>. The admission exam at the AJPP took a long time due to the pandemic situation. The test on case studies was postponed due to the INVOKA GROUP DOOEL company case, which was in charge of hosting the electronic exams of the Academy.<sup>195</sup>

On February 8, 2019, a working group was formed within the Ministry of Justice to prepare a draft of the new Law on the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors. The working group is composed of ten members, including the director of the Public Prosecutor's Office, represen-

182 Цонеvsка И и Камбери И, „Процена на влијанието на регулативата на Законот за судови“ (Институт за европска политика – Скопје 2018) (Институт за европска политика – Скопје 2018), (Conevska I and Kamberi I, "Assessment of the impact of the regulation of the Law on courts" (European Policy Institute - Skopje 2018)

183 Blueprint Justice Group (n 12).

184 Blueprint Justice Group (n 12).

185 Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 42/2020; The Law on Public Prosecution.

186 Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 42/2020, Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of Macedonia.

187 Council of Public Prosecutors (n 69).

188 "Policy Dialogue 'Implementation of the Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 with Action Plan - How far are we and what next?'" (N 16).

189 Фактор.мк, „Ленче Ристовска била многу млада за да работи како виш јавен обвинител“ (n 89), (Factor.mk, "Lence Ristovska was too young to work as a senior public prosecutor" (n 89)).

190 Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 'Press Release from the 370th Session of the Judicial Council of RNM - 22.04.2021' (22 April 2021) 2<shorturl.at/aeft> .

191 Blueprint Justice Group (n 12).

192 Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors, 'Initial Training - Documents' <<https://jpacademy.gov.mk/initial-training/>> .

193 "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", no. 230/2020 dated 24.09.2020; Public announcement for admission to initial training at the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors "Pavel Shatev" Skopje.

194 The admission exam at the AJPP took a long time due to the pandemic situation. The test on case studies was postponed due to the INVOKA GROUP DOOEL company case, which was in charge of hosting the electronic exams of the Academy.

195 Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors, "Reporting - Initial Training" (May 2021) <[https://jpacademy.gov.mk/initial\\_training/izvestuvane/](https://jpacademy.gov.mk/initial_training/izvestuvane/)> .



tatives of the Ministry of Justice, judges, public prosecutors and representatives of civil society organizations. These draft amendments aim to remove the obstacles faced by the AJPP.<sup>196</sup> Although this law was adopted by the Government in July 2019, it was not adopted by the previous parliament.<sup>197</sup>

The new draft-law on the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors was finalized by a working group established in the Ministry of Justice, and in June 2021 was adopted by the Government of the RNM and is in parliamentary procedure.<sup>198</sup>




The Law on Courts, the Law on the Judicial Council, the Law on Public Prosecution and the Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors, taken in correlation with the Law on the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors for admission of initial trainees, constitute the legal framework and determine criteria and procedure for selection of judges and public prosecutors.

The established legal framework, and the guarantees for the correct application of the merit system, are only one way of meeting the benchmarks in the area of justice as part of Chapter 23. However, consistent implementation of these provisions is necessary, by monitoring the implementation of these Laws, both at the state level and by NGOs.

Reactions by judges, and data from the observed sessions of the Judicial Council indicate that judges and court presidents are elected and judges are promoted without debate and clear argumentation. Inadequate or no reasoning for the election or non-election of judges, judges in higher courts and presidents of courts, giving generic and abstract explanations at Council sessions and very rarely referring to candidates' CVs are some of the reasons that cast doubt on the independence of the Judicial Council and the absence of influence in the election, both for the general public and for the judges themselves.

The obtained data show that the unelected candidates for judges and presidents of courts do not use the appeal mechanism of the Appeals Council of the Supreme Court and such a mechanism, although introduced to provide guarantees to judges, is still dysfunctional in practice.

The reasoning of these decisions is of exceptional importance to restore the trust of the citizens in the Public Prosecutor's Office. 

196 Conevska et al. (n 4).

197 Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, "Session no. 123 of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia "(16 February 2020) 121.

198 Assembly of R. North Macedonia, "Materials - Draft-Law on the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors" <<https://www.sobranie.mk/materialdetails.aspx?materialId=543628f3-2109-4bd5-8b99-22d543901888>> .

## Quality of justice

The Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors (AJPP) continuously works to improve the quality of training and introduce the necessary training topics, based on the conducted training evaluations and topics proposals submitted by the Judicial Council, the Council of Public Prosecutors, experts and NGOs. There is a significant increase in the number of people who have received training related to victims, including child victims in 2020, as opposed to 2019. In 2020, a total of 449 people attended the training, of which 184 judges, 196 public prosecutors, 33 officers, 7 lawyers, 4 representatives of the Ministry of Interior, 22 trainees of initial training and three other participants, while in 2019, 8 judges, 12 public prosecutors, 2 expert associates from the courts and prosecutor's offices and 15 representatives from the Ministry of Interior. The number of trainings related to child victims has also increased, with 17 trainings in 2020, and only 2 counseling sessions in 2019. There is also a significant number of judges and public prosecutors who have undergone training on the case law of the ECtHR, or with 46% in 2019 and 2020.<sup>199</sup>

The AJPP has signed memoranda of cooperation with several relevant institutions, international and non-governmental organizations.<sup>200</sup> In June 2020, the Public Prosecutor's Office, the State Office for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (SOPJP) and the Chamber of Mediators of the Republic of Macedonia signed a memorandum of cooperation aimed at joint action to develop and promote mediation in the child justice system.

As noted in the previous shadow report<sup>201</sup> if the Academy is expected or required to provide greater and better training for judges, public prosecutors, and support staff (including professional staff), it needs to be equipped with additional premises, mainly training facilities, budget and staff. The AJPP will not have enough room to organize continuous trainings for the next generation of applicants In April 2021, Judge Ilir Iseni was elected Deputy Director of the Public Prosecutor's Office.<sup>202</sup>

The signing of Protocol no.16 by the Minister of Justice, was a significant step towards improving the quality of justice.<sup>203</sup> The Unit of the Case Law at the Supreme Court in 2019 held 7 sessions on the aligning of the case law.<sup>204</sup> In 2020, judges from different appellate areas and the Supreme Court (for case law), didn't meet at all unlike in 2019 when they had three meetings.<sup>205</sup> In order to align the case law, the Supreme Court of RNM and the appellate courts need to meet to take common positions on certain legal issues for greater uniformity in decision-making, and to increase the activity of the case law units. In order to follow the guidelines and positions taken by the appellate courts at their meetings, the conclusions of these meetings should be more transparent, thus making the application of the case law easier.<sup>206</sup>

199 'Report From the Monitoring of the Strategy for Reform of the Judicial Sector 2017-2022 - For 2020 Year' (European Policy Institute - Skopje, Association ZENIT, September 2021).

200 Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors, "Memoranda of Cooperation" <<https://jpacademy.gov.mk/memorandumi-za-sorabotka/>>.

201 Conevska and Kamberi (n 5).

202 Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 'Press Release from the 370th Session of the Judicial Council of RNM - 22.04.2021' (22 April 2021) 2<[shorturl.at/aeft](https://shorturl.at/aeft)> .

203 Министерство за Правда „Маричиќ во Стразбур ја потпиша Конвенција за борба против фалсификување лекови и Протоколот 16“ (Ministry of Justice 'Maricic Signed the Convention on the Counterfeiting of Medical Products and Protocole 16 in Strasbourg') (September 2021) 16<<https://www.pravda.gov.mk/vest/6236>> .

204 Supreme Court, "Decision (2/2020) on the request for free access to information" (January 29, 2020).

205 "Report on monitoring the Judicial Sector Reform Strategy 2017-2022 - for 2020" (n 202).

206 Душко Георгиевски, 'Анализа На Квалитетот и Воедначеноста На Судските Одлуки Во Граѓанско Правната Област' (Институт за европска политика и Асоцијација ЗЕНИТ, август 2021), Dushko Georgievski, 'Analysis of the Quality and Uniformity of Court Decisions in the Civil Cases' (European Policy Institute and Association ZENIT, August 2021) <<https://epi.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/%D0%90%D0%9D%D0%90%D0%9B%D0%98%D0%97%D0%90-%D0%9D%D0%90-%D0%9A%D0%92%D0%90%D0%9B%D0%98%D0%A2%D0%95%D0%A2-%D0%98-%D0%92%D0%9E%D0%95%D0%94%D0%9D%D0%90%D0%A7%D0%95%D0%9D%D0%9E%D0%A1%D0%A2-%D0%9D%D0%90-%D0%A1%D0%A3%D0%94%D0%A1%D0%9A%D0%98%D0%A2%D0%95-%D0%9E%D0%94%D0%9B%D0%A3%D0%9A%D0%98-%D0%92%D0%9E-%D0%93%D0%A0%D0%90%D0%83%D0%90%D0%9D%D0%A1%D0%9A%D0%9E-%D0%9F%D0%A0%D0%90%D0%92%D0%9D%D0%90%D0%A2%D0%90-%D0%9E%D0%91%D0%9B%D0%90%D0%A1%D0%A2.pdf>>.

There is a significant increase in the number of probation cases in 2020 (276 cases), compared to 2019 (165 cases). This is a major progress considering the fact that the probation service actively started working in 2019. In both years, most of the cases are related to the alternative measure of release on parole.<sup>207</sup>

The previous draft - Law on Mediation, as of February 2020 was not adopted by the previous parliament. The draft - Law on Mediation was finalized by a working group established in the Ministry of Justice and since June 2021 is in parliamentary procedure.<sup>208</sup>

Besides the need to amend the laws, additional measures are needed to promote the concept of mediation. Budget funds are also needed for increased use of mediation under the Law on Child Justice, especially since the mediation reduces the costs for the parties. In this regard, when creating its budget, the Prosecution should have an estimate of the number of cases that specifically involve children.<sup>209</sup>

In July 2019, in cooperation with the Chamber of Mediators, the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia adopted a Conclusion requiring that all state bodies, institutions, state-owned public enterprises, and the local self-government units, to try and resolve disputes through mediation, before initiating court proceedings.<sup>210</sup>

The survey conducted with mediators<sup>211</sup> concludes that there is an increase in the number of cases referred by the mediators to the public authorities in 2020 (133 cases) compared to 2019 (89 cases). Cases resolved in this way in 2020 (128 cases) also increased compared to 2019 (58 cases).<sup>212</sup> Cases referred to mediation under the Law on Child Justice increased in 2020 (4 cases) as opposed to 2019 when no cases were referred as reported by mediators. Labor and trade cases that were referred and resolved through mediation in 2020, significantly increased. In 2019, in the register kept by the Ministry of Justice, 87 mediations in trade disputes were registered, while 16 of the disputes ended with a settlement. In 2020, there is a significant increase in the number of trade disputes in mediation proceedings, ie 189 mediations, of which 37 ended with a settlement. Unlike 2019, when not a single case of mediation in labor disputes was registered in the Register maintained by the Ministry of Justice, in 2020, there were 126 mediations, 89 of which ended with a settlement.

On September 24, a notification for the start of the drafting process of a new Law on Expertise was published on ENER.<sup>213</sup> It is indisputable that expertise is key to resolving court cases, to impartiality and to the quality of justice. The legal framework that regulates in detail the area of expertise was first introduced in 2010 with the adoption of the Law on Expertise. So far, it has been amended five times in 2014, 2015 and 2018. ENER's notification notes that due to the large number of detected weaknesses and gaps in the current law, it is necessary to adopt a new law that will contribute to increasing efficiency and establishing a functional expertise system.<sup>214</sup>

207 "Report on monitoring of the Strategy for the Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 - for 2020" (n 20).

208 Blueprint Justice Group (n 12).

209 European Policy Institute, "Public Policy Document 'Implementation of the Strategy for the Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022'" (n 32).

210 Ibid.

211 22 mediators answered the first survey for 2019, and 21 mediators answered the survey for 2020. "Report on monitoring of the Strategy for the Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 - for 2020" (n 20).

212 Ibid.

213 ENER, "Regulation: Draft Law on Expertise" (September 2021) <[https://ener.gov.mk/Default.aspx?item=pub\\_regulation&subitem=view\\_reg\\_detail&itemid=70466](https://ener.gov.mk/Default.aspx?item=pub_regulation&subitem=view_reg_detail&itemid=70466)> .

214 Ibid.



AJPP continuously works on improving the quality of trainings and introducing the necessary training topics. It is necessary to increase the budget of the AJPP in order to improve the quality of trainings. The AJPP needs further staffing and technical and infrastructural equipment. It is necessary to provide new premises to the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors to enable it to fully perform its primary competencies, namely to organize trainings as part of the continuous training, and to be able to accept new applicants to initial training.

The Unit of the Case Law at the Supreme Court in 2019 held 7 sessions on the aligning of the case law. In 2020, judges from different appellate areas and the Supreme Court (for case law), didn't meet at all unlike in 2019 when they had three meetings.

The signing of Protocol no.16 by the Minister of Justice, was a significant step towards improving the quality of justice.

In order to align the case law, the Supreme Court of RNM and the appellate courts need to meet to take a common positions on certain legal issues for greater uniformity in decision-making, and to increase the activity of the case law units. In order to follow the guidelines and positions taken by the appellate courts at their meetings, the conclusions of these meetings should be more transparent, thus making the application of the case law easier.

The probation service became operational in 2019. However, judges do not use the probation service sufficiently. This law is extremely important in determining the type and length of the sentence. Therefore, intensive training of judges on the application of the Law on Probation is recommended, because the cooperation with the probation service provides a proper approach to individualization of the sentence for each defendant.

Further promotion of the concept of mediation through promotional activities is needed. However, the number of cases, in which the parties are public bodies increased in 2020, and the number of trade and labor disputes that have been referred and resolved through mediation, significantly increased as well.



## Efficiency

According to the latest data from the Judicial Council Report for 2020<sup>215</sup>, the courts in 2020 failed to handle the influx of cases and increased the backlog by 2,503 cases which brings to the conclusion that in 2020 out of 34 courts, 15 courts were assessed as efficient, while 19 courts as inefficient, 2 courts of appeal and 17 basic courts. According to the Judicial Council, this situation is primarily a result of the Covid -19 pandemic in our country, despite the fact that the presidents of the courts have taken all measures and activities to reduce the backlog of cases in the courts. As in all other areas of life, this pandemic affected the assessment of courts, as there were judges and court staff infected with the virus, and quarantined due to a contact with an infected person.

According to the report on the work of the Public Prosecutor's Offices for 2020<sup>216</sup>, the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Senior Public Prosecutor's Offices, the Basic Public Prosecutor's Offices and the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption, have acted in an efficient and professional manner, despite the lack of staff. The Public Prosecutor's Office performed the function of criminal prosecution of criminal offenders without interruption, adjusted in accordance with the recommendations and conclusions of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia on the Covid-19 measures. In accordance with the mandatory instructions of the State Public Prosecutor, the the criminal offence cases that endanger the health of the citizens were processed immediately.

However, in order to increase the efficiency of the judiciary and the public prosecutor's office, more funds, staffing, improvement of the equipment and provision of more working space is needed, especially for some public prosecutor's offices<sup>217</sup>, which are still situated in the court buildings. In this regard, it is necessary to do a good assessment of the staffing needs in the courts and public prosecutor's offices and full implementation of the human resources strategies.

It is necessary to provide appropriate facilities for the Administrative Court,<sup>218</sup> and staffing, since the new Law on Administrative Disputes, which will be implemented as of May 2020, provides more duties for the Administrative Judiciary. The Administrative Court will be on the same level as other courts with the introduction of the public hearing.

In the area of the judiciary, in 2020 despite the new employments in the courts (proportional to number of retirements), the issue of under-staffing still persisted. The Report on the work of the Judicial Council<sup>219</sup> notes that the courts need managerial staff, professional and administrative-technical staff and professional staff in the field of information technology, human resource management, internal audit, public internal financial control, strategic planning. Due to the insufficient number of judges in accordance with the systematization made by the Judicial Council, the Council in 2020 adopted 13 decisions on the temporary referral of judges under Article 39 of the Law on Courts.<sup>220</sup>

215 The Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 'Annual Report on the Work of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia for 2020' (n 218).

216 Љубомир Јовевски, јавен обвинител на РСМ, „Извештај за работата на јавните обвинителства на Република Северна Македонија во 2020 година“, (Ljubomir Jovevski, Public Prosecutor of RNM, "Report on the work of the Public Prosecutor's Offices of the Republic of North Macedonia in 2020") (2020) <<https://jorm.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/izveshta%D1%98-za-2020-%D1%98o-na-rsm.pdf>>.

217 "Policy Dialogue 'Implementation of the Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 with Action Plan - How far are we and what next?'" (N 16).

218 Ibid.

219 The Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, 'Annual Report on the Work of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia for 2020' (n 218).

220 Ibid.

Understaffing is also noticed in the Public Prosecutors' offices. Out of a total of 244 foreseen positions, there are only 180 prosecutors as of September 2021.<sup>221</sup> To perform the function under the laws, it is important to fill the vacancies of the public prosecutors faster, especially in the basic public prosecutor's offices. Vacancies for other administrative staff should also be filled, primarily to strengthen the capacity of investigative centers.<sup>222</sup>

The digitalization and full implementation of the digitalization plan in the judiciary and the interoperability process are expected to contribute to greater efficiency of both the judiciary and the public prosecutor's office.<sup>223</sup> Procurement of computers and equipment is needed, both in the courts, and in the public prosecutor's offices. The digitalization process will also contribute to easier searching of the courts' website and will increase transparency and openness. It will also provide e-services for the citizens.<sup>224</sup>

It is of key importance to increase the efficiency of the courts and provide the adequate funding of the judiciary and the public prosecutor's office, as elaborated in detail in the section on independence in this report. In this regard, for years the legal provision for allocating 0.8% of GDP to the courts has not been respected. There is also a reduction in the funds allocated to the judiciary in 2020 (0.29% of GDP), as opposed to 2019 (0.31% of GDP).<sup>225</sup> As far as the Public Prosecutor's Office is concerned, out of the necessary funds in the amount of 1,179,054.00 for the work of the prosecutors' offices, as requested in the Draft Calculation approved together with the Supplementary Budget, the total funds approved were in the amount of 643,700,000.00 denars, or only 48.49%. This amount is insufficient for the prosecutors' offices to perform their function smoothly.<sup>226</sup> The lack of sufficient financial resources allocated to the Public Prosecutor's Office undermines the secrecy of the investigation as prosecutors are required to turn to the executive for additional funds for expertise in conducting investigations into capital criminal cases.<sup>227</sup>

It is necessary to use the human resources of the former Special Public Prosecutor's Office, especially those trained for the use of digital tools, and to use of the latest equipment from the SPO, which has not been used for two years.<sup>228</sup> Former SPO public prosecutors working on SPO cases, like other public prosecutors, do not have sufficient professional staff.<sup>229</sup>

Regarding the efficiency of the criminal proceedings, it is noted that the main hearing in the cases "Titanic", "Toplik", "Talir" and "Tenders" will restart, due to the change of the Trial Chamber, ie due to the end of the mandate of the presiding judge. According to the Republic Public Prosecutor, "cases of the retrial of several cases is due to lacuna in the Law on Criminal Procedure". He suggests that other solutions be considered to overcome this problem. Joveski believes that "when there is a change in the composition of the trial chamber, instead of taking the case back to its start, time should be given to the new member to review the cases". Or, allow the lay judge to stay until the end of the case, regardless of the fact that he/she has reached a certain age. "According to the Prosecutor, the retrial of some of the SPO cases will significantly delay the proceeding, but he expects the Basic Criminal Court in Skopje will give priority to these cases".<sup>230</sup> The professional public reacted to the delay of the proceedings and

221 "Policy Dialogue 'Implementation of the Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 with Action Plan - How far are we and what next?'" (N 16).

222 Ljubomir Jovevski, Public Prosecutor of RNM (n 219).

223 European Policy Institute, "Digital Judiciary - A New Era of Macedonian Judicial System Reforms", (n 117).

224 Ibid.

225 "Report on monitoring of the Strategy for the Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 - for 2020" (n 202).

226 Ljubomir Jovevski, Public Prosecutor of RNM (n 219).

227 "Policy Dialogue 'Implementation of the Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 with Action Plan - How far are we and what next?'" (N 16).

228 Ibid.

229 Ibid.

230 dw.com, „Жежок август за предметите на СЈО – Дали конечно ќе има завршница?“, (dw.com, "Hot August for SPO cases - Will there finally be an end?") (July 27, 2021) <<https://www.dw.com/mk/%D0%B6%D0%B5%D0%B6%D0%BE%D0%BA-%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%B3%D1%83%D1%81%D1%82-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%BC%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D1%81%D1%98%D0%BE-%D0%B4%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B8-%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%BE-%D1%9C%D0%B5-%D0%B8%D0%BC%D0%B0-%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%B2%D1%80%D1%88%D0%B-D%D0%B8%D1%86%D0%B0/a-58577949>> accessed 9 September 2021.

possible positive moves for solving this problem were proposed.<sup>231</sup> In this regard, the following options should be considered: the possibility of extending the term of the lay judge at the request of the President of the Trial Chamber or a new member of the Chamber to be acquainted with the evidence outside the main hearing that would allow that part of the evidence to be considered as presented. It is also necessary to have a good working plan and prioritization of cases, ie upon reception of the case to take into account the statute of limitation, the volume of evidence and the number of defendants. The age of the lay judges should also be taken into account, ie to complete the case before the end of the term of the lay judge or before he/she retires. Appointing reserve lay judges who would be constantly present at the main hearing in order to eliminate the possibility of retrials.

Generally speaking, as far as the hearings in criminal proceedings are concerned, the data from the monitored cases by the Coalition "All for a Fair Trial" for 2020<sup>232</sup> indicate that there is still a high percentage of adjourned main hearings in criminal proceedings, primarily due to the absence of the parties whose presence in the process is mandatory, but there are also delays due to inadequate management of the evidentiary procedure, ie due to inaccurate planning of the actions to be taken at a hearing, as well as longer-term planning of the course of the proceeding. Although this percentage is slowly decreasing every year, their number is still over half of all monitored main hearings, clearly indicating that if the criminal proceedings, guilty plea and verdicts based on a plea settlement are excluded, it is more likely that a hearing will be postponed. Out of a total of 400 monitored main hearings in 15 basic courts in North Macedonia, 55% of the hearings have been postponed. As far as the measures to ensure attendance is concerned, it is positive that the measure of remand is applied in only few cases, and at the same time there is a constant decline in its application over the years, so the imposition of this measure in 2020 is the lowest compared to the 5 years before. However, other easier measures to ensure attendance at proceedings remain underutilized.



The efficiency of courts has decreased in 2020 compared to 2019. According to the Judicial Council, this situation is primarily due to the Covid -19 pandemic. According to the report on the work of the Public Prosecutor's Offices for 2020, the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Senior Public Prosecutor's Offices, the Basic Public Prosecutor's Offices and the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption, have acted in an efficient and professional manner, despite the lack of staff.

However, in order to increase the efficiency of the judiciary and the public prosecutor's office, more funds, staffing, improvement of the equipment and provision of more working space is needed, especially for some public prosecutor's offices, which are still situated in the court buildings. In this regard, it is necessary to do a good assessment of the staffing needs in the courts and public prosecutor's offices and full implementation of the human resources strategies.


It is necessary to provide appropriate facilities for the Administrative Court, and staffing, since the new Law on Administrative Disputes, which will be implemented as of May 2020, provides more duties for the Administrative Courts. The Administrative Court will be on the same level as other courts with the introduction of the public hearing.

The digitalization and full implementation of the digitalization plan in the judiciary and the interoperability process are expected to contribute to greater efficiency of both the judiciary and the public prosecutor's office. Procurement of computers and equipment is needed, both in the courts, and in the public prosecutor's offices. The digitalization process will also contribute to easier searching of the courts' website and will increase transparency and openness. It will also provide e-services for the citizens.

231 "Policy Dialogue 'Implementation of the Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 with Action Plan - How far are we and what next?'" (N 16).

232 Contribution from the Coalition "All for a Fair Trial", for this shadow report.

It is necessary to use the human resources of the former Special Public Prosecutor's Office, especially those trained for the use of digital tools, and to use the latest equipment from the SPO, which has not been used for two years.

Regarding the efficiency of the criminal proceedings, it is noted that the main hearing in the cases "Titanic", "Toplik", "Talir" and "Tenders" will restart, due to the change of the Trial Chamber, ie due to the end of the mandate of the presiding judge. In this regard, the experts propose to consider several options regarding the replacement of lay judges, and for the courts to make a plan for prioritization of cases, ie when receiving the case to take into account the statute of limitation, the volume of evidence and number of defendants. 



## 2. Fight against corruption

In Transparency International's latest Corruption Perceptions Index 2020 report, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,<sup>233</sup> along with Bosnia and Herzegovina, are ranked lowest compared to other Western Balkan countries. The Republic of North Macedonia is ranked 111th, unlike the previous year, when it was ranked 106th,<sup>234</sup> and 93rd in the index corruption perception 2018.<sup>235</sup>

Despite the efforts to strengthen the legal and institutional framework for combating corruption, the corruption perception in the Republic of North Macedonia is at a high level and is increasing over the years. However, the Government of the RNM has expressed its commitment to work on the reform processes related to the fight against corruption. Thus, in September 2020, a vice Prime Minister in charge of the fight against corruption and crime, sustainable development and human resources was appointed for the first time, with a broad mandate.<sup>236</sup> Reform processes related to the fight against corruption is one of the main priorities of "Action 21 - European standards at home".<sup>237</sup> Namely, in March 2021, the Government adopted the Anti-Corruption Plan<sup>238</sup> which was drafted based on the recommendations and proposals from competent institutions, non-governmental organizations, independent bodies, and in line with the relevant domestic and foreign reports and contains new ways and appropriate mechanisms for preventing and eradicating corruption. This plan aims to strengthen the capacities and establish a synchronized system for efficient work of the institutions. Among other things, the plan<sup>239</sup> envisages increased use of the National Interoperability Platform for the needs of the competent bodies for fight against corruption and inter-institutional cooperation of seven institutions<sup>240</sup> in charge of the fight against corruption with the Office of the deputy Prime Minister in charge of the fight against corruption and crime, sustainable development and human resources, and among themselves. In this respect the Government of the RNM and the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, adopted an anti-corruption program with an action plan.<sup>241</sup>

233 Transparency International, 'Corruption Perception Index 2020' (2021) <<https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/mkd>> accessed 9 September 2021.

234 Transparency International, "2019 Corruption Perceptions Index" <<https://www.transparency.org/cpi2019#report>>.

235 Transparency International, "2018 Corruption Perceptions Index" (Transparency International, January 29, 2019) <[https://www.transparency.org/news/pressrelease/corruption\\_perceptions\\_index\\_2018](https://www.transparency.org/news/pressrelease/corruption_perceptions_index_2018)> .

236 Government of R. North Macedonia, "Deputy Prime Minister for Fight against Corruption and Crime, Sustainable Development and Human Resources" <<https://vlada.mk/minister/LjupchoNikolovski>> .

237 Влада на Р. Северна Македонија, „Владата на Република Северна Македонија е цврсто решена да ја промени сликата и перцепцијата во борбата против корупцијата, тоа е еден од главните приоритети на владината 'Акција 21 – европски стандарди дома'“, (The Government of R. North Macedonia, "The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia is firmly determined to change the image and perception in the fight against corruption, it is one of the main priorities of the government 'Action 21 - European standards at home.'" (January 28, 2021) <<https://vlada.mk/node/24047?ln=mk>> .

238 Government of R. North Macedonia, "From the 50th session of the Government: The Plan for Fight against Corruption adopted; The Health Protocol for Uninterrupted Conduct of the Census adopted; The Draft Law on Declaring Part of Shar Mountain as a National Park Approved (2 March 2021) <<https://vlada.mk/node/24418>> .

239 Government of the R. North Macedonia, "Action 21' Anti-Corruption Plan" (March 2021) 21.

240 Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Intellectual Council, Financial Police, Financial Intelligence Unit, Public Revenue Office, Customs Administration.

241 Ministry of Information Society and Administration, "Anti-Corruption Program with Action Plan" (March 2021) <[https://www.mioa.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl\\_files/documents/antikorupciska\\_programa\\_-\\_05.05.2021.pdf](https://www.mioa.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl_files/documents/antikorupciska_programa_-_05.05.2021.pdf)> .

## Institutional framework

### STATE COMMISSION FOR PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION TA

With the adoption of the new Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest, the new members of the SCPC were elected and started working in February 2019. The new Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest has increased and strengthened the competencies of the SCPC and provided more effective action mechanisms.

Despite the challenges posed by the Covid 19 pandemic, a four-month period of “state of emergency”, an eight-month period of “Technical Government”, a year of “early parliamentary elections - 2020”, the SCPC during the reporting period worked transparently and processed several cases upon complaints, and opened several cases on its own initiative.

Namely, the SCPC during 2020<sup>242</sup> received 550 reports from citizens with suspicions of corrupt behavior, abuse of public office, conflict of interest and started 102 cases on its own initiative. In the field of corruption, it processed 378 cases, decided upon 157 cases in the field of conflict of interests, on 33 reports for non-compliance with the prohibitions during the election process, and on 38 reports in data checking of asset declarations.<sup>243</sup> In 2020, the decisions of the SCPC mainly refer to the work of the executive bodies at central and local level (134 decisions), the judiciary (80) and education (72). On average, it needed ten months to close a case and make a decision.<sup>244</sup> In the second half of 2020, the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption made 263 decisions, of which 88, or 33%, dealt with employment-related cases or labor-related procedures. In 4 cases, related to employment or labor relations the Commission confirmed the violation of law. Half of the proceedings were initiated by a known complainant (51%). 40% cases were initiated at the initiative of an unknown / anonymous complainant, while only 2% were initiated on the initiative of the SCPC.<sup>245</sup>

The SCPC, on its own initiative, opened cases for senior state officials. During the reporting period, investigations were opened, and court proceedings were initiated on current senior state officials. At the same time, the SCPC, on its own initiative, opened the case against Rashkovski.<sup>246</sup> In December 2020, the Assembly elected Pavlina Crvenkovska as a new member of the Judicial Council from among prominent lawyers.<sup>247</sup> In May 2021, shortly after the election of the new President of the Judicial Council, the SCPC initiated a case against her.<sup>248</sup> The SCPC opened a case regarding government part-time job fees<sup>249</sup> and also a case for the mayor of Skopje for a conflict of interest by concluding an agreement with his law firm, which was later closed<sup>250</sup>.

242 Државна комисија за спречување на корупција, „Годишен извештај за работата на ДККК за 2020 година“, (The State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, “Annual Report on the Work of the SCPC for 2020”) (March 2021) <<https://dksk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/%D0%93%D0%98-%D1%84%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BB.pdf>> accessed 9 September 2021.

243 Ibid.

244 Миша Поповиќ, „Извештај за работата на Државната комисија за спречување корупција за 2020 година“ (2021), (Misha Popovic, ‘Report on the Work of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption for 2020’) (2021) <[http://www.antikorupcija.mk/uploads/records/file/%D0%98%D0%B7%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%98%20%D0%B7%D0%B0%20%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0%20DKSK%20-%20KOR%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.antikorupcija.mk/uploads/records/file/%D0%98%D0%B7%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%98%20%D0%B7%D0%B0%20%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0%20DKSK%20-%20KOR%20(1).pdf)> accessed 9 September 2021.

245 Мартина Илиевска, „Анализа на одлуките на ДККК за постапки за вработување во втората половина на 2020 година“, (Martina Ilievska, “Analysis of the decisions of the SCPC for employment procedures in the second half of 2020”) (2021) <<http://www.antikorupcija.mk/uploads/records/file/A%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B0%20%D0%B-D%D0%B0%20%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0%20%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D0%B4%D0%BA%D1%81%D0%BA%20KOR-2.pdf>>.

246 Fotinovska (n 95).

247 Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, ‘Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia - President’ (n 37).

248 360 степени, „ДККК отвори предмет за новата претседателка на Судскиот совет“ (n 39), (360 degrees, “SCPC Opens a Case against the New President of the Judicial Council”) (n 39).

249 press24, „Антикорупциска ќе ги бара имињата на мистериозните хонорарци во Владата“, (Anticorruption Commission will seek the names of mysterious contracted staff in the Government’) (9 April 2021) <<https://press24.mk/antikorupcija-ka-kje-gi-bara-iminjata-na-misterioznite-honorarci-vo-vladata>>.

250 State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, “Decision no. 09-2034/9” (November 27, 2020).

The latest SCPC report<sup>251</sup> states that the analyzed reports in 2020 point to the fact that the judiciary, the executive, the institutions that decide in the field of urban planning and municipalities, are perceived as areas with the highest risk of corruption, abuse of office and possibility for conflict of interests, which confirmed the areas defined in the National Strategy for Fight against Corruption. Most are reported for abuse of office in employment, issuance of various permits, existence of conflict of interest in court decisions, etc.<sup>252</sup>

The new Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest provides the SCPC with a wide front of action, but there is a danger of jamming the work of the SCPC with smaller cases and cases that are not within its competence, which would deplete its capacity and resources and high-profile corruption cases could not be addressed. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a mechanism for filtering the reports that are not within the competence of the SCPC, those that expired or those lacking available data.<sup>253</sup> The SCPC also needs to focus for the most part on high-profile corruption cases.<sup>254</sup> In this regard, it is necessary for the SCPC to open more cases on its own initiative, because the Commission is flooded with cases reported by citizens where in the end no corruption is found.<sup>255</sup>

As far as other competencies of the SCPC are concerned, during 2020 the Committee revised the National Strategy for Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest because it was not adopted by the previous parliamentary composition. It was adopted on December 10, 2020 by the SCPC and covers the period 2021-2025.<sup>256</sup> The process of preparation of the Strategy was under the competence of the SCPC. To this end, based on a previously conducted analysis of corruption risks, the SCPC implemented a broad, inclusive and transparent consultation process with the participation of representatives from the public and private sector, media, civil society organizations and foundations, experts and representatives of relevant international organizations. The draft strategy was also made available to the public for comments, thus enabling a broad consensus on its scope and content.<sup>257</sup>

During 2020, the SCPC also conducted an anti-corruption review of seven laws, started the implementation of several projects supported by domestic and international organizations, and adopted new acts for organization and systematization of jobs in the SCPC Secretariat. In this part in 2020, a Regulation for internal organization of the SCPC Secretariat and a Regulation for systematization of jobs in the SCPC Secretariat were developed and adopted, which enabled the organization of staff under the expanded legal competencies, but also the possibility to increase the number of staff. Nevertheless, during 2020, the SCPC did recruit new staff, primarily due to reduced budget funds.<sup>258</sup> At the beginning of 2020, the SCPC adopted the Code of Ethics for the President and members of the SCPC, as well as Guidelines for Integrity and Ethical Behavior for the SCPC staff, which set out the principles, values and norms of conduct for all employees.<sup>259</sup>

251 State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, "Annual Report on the Work of the SCPC for 2020" (n 245).

252 Ibid.

253 Институт за човекови права и Транспаренси Интернешнал Македонија, „Втор квартален извештај септември-ноември 2019 од следењето на работата на Државната комисија за спречување корупција“ (2019), (The Institute for Human Rights and Transparency International Macedonia, "Second Quarterly Report September-November 2019 from the monitoring of the work of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption") (2019) <[http://ihr.org.mk/uploads/%D0%A1%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B8/%D0%9F%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B7%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0%20%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%98%20%D0%94%D0%9A%D0%A1%D0%9A/Vtor\\_Kvartalen\\_Izveshtaj.pdf](http://ihr.org.mk/uploads/%D0%A1%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B8/%D0%9F%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B7%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0%20%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%98%20%D0%94%D0%9A%D0%A1%D0%9A/Vtor_Kvartalen_Izveshtaj.pdf)>.

254 "Policy Dialogue" Reforms in Chapter 23, 17 April 2019" (17 April 2019).

255 Popovic (n 247).

256 „Националната стратегија за спречување на корупцијата и судирот на интереси (2021-2025) со Акционен план за нејзино спроведување“, ("The National Strategy for Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest (2021-2025) with Action Plan for its implementation") (December 2020) <<https://dsk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Nacionalna-strategija-DK-SK-KONECNA.pdf>>.

257 Ibid.

258 State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, "Annual Report on the Work of the SCPC for 2020" (n 245).

259 Ibid.

In terms of transparency and openness, during the reporting period in a situation of pandemic, the SCPC transparently published all the information on its website. Its sessions (including case discussions) were public. During the pandemic the SCPC allowed online sessions and provided access to the media. Namely, to adjust its work to the new pandemic situation, the SCPC initiated the amending of its Rules of Procedure, to enable online sessions and meetings.<sup>260</sup>

In 2021, the SCPC was given new suitable premises to carry out their work smoothly.<sup>261</sup> However, the understaffing and the limited funds available for procurement of the required software remain, significantly affecting the efficient operation of the SCPC.<sup>262</sup> For smooth operation, the SCPC needs a higher budget and more resources, even though the SCPC budget for 2021 is larger than the budget allocated in 2020.<sup>263</sup>

## THE PUBLIC PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

The Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecuting Organized Crime and Corruption has opened the "Extortion racket" case, where the former special public prosecutor is also accused of extortion and abuse of office.<sup>264</sup> The "extortion racket" ended in June 2020, when the former Special Public Prosecutor was sentenced to seven years in prison for abuse of office and authority. The Skopje Court of Appeals upheld the verdict on July 21, making it final.<sup>265</sup>

Regarding the cases taken over by the former SPO, in 2020 in the minutes of the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption, four cases were registered against a total of 28 persons of the Public Prosecutor's Office for prosecution of related crimes arising from the content of illegal interception of communications after which an order was issued to conduct an investigation for eight persons, an indictment for one person, a decision to reject the criminal charges against two persons, and a pre-investigation procedure is conducted for 17 persons.<sup>266</sup>

In 2019, an investigation on 90 persons remained pending, ie in 2020, investigative procedures were conducted against 98 persons. After the completed investigation procedures, indictments were filed for 13 persons, orders were issued to stop the investigation for eight persons, and the investigation is ongoing for 77 persons. Following the indictments, there were first-instance verdicts for four persons, of which one was found guilty following a plea and three were sentenced to prison. The criminal offenses consist of money laundering and other proceeds of crime from Article 273 of the Criminal Code, abuse of official position and authority under Article 353 of the Criminal Code and criminal association under Article 394 of the Criminal Code.<sup>267</sup> A first instance verdict was passed in "Target-Tvrđina" and "Trezor", for which an appeal procedure is underway before the Court of Appeal in Skopje. A first instance verdict was also passed in the "Torture" case in June 2021.<sup>268</sup>

260 Ibid.

261 The Government of R. North Macedonia, "DPM Nikolovski, Ivanovska and Mircevski visiting the new premises of the SCPC: Сите ресурси ги ставаме во служба на реализација на планот за борба против корупција, ДКСК наскоро се вселува во новите простории", (The Government of R. North Macedonia, "DPM Nikolovski, Ivanovska and Mircevski visiting the new premises of the SCPC: We are putting all our resources in the implementation of the anti-corruption plan, the SCPC will soon move into the new premises") (March 10, 2021) <<https://vlada.mk/node/24514>> . <<https://vlada.mk/node/24514>> .

262 State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, "Annual Report on the Work of the SCPC for 2020" (n 245).

263 State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, "Budget of the SCPC" <<https://dksk.mk/%D0%B1%D1%83%D1%9F%D0%B5%D1%82-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%B4%D0%BA%D1%81%D0%BA/>> .

264 European Commission, "Update on the Republic of North Macedonia" (European Commission, 3 февруари 2020) <<https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/update-on-the-republic-of-north-macedonia.pdf>> .

265 Tamara Dichoska (n 100).

266 Ljubomir Jovevski, Public Prosecutor of RNM (n 219).

267 Ibid.

268 mkd.mk, „Денес Сашо Мижалков ќе ја чуе четвртата пресуда, овој пат за 'Тортура'", (mkd.mk, "Today Sasho Mijalkov will hear the fourth verdict, this time for 'Torture'") (June 2021) <<https://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/sudstvo/denes-sasho-mijalkov-kje-ja-chue-chetvrtata-presuda-ovoj-pat-za-tortura>> .

Regarding the efficiency of the criminal proceedings, it is noted that the main hearing in the cases “Titanic”, “Toplik”, “Taliir” and “Tenders” will restart, due to the change of the Trial Chamber, as the mandate of the presiding judge expired. The Public Prosecutor and the experts underlined the weaknesses of the criminal procedure in this part, by giving specific recommendations for improvement.<sup>269</sup> This topic is elaborated in detail in the section on efficiency of this report.

As hearings in criminal proceedings are concerned, the data from the monitored cases by the Coalition “All for a Fair Trial” for 2020<sup>270</sup> indicate that there is still a high percentage of postponed main hearings in criminal proceedings. Out of a total of 400 monitored main hearings in 15 basic courts in North Macedonia, 55% of the hearings have been postponed.

A serious commitment of the state is needed to improve the efficiency of criminal justice, the staffing, material conditions and a larger budget of the courts and public prosecutor’s offices. In this regard, it is necessary<sup>271</sup> to provide an adequate number of judges in accordance with the systematization and even distribution of cases, to optimally use the capacity available to the court, which would result in efficient and economical conduct of proceedings. The Public Prosecutor’s Office needs to be promoted to prosecute organized crime and corruption with human resources and public prosecution staff, and above all with financial support from the budget.<sup>272</sup> It is also necessary for the court to take a more active role in prioritizing cases, to avoid unnecessary delays in proceedings.<sup>273</sup> It is necessary to use the human resources of the former Special Public Prosecutor’s Office, especially those trained for the use of digital tools, and to use of the latest equipment from the SPO, which has not been used for two years.<sup>274</sup> Former SPO public prosecutors working on SPO cases, like other public prosecutors, do not have sufficient professional staff.<sup>275</sup>

The Law on Criminal Procedure<sup>276</sup> provides for the possibility of establishing investigation centers in the area of one or more public prosecutor’s offices by a decision of the public prosecutor of RNM. The Public Prosecutor of RNM decided to establish investigation centers in four public prosecutor’s offices: BPP0 Skopje, BPP0 Tetovo, BPP0 Kumanovo and BPP0 for Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption Skopje.<sup>277</sup> On February 7, 2020, the Public Prosecutor of the Republic of North Macedonia adopted a Regulation on the organization and operation of the investigation centers.<sup>278</sup> However, although only four prosecutor’s offices have operational investigation centers, they do not have the necessary capacity, staff, nor are they digitalized. The Government issued a statement announcing that it will work on the staffing and digitalization of the investigation centers in the Public Prosecutor’s Office, which will contribute to the fight against corruption and crime by resolving cases quickly.<sup>279</sup>

269 According to the Republic Public Prosecutor, “cases sent back for retrial is due to lacuna in the Law on Criminal Procedure”. He suggests that other solutions should be considered to overcome this problem. Joveski believes that “when there is a change in the composition of the trial chamber, instead of taking the case back to its start, time should be given to the new member to review the cases”. Or, allow the lay judge to stay until the end of the case, regardless of the fact that he/she has reached a certain age. “According to the Prosecutor, the retrial of some of the SPO cases will significantly delay the proceeding, but he expects the Basic Criminal Court in Skopje will give priority to these cases”. The professional public reacted to the delay of the proceedings and possible positive moves for solving this problem were proposed. In this regard, the following options should be considered: the possibility of extending the term of the lay judge at the request of the President of the Trial Chamber or a new member of the Chamber to be acquainted with the evidence outside the main hearing that would allow that part of the evidence to be considered as presented. It is also necessary to have a good working plan and prioritization of cases, ie upon reception of the case to take into account the statute of limitation, the volume of evidence and the number of defendants. The age of the lay judges should also be taken into account, ie to complete the case before the end of the term of the lay judge or before he/she retires. Appointing reserve lay judges who would be constantly present at the main hearing in order to eliminate the possibility of retrials.

270 Contribution from the Coalition “All for a Fair Trial”, for this shadow report.

271 Натали Петровска, Сибел Амет и Жарко Хаџи-Зафиров, „Ефикасна кривична правда: Преглед на предметите иницирани од СЈО”, (Natali Petrovska, Sibel Amet and Zharko Hadzi-Zafirov, “Effective criminal justice: Review of cases initiated by the SPO”) (2020).

272 Ibid.

273 “Policy Dialogue” Implementation of the Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform 2017–2022 with Action Plan – How far are we and what next?” (N 16).

274 Ibid.

275 Ibid.

276 “Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia”, no. 150 dated 18.11.2010; Law on Criminal Procedure.

277 Blueprint Justice Group (n 115).

278 Contribution of the Ministry of Justice to this shadow report.

279 Влада на Р. Северна Македонија, „Владата на Република Северна Македонија е цврсто решена да ја промени сликата и перцепцијата во борбата против корупцијата, тоа е еден од главните приоритети на владината “Акција 21 – европски стандарди дома”, (“The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia is firmly determined to change the image and perception in the fight against corruption, it is one of the main priorities of the government” Action 21 – European standards at home”) (n 240)

The public also reacted to the confidentiality bonuses distributed to public prosecutors and staff employed by the SPO. The Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption has launched an investigation into possible abuses in distributing these bonuses.<sup>280</sup> At the request of the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Organized Crime and Corruption, the State Audit Office conducted a compliance audit on "Salaries and salary supplements and other allowances in the Public Prosecutor's Office to prosecute crimes related to and arising from the content of illegal interception of communications"<sup>281</sup>. The audit covered the period 2015-2019. The audit report notes that the salary supplements for 2015, provided for the public prosecutor and public prosecutors in this Prosecution Office, exceed the amount of funds paid for the basic salary per person. The audit found that the exercise of the right to salary, except for salary supplements for 2015, the exercise of the right to salary supplements, the accuracy of the calculation, recording and payment comply, in all material respects, with the relevant legislation and internal acts. In contrast, the exercise of the right to other fees, the accuracy of the calculation, recording and payment are not in accordance, in all material respects, with the relevant legislation and internal acts.<sup>282</sup>

---

280 Pravidko, „Joveski: За доверливост двапати се делеле надоместоци во СЈО“, (Pravidko, “Joveski: Fees for confidentiality were awarded twice in the SPO” (November 28, 2019) <<https://www.pravidko.mk/joveski-za-doverlivost-dvapati-se-delele-nadomestotsi-vo-sjo/>>.

281 Државен завод за ревизија, „Извршена е ревизија на Специјалното јавно обвинителство за периодот 2015–2019 година на тема ‘Плати и додатоци на плати и други надоместоци’“ (State Audit Office, “Audit of the Special Public Prosecutor's Office for the period 2015-2019 on ‘Salaries and salary supplements and other allowances’”) (September 29, 2020) <<https://dzt.mk/mk/200929-izvrshena-e-revizija-na-specijalnoto-javno-obvinitelstvo-za-periodot-2015-2019-godina-na>>.

282 Ibid.

## Legal framework

In order to effectively fight corruption, the new Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest was adopted.<sup>283</sup> It regulates both areas - corruption and conflict of interest, and among other things, introduces changes in the election procedure of the president and members, in the status and their salaries, as well as in the termination of office and dismissal of members, and there are changes in the declaration of assets and interests and obligations of administrative, judicial and public officials. The competencies of the Commission are growing, and it now conducts a procedure for controlling the financing of political parties and monitors the legality of the financing of election campaigns.<sup>284</sup> The new Law introduces the exclusive competence of the Commission to examine the assets of elected and appointed officials, which helps in meeting one of the GRECO recommendations following the fourth round of evaluation.<sup>285</sup> A new Law on Public Prosecution was also adopted.<sup>286</sup>

On December 22, 2020, the draft-law on amending the Criminal Code was published on the electronic national register of regulations of the Republic of North Macedonia (ENER) for written opinions, remarks and suggestions from the stakeholders. The main reason for starting the process of amending the Criminal Code is the need to align the provisions with international standards in certain areas, above all - the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, known as the Istanbul Convention and Practice of the European Court of Human Rights, as well as the intention to remove the identified weaknesses. Meanwhile, on December 15, 2020, a new working group was formed to draft a new criminal code.<sup>287</sup> Although the Strategy for the Judicial Sector Reforms 2017-2022<sup>288</sup> provides for amendments to the Law on Criminal Procedure, it was decided to proceed with the drafting of a new law. The working group was established in November 2017, while at the end of 2020 the new Minister of Justice started the procedure for establishing a new working group to work on the text of the draft law on criminal procedure, which includes representatives of relevant institutions, judges, public prosecutors and academics, and representatives of the Blueprint Judicial Reform Group.<sup>289</sup> It is necessary to elaborate the confiscation provisions and procedure, and to agree on the terminology in both the Criminal Code and the Law on Criminal Procedure.<sup>290</sup>

It started with the preparation of the Law on the Origin of Assets, which will serve to detect and confiscate illegally acquired assets and assets of unproven origin, with the aim of protecting state interests.<sup>291</sup> This draft law will be sent for opinion to the Venice Commission.<sup>292</sup>

283 Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interests ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia", No. 12, January 19, 2019).

284 Ibid.

285 "Policy Dialogue 'Reforms in Chapter 23', 17 April 2019" (n 257).

286 Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 42/2020; Law on Public Prosecution. (n 114)

287 Хаџи-Зафиров и др. (n 11).

288 „Стратегија за реформа на правосудниот сектор 2017-2022 со Акциски план“ (n 18), (Hadzi-Zafirov et al., "Strategy for the Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 With Action Plan")

289 Hadzi-Zafirov et al. (n 11).

290 Натали Петровска и Дарко Аврамовски, „Практичната примена на мерката конфискација во кривичните постапки во Република Северна Македонија“, (Natali Petrovska and Darko Avramovski, "Practical application of the confiscation in criminal proceedings in the Republic of North Macedonia") (2021).

291 "SCPC press-release" (July 26, 2021) <<https://dksk.mk/%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%BE%D0%BF%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%B-D%D0%B8%D0%B5-3/>>.

292 dw.com, „Ќе се конфискува имот вреден над 30 илјади евра без доказ за потекло“, (dw.com, "Property worth over 30 thousand euros without proof of origin will be confiscated") (September 22, 2021) <<https://www.dw.com/mk/%D1%9C%D0%B5-%D1%81%D0%B5-%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD%D1%84%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BA%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B0-%D0%B8%D0%BC%D0%BE%D1%82-%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%B5-%D0%BD-%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%B4-30-%D0%B8%D0%BB%D1%98%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B8-%D0%B5%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%B0-%D0%B1%D0%B5%D0%B7-%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%B7-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BA%D0%BB%D0%BE/a-59263535>>.



During the reporting period, the SCPC worked transparently and processed several cases based on received reports, as well as opened several cases on its own initiative. In terms of transparency and openness, during the reporting period in a situation of pandemic, the SCPC transparently published all the information on its website. Its sessions (including case discussions) were public. During the pandemic the SCPC allowed online sessions and provided access to the media.

In 2021, the SCPC was given new suitable premises to conduct their work smoothly. However, an increase in the budget is needed, as well as adequate staffing and technical staffing of the Commission.

A serious commitment of the state is needed to improve the efficiency of criminal justice, the staffing, material conditions and a larger budget of the courts and public prosecutor's offices. It is necessary to use the human resources of the former Special Public Prosecutor's Office, especially those trained for the use of digital tools, and to use the latest equipment from the SPO, which has not been used for two years.

To advance the fight against corruption, it is necessary to fully implement the anti-corruption plan, as well as the National Strategy for Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest.

The new Law on Criminal Procedure, the Criminal Code, as well as the Law on the Origin of Property are expected to be adopted in the next period, in line with the opinion of the Venice Commission.





# 3. Fundamental Rights



## Case law of the European Court of Human Rights

During 2020, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) received 300 applications against the Republic of North Macedonia. 277 applications were declared inadmissible or rejected. 14 judgments were rendered in 23 cases in which at least one violation of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) was found.<sup>293</sup>

In the reporting period, the verdict in *Boshkoski v. North Macedonia* is to be singled out. Namely, the ECtHR found that Ljube Boskoski's right to a fair trial was violated in relation to Article 6 of the ECHR, which provides for the right to a fair trial. In its ruling, the ECtHR ordered North Macedonia to pay 4,500 euros in non-pecuniary damage and 1,220 euros in costs and expenses.<sup>294</sup> In another case processed by the ECtHR, the Government of North Macedonia shall pay 12,000 euros to two Roma families, for a case where two Roma died in suspicious circumstances in the prisons in Idrizovo<sup>295</sup> and Stip<sup>296</sup> in 2017. The ruling was based on the settlement reached between the state and the applicants.

On September 25, 2020, the ECtHR submitted to the Government of the RNM the applications of Nikola Gruevski, Gordana Jankuloska, Mile Janakieski, Saso Mijalkov and others regarding the annulment of the abolition of the then President.<sup>297</sup> The Government at a session held on December 15, 2020<sup>298</sup> adopted the information that these applications will not be approved. In this regard, the Government by June 2021 should explain whether the withdrawn abolition is legally justified.

Based on the violation of the right to expression, the Court in Strasbourg ruled in favor of the journalist Nikola Gelevski and ordered the state to pay a 3,000 euros in damages.<sup>299</sup> The Court found that the Government acknowledged that there had been some interference with freedom of expression, but that this was in order to protect the reputation of others, while the Court noted that it was not directed at the applicant's private activities and that the court verdict against the journalist can have the "effect of deterring political debate on important issues in the media".<sup>300</sup>

293 European Court of Human Rights, Press Country Profile – The Republic of North Macedonia (2021) <[https://echr.coe.int/Documents/CP\\_Republic\\_of\\_North\\_Macedonia\\_ENG.pdf](https://echr.coe.int/Documents/CP_Republic_of_North_Macedonia_ENG.pdf)> accessed 19 April 2021.

294 Европски суд за човекови права, „Случај Бошкоски против Северна Македонија“, (European Court of Human Rights, “Boshkoski v. North Macedonia”) <<http://biroescp.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/БОШКОСКИ-ПРОТИВ-СЕВЕРНА-МАКЕДОНИЈА.pdf>> accessed 19 April 2021.

295 European Court of Human Rights, “Decision – Application no. 59492/18, Mizafer Jusinova v. North Macedonia <[296 European Court of Human Rights, “Decision – Application no. 30415/18, Nehru Redzepov and Dzemile Redzepova v. North Macedonia” <\[297 Алсат М, 360 степени, „Груевски, Мијалков, Јанкулошка, Јанакиевски... меѓу ексфункционерите кои во Стразбур се повикуваат на аболитијата“ \\(Alsat M, 360 degrees, “Gruevski, Mijalkov, Jankuloska, Janakieski ... among the ex-officials that invoke the abolition in Strasbourg”\\) \\(October 5, 2021\\) <<https://360stepeni.mk/gruevski-mijalkov-jankuloska-janakieski-megu-eksfunkcionerite-koi-vo-strazbur-se-povikuvaat-na-abolitsijata/>> accessed 19 April 2021.\]\(https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/#{“itemid”:\[“001-208155”\]}>”> accessed 19 April 2021.</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=\)](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/#{“appno”:[“59492/18”],“itemid”:[“001-208156”]}>”> accessed on 19 April 2021.</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

298 The Government of R. North Macedonia, “From the 30th session of the Government: Adopted additional restrictive measures in the period from December 18 to January 20; The transport of part of the vaccines against COVID-19 will be done through UNICEF” (December 15, 2020) <<https://vlada.mk/node/23565>> accessed 19 April 2021.

299 European Court of Human Rights, “Gelevski Case v. North Macedonia (Application No. 28032/12)” <<https://biroescp.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CASE-OF-GELEVSKI-V.-NORTH-MACEDONIA.pdf>> accessed 29 April 2021.

300 Ibid.

## The Ombudsperson

Three weeks prior to the end of the term of the Ombudsman, MP's on 26.11.2020, adopted the decision to publish an announcement for the election of the Ombudsman.<sup>301</sup> The decision was published in the "Official Gazette"<sup>302</sup> and in three print media, which was criticized by civil society organizations. Namely, the Network for Protection against Discrimination criticized this procedure saying it "deliberately misleading and aimed to inform only a small portion of the public, preventing potential interested candidates to apply".<sup>303</sup> Moreover, the announcement was not published on the website of the Assembly under "announcements", and the media were not notified in writing, which would increase the visibility of the announcement.<sup>304</sup> The proposal for a new Ombudsperson was approved by the Committee on Elections and Appointments on 11 January 2021.<sup>305</sup> The Committee reviewed a total of four candidates, but the public was not informed about their CVs while the general impression was that the selection was non-transparent. At the 32nd session of the Assembly of RNM, held on 25.01.2021, Naser Ziberi was elected Ombudsman with 61 votes, out of which 26 votes were not part of the governing coalition. The selected candidate previously worked as a notary public for 20 years, while the public knows him since he was appointed Minister of Labor and Social Policy from 1996 to 1998.<sup>306</sup> Naser Ziberi was also the candidate of the ruling DUI party for the post of Prime Minister in the parliamentary elections held in 2020.

The new Ombudsman Naser Ziberi nominated Vaska Bajramovska Mustafa as the Deputy Ombudsman for a term of eight years. Vaska Bajramovska Mustafa previously held the same position since 2013. New names were proposed for the other ombudsman's deputies. "Azmin Sherifi was appointed Deputy Ombudsman in Kumanovo, and Sasho Perovski was nominated for deputy in Tetovo by Ziberi. Liljana Kirova, on the other hand, should be the Deputy Ombudsman in Stip, while Vancho Velkov should be the Deputy Ombudsman in Strumica. "They are all law graduates."<sup>307</sup>

In 2020, most of the complaints submitted to the Ombudsman refer to the judiciary, ie in the area of work of enforcement agents. Citizens are additionally concerned by the problems regarding the non-payment of salaries and allowances, power outage, which prevents children from attending online classes, and also the situation of socially vulnerable citizens during the pandemic caused by COVID-19 that face a series of challenges with the realization of social

301 Собрание на Република Северна Македонија, „Предлог-одлука за распишување оглас за избор на Народен правобранител“, (Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, "Draft-decision to publish an announcement for the election of the Ombudsman") (November 26, 2021) <<https://sobranie.mk/materialdetails.aspx?materialId=c5455e-cc-067d-408e-bb3a-23fd769ad167>> accessed 20 April 2021.

302 "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia", no. 285 from 30.11.2020 <<https://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/26a4c-feef77748a0adb7c6d1d064d846.pdf>> accessed April 20, 2021.

303 Радио МОФ, „Мрежа за заштита од дискриминација: Собранието го сокри огласот за Народен правобранител од јавноста“ (24 декември 2020) (Network for Protection against Discrimination: The Assembly hid the announcement for the Ombudsman from the public“ (December 24, 2020) <<https://www.radiomof.mk/mrezha-za-zashtita-od-diskriminacija-sobranieto-go-sokri-oglasot-za-naroden-pravobranitel-od-javnosta/>> accessed 20 April 2021.

304 Ibid.

305 Assembly of the R. North Macedonia, "9th Session of the Committee on Elections and Appointments scheduled for 11.01.2021 at 13:00" (November 1, 2021) <<https://www.sobranie.mk/sessiondetailsrabotni.aspx?sessionDetailsId=25375226-884f-4591-a5fc-ee08e167071f&date=11.1.2021>> accessed 15 October 2021.

306 Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, "Draft Decision on the Election of the Ombudsman" (January 25, 2021) <<https://sobranie.mk/materialdetails.aspx?materialId=9956e741-8df8-44fc-9329-beb5b023d>> .

307 Фактор.мк „Васка Бајрамовска Мустафа уште осум години ќе биде заменик народен правобранител – Зибери ја достави листата со кандидати до Собранието“ (Factor.mk "Vaska Bajramovska Mustafa will be the Deputy Ombudsman for another eight years - Ziberi submitted the list of candidates to the Parliament") <<https://faktor.mk/vaska-bajramovska-mustafa-ushte-osum-godini-kje-bide-zamenik-naroden-pravobranitel---ziberi-ja-dostavi-listata-so-kandidati-do-sobranieto>> accessed October 1, 2021.

protection rights.<sup>308</sup> The main problem, according to the Ombudsman, is “the inability to exercise the right to guaranteed minimum assistance based on permanent changes with the health situation, ie (in) ability to work, primarily due to the inefficiency of the Commission to process citizens’ claims.”<sup>309</sup>

Surveys show that less than 50 percent of citizens trust the Ombudsman institution in the country and the region. In addition to other institutions working in the field of human rights protection, the Ombudsman faces a lack of financial resources, human resources, but also the politicization of employment.<sup>310</sup> Additionally, the public witnessed through the media the internal disputes between the staff and the deputies of the Ombudsman with the Ombudsman Ixhet Memeti. Namely, the Ombudsman revoked the authorizations of another deputy, and additionally calculated the work from home during the pandemic caused by COVID-19 as annual leave.<sup>311</sup> Moreover, other allegations were presented to the public of abuses of the Ombudsman in relation to lease of space, suppliers, employment and more. After an anonymous report, the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption investigated these allegations and did not find any irregularities in the work of the Ombudsman, and therefore stopped the procedure.<sup>312</sup>

The State Commission for Prevention of Corruption in December 2020 found that the Deputy Ombudsman in Kicevo, who was elected in 2019, did not meet the requirements for the level of education and the required work experience of at least seven years in the field of protection and promotion of human rights.<sup>313</sup> The SCPC informed the Parliament of the RNM about this situation, while the Ombudsman Ixhet Memeti stated that, although he did not meet the requirements, he still considered him a good candidate.<sup>314</sup> Besides that, the Constitutional Court discussed this situation upon a report of an affected citizen and found that the Decision by which the Assembly elected the candidate for Deputy Ombudsman in Kicevo “is not an act to seek protection of freedoms and rights provided in Article 110 paragraph 3 of the Constitution”.<sup>315</sup>

308 Народен правобранител, „Годишен извештај за степенот на обезбедувањето, почитување, унапредување и заштита на човековите слободи и права – 2020“ (Ombudsman, “Annual Report on the level of provision, respect, promotion and protection of human rights and freedoms - 2020”) (March 2021) <<http://ombudsman.mk/upload/Godisni%20izvestai/GI-2020/GI-2020.pdf>> accessed 21 April 2021.

309 Ibid.

310 Билјана Котевска, „Ефективност на националните институции за човекови права на Западен Балкан – Црна Гора, Северна Македонија, Србија: Report on North Macedonia (“Effectiveness of National Human Rights Institutions in the Western Balkans - Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia: Country Report on North Macedonia) (Civil Rights Defenders 2019) <<https://epi.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Effectiveness-of-National-Human-Rights-Institutions-in-the-Western-Balkans.pdf>> .

311 СДК.мк, „Војна кај Народниот правобранител – замениците го обвинуваат омбудсманот Мемети за деспотизам, тој вели 5 месеци не доаѓаат на работа“ (SDK.mk, “In war with the Ombudsman - the deputies accuse the Ombudsman Memeti of despotism, he says they have not come to work for 5 months”) (August 21, 2020) <<https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/vojna-kaj-narodniot-pravobranitel-zamenitsite-go-obvinuvaat-ombudsmanot-memeti-za-despotizam-toj-veli-5-mesetsi-ne-dogaat-na-rabota/>> accessed 21 April 2021.

312 State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, “Decision no. 12-465 / 5 from 15.04.2021” <<https://dksk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2021-465-5-v.v.-12-3210-2020.pdf>> accessed 21 April 2021.

313 State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, “Decision no. 12-88 / 10 from 22.10.2020” <[https://old.dksk.mk/fileadmin/user\\_upload/2020/odluki/2020-88-10.pdf](https://old.dksk.mk/fileadmin/user_upload/2020/odluki/2020-88-10.pdf)> accessed on April 20, 2021.

314 Фокус.мк, „Антикорупциска утврди дека Ицет Мемети предложил заменик кој не ги исполнувал условите од редовите на рамковните“ (Fokus.mk, “Anticorruption found that Ixhet Memeti proposed a deputy who did not meet the requirements”) (October 28, 2020) <<https://fokus.mk/antikoruptionska-utvrdi-deka-idhet-memeti-predlozhi-zamenik-koj-ne-gi-ispolnuval-uslovite-od-redovite-na-ramkovnite/>> .

315 Constitutional Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, „Decision no. 32/2020” <<http://ustavensud.mk/?p=19911>> accessed on April 20, 2021.

## Torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

During 2020, the Ombudsman acted on 21 complaints regarding torture, inhuman and degrading treatment by police officers and members of the prison police.<sup>316</sup> Of these cases, a total of 14 related to police officers, while seven related to prison police officers.<sup>317</sup> During the proceedings, the Ombudsman submitted ten requests for initiating a procedure for determining criminal liability, eight of which refer to police officers, and two to prison police officers.

The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights for the period January-October 2020 registered 27 complaints of citizens to the Department of Internal Control, Criminal Investigations and Professional Standards regarding the use of force by police officers. Of the total number of complaints, ten were rejected as unfounded, criminal charges were filed for two, while 15 complaints were found to contain no evidence of use of force.<sup>318</sup>

One of the most striking cases of inhuman treatment was the one in September 2020, where a police officers beat three citizens of Roma ethnicity. A video was released in public. The event took place on September 22 in Bitola, after the three citizens had a car accident in the city. The individuals sustained a cracked arcade, internal bleeding and other bodily injuries.<sup>319</sup> One police officer was charged with unjustified use of physical force, and another police officer, who was involved in the incident, was suspended.<sup>320</sup> A few weeks after this case, again police officers from Bitola in a police van beat a mother and son of Roma ethnicity, which may be a revenge for the sanctions against their colleagues. The mother was immediately transported to the hospital, and as she was asthmatic, her situation became life-threatening.<sup>321</sup>

316 Ombudsman (n 311).

317 Ibid.

318 Хелсиншки комитет за човекови права на Република Македонија, „Кривични дела поврзани со тортура, нехумано и нечовечко постапување сторени од страна на лица со полициски овластувања и припадници на затворската полиција за период јануари 2019 – октомври 2020 година“, (The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia, “Criminal acts related to torture, inhuman and cruel treatment committed by persons with police powers and prison police officers for the period January 2019 - October 2020”). <<https://mhc.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/mk.pdf>> accessed April 2, 2021.

319 Слободен печат, „Полициска бруталност на дело: тројца полицајци претепана Роми во Битола“ (Sloboden Pечат, “Police Brutality in Action: Three Police Officers Beat Roma in Bitola”) (September 24, 2020) <<https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/policziska-brutalnost-na-delo-trojca-policzijaczi-pretepa-a-romi-vo-bitola-video/>>

320 a1on.mk, „Спасовски: Кривична пријава и суспензии за полицајци по претепувањето во Битола“ (a1on.mk, “Spasovski: Criminal charges and suspensions for police officers after the beating in Bitola”) (September 25, 2020) <<https://a1on.mk/uncategorized/spasovski-krivichna-prijava-i-suspenzija-za-policiaecot-od-bitola-koj-napadna-rom-suspendiran-ush-te-eden-policiaec/>>

321 Хелсиншки комитет за човекови права на Република Македонија, „Хелсиншки и Аваја реагираат на нов случај на полициска бруталност кон Роми во Битола“ (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia, “Helsinki and Avaja reacted to a new case of police brutality against Roma in Bitola”) (October 21, 2020) <<https://mhc.org.mk/media/helsinshki-i-avaja-reagiraat-na-nov-sluchaj-na-policziska-brutalnost-kon-romi-vo-bitola/>> accessed 22 April 2021.

## Prison and detention facilities

At a session held on April 8, 2020, the Government adopted a Decree with legal force on the implementation of the Law on Execution of Sanctions during a State of Emergency.<sup>322</sup> With this decree, the issuance of referral acts for the execution of sanctions for imprisonment of up to three years has been postponed until September 1, 2020, except for cases approaching a statute of limitations. However, the pandemic caused by COVID-19 did not bypass the penitentiary institutions in the country. During the reporting period, detainees and convicts, as well as prison staff, got infected with COVID-19, while two prisoners died of the virus.<sup>323</sup> Consequently, the inmates were placed on the priority vaccination list.<sup>324</sup> Additionally, a working group consisting of the justice sector, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Health, discussed potential solutions to reduce the number of detainees and prisoners, in order to prevent the spread of the virus in penitentiaries. The working group plans to stop some of the referral decisions, and a release on parole of those prisoners who have almost served their sentences.<sup>325</sup>

The state spends a total of 18.2 M euro in the area of the prison system. Half of this money goes to prison police and prison staff, while 18% of the total goes to improving prison conditions. In 2020, 1,901 persons were imprisoned, which is 89% of the total accommodation capacity of the prisons.<sup>326</sup>

The Committee for the Prevention of Torture of the Council of Europe in its July 2021 report argues that the work of prisons is non-transparent, and notes that politics impacts the selection of managers, rather than the ability to perform this complex task. Moreover, the report states that "the long-standing recommendations of the Committee for Professional Management of the Prison System have been met, consisting of a clear hierarchy between prison administration and prison directors, a clear management flow and the establishment of a sustainable staff training system, and adoption of clear anti-corruption measures, which, as stated, represent a 'small' development".<sup>327</sup>

As far as the general penitentiary conditions are concerned, it is noted that the health care of the prisoners continues to be under the required level. The Ombudsman bases this claim on "the lack of full-time employed medical staff, the lack of adequate medical equipment and medicines, and often there is a problem in conducting specialist medical examinations of convicts and detainees in appropriate health facilities."<sup>328</sup> Namely, most of the complaints submitted by the convicted and detained persons refer to the health care and the health treatment in the penitentiary-correctional institutions throughout the country.<sup>329</sup> Convicts and detainees com-

322 Decree with legal force on the application of the Law on Execution of Sanctions during a State of Emergency ("Official Gazette", No. 95/20).

323 Сител, „Сведоштво од затворениците во Шутка: Владее страв и паника по вториот смртен случај“ (Sitel, "Testimony of the prisoners in Shutka: Fear and panic reign after the second death") (April 15, 2020) <<https://sitel.com.mk/svedoshtvo-od-zatvorenice-vo-shutka-vladee-strav-i-panika-po-vtoriot-smrten-sluchaj>> accessed 22 April 2021

324 Влада на Р. Северна Македонија, „Филипче: Имунизацијата ја почнуваме со вакцината Синофарм, медицински работници и сите лица над 70 години со приоритет за вакцинирање“, ("Filipche: "We start the immunization with the Sino-farm vaccine, medical workers and all people over 70 with priority for vaccination.") <<https://vlada.mk/node/24140>> accessed September 10, 2021.

325 Телма, „Надлежните бараат начин за намалување на бројот на затвореници“ (5 декември 2020), Telma, ("The authorities are looking for a way to reduce the number of prisoners") (December 5, 2020) <<https://telma.com.mk/2020/12/05/nadlezhnite-baraat-nacin-za-namaluva-n/>> accessed 22 April 2021.

326 21.tv, „9,500 евра за секој затвореник – условите и полицискиот професионализам остануваат главни предизвици“ (21.tv, "9,500 euros for each prisoner - conditions and police professionalism remain major challenges") (May 22, 2021) <<https://mk.tv21.tv/9-500-evra-za-sekoj-zatvorenik-uslovite-i-politsiskiot-profesionalizam-ostanuvaaat-glavni-predizvitsi/>> accessed 11 August 2021.

327 Слободна Европа, „Затворениците со минимум лекарска грижа“ (Free Europe, "Prisoners with Minimum Medical Care") (30 July 2021) <<https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/zatvorenice-so-minimum-lekarska-griza/31384525.html>>.

328 Ombudsman (n 311).

329 Ibid.

plain about irregular or delayed check-ups.. In terms of prison overcrowding, compared to 2017 when there were 2,500 prisoners, with a capacity for only 2,300, as of May 2020, the prisons accommodate about 1,800 prisoners, which is a significant reduction in number.<sup>330</sup> Nevertheless, the Ombudsman in his latest report stated that the accommodation conditions “are not at the required level and do not meet the international standards that should be applied regarding the respect for human rights.”<sup>331</sup> The Helsinki Committee in its report lists “moisture, mold and unpleasant odor” in the Idrizovo Prison, “accommodation facilities do not meet the minimum standards for the cell size per convict convicts, and part of the premises do not meet the standards regarding humidity, lighting and ventilation” for the Shtip Prison.<sup>332</sup> These allegations are confirmed by the latest report of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which notes under-staffing, poor prison health care, poor prison conditions, and a lack of professional approach and poor management of complex situations.<sup>333</sup>

At the end of 2020, the new building of the Correctional Institution - Tetovo was put into operation, which is intended to accommodate children who from 2015 were accommodated in the Ohrid Prison Penitentiary.<sup>334</sup> However, the Ombudsman notes that children do not have a quality educational process, as only temporary classes are held, and children do not have adequate health care as the facility has only one nurse while medical examinations are performed only twice a week.<sup>335</sup>

330 mms.mk, „Дали затворите се вистинска казна само за сиромашните?: Во ‘Стадион’ се дебатираше за затворскиот систем (видео)?“ ( mms.mk, “Are prisons a real punishment only for the poor?: “The prison system was debated in ‘Stadion’ (video)”) (May 30, 2020) <[https://mms.mk/142847/дали-затворите-се-вистинска-казна-сам/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=%25d0%25b4%25d0%25b0%25d0%25bb%25d0%25b8-%25d0%25b7%25d0%25b0%25d1%2582%25d0%25b2%25d0%25be%25d1%2580%25d0%25b8%25d1%2582%25d0%25b5-%25d1%2581%25d0%25b5-%25d0%25b2%25d0%25b8%25d1%2581%25d1%2582%25d0%25b8%25d0%25bd%25d1%2581%25d0%25ba%25d0%25b0-%25d0%25ba%25d0%25b0%25d0%25b7%25d0%25bd%25d0%25b0-%25d1%2581%25d0%25b0%25bc](https://mms.mk/142847/дали-затворите-се-вистинска-казна-сам/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=%25d0%25b4%25d0%25b0%25d0%25bb%25d0%25b8-%25d0%25b7%25d0%25b0%25d1%2582%25d0%25b2%25d0%25be%25d1%2580%25d0%25b8%25d1%2582%25d0%25b5-%25d1%2581%25d0%25b5-%25d0%25b2%25d0%25b8%25d1%2581%25d1%2582%25d0%25b8%25d0%25bd%25d1%2581%25d0%25ba%25d0%25b0-%25d0%25ba%25d0%25b0%25d0%25b7%25d0%25bd%25d0%25b0-%25d1%2581%25d0%25b0%25bc)> accessed 22 April 2021.

331 Ombudsman (n 311).

332 Хелсиншки комитет за човекови права на Република Македонија, „Прв извештај за состојбата и условите во казнено-поправните и воспитно-поправните установи во Република Северна Македонија – 1 август – 1 октомври 2020“, (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia, “First Report on the situation and conditions in the penitentiary and correctional institutions in the Republic of North Macedonia - August 1 - October 1, 2020”) <<https://mhc.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/izvestaj-helsinki-popravni-domovi-mk.pdf>> accessed 22 April 2021.

333 Report to the Authorities of North Macedonia on the Visit to North Macedonia Carried out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) from 2 to 10 December 2019 (2021) <[https://rm.coe.int/1680a26b8f7fbclid=IwAR32ifHb9qOicAyp\\_XnwABkr\\_snbGvaMtgBbDYIHbBgYGek-tQN3mSNSzVw](https://rm.coe.int/1680a26b8f7fbclid=IwAR32ifHb9qOicAyp_XnwABkr_snbGvaMtgBbDYIHbBgYGek-tQN3mSNSzVw)>.

334 Владата на Република Северна Македонија, „Маричиќ од Волковија: Владата на Република Северна Македонија, „Маричиќ од Волковија: Децата-штитеници добиваат нов воспитно поправен дом вреден 4.000.000 евра“ (The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, “Maricic from Volkovija: The protégés receive a new correctional facility worth 4,000,000 euros”) (November 25, 2020) <<https://vlada.mk/node/23328>> accessed 22 April 2021.

335 The Ombudsman (n 311).

## Personal data protection

On August 24, 2021, the new Law on Personal Data Protection entered into force, which was adopted in February 2021 with delayed implementation. The application of this Law provided the alignment with the General Regulation on Personal Data Protection 2016/679 of the European Parliament and the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data. The harmonization with the EU law and directives, requires the adoption of a law on transposition of the Directive (EU) 2016/680<sup>336</sup>, which refers to the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by competent authorities for the purposes of the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences or the execution of criminal penalties, and on the free movement of such data, and moreover, it is necessary to ratify the Protocol amending the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (CETS, No. 223<sup>337</sup>).<sup>338</sup> For this purpose, the Agency for Personal Data Protection prepared a working version of a draft law for the transposition of Directive 2016/680 and ratification of the above protocol.

Out of the total number of complaints of 418 in 2020, 246 (65%) are for social network abuse, while others are for processing personal data through video surveillance systems, publishing a SEC electoral list and other. Regarding the abuses on social networks, most often the complaints refer to fake profiles (116), unauthorized intrusion into profiles (73), posting other people's photos (29) and other. The most common social network to which the complaints refer is "Facebook", followed by "Instagram".<sup>339</sup>

The Ministry of Interior announced that they carried out an action in which charges were filed against ten people, nine of whom were employees of the Ministry of Interior, who abused their official position and authority. Namely, the employees of the Ministry of Interior illegally issued 215 passports to high-risk persons by "using data of persons who had not yet requested and obtained a Macedonian biometric passport, but have emigrated from the country or have been living abroad since birth, who have never entered the country, but have Macedonian citizenship."<sup>340</sup>

Following the DDOS computer attack on 15 July 2020 on the ballot counting software owned by the State Election Commission, the Office for Personal Data Protection ex officio on 29 July 2020 conducted an ad hoc inspection to check the safety of the data of the persons processed by the SEC. Consequently, APPD found that the SEC did not provide the required level of security through technical and organizational measures, did not test the software for conducting the 2020 parliamentary elections in terms of personal data protection, while in procurement, the SEC acted contrary to regulations for personal data protection.<sup>341</sup> Additionally, the APPD found that the SEC uploaded personal data documents to the Google Drive platform, while an internal process for storing and managing personal data was not established as provided under the Personal Data Protection Act.<sup>342</sup>

336 EUR Lex, Directive (EU) 2016/680 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32016L0680>> accessed 23 April 2021.

337 The Council of Europe, "Protocol Amending the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with Regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data" <<https://rm.coe.int/16808ac918>> accessed on 23 April 2021.

338 Агенција за заштита на личните податоци, „Годишен извештај на Агенцијата за заштита на личните податоци 2020“, (Personal Data Protection Agency, "Annual Report of the Agency for Personal Data Protection 2020") (2021) <[https://www.dzlp.mk/sites/default/files/u4/pdf-azlp-godisen\\_izvestaj\\_za\\_2020\\_mk.pdf](https://www.dzlp.mk/sites/default/files/u4/pdf-azlp-godisen_izvestaj_za_2020_mk.pdf)> accessed 23 April 2021.

339 Ibid.

340 Телма, „Најмалку тројца криминалци ги користеле лажните македонски пасоши и на скопскиот аеродром и Дево Баир“ (Telma, "At least three criminals used fake Macedonian passports at the Skopje airport and Devo Bair") (April 13, 2021) <<https://telma.com.mk/2021/04/13/најмалку-тројца-криминалци-ги-корист/>> accessed 23 April 2021.

341 Агенција за заштита на личните податоци, „Наоди од спроведената супервизија во ДИК“ (Agency for Personal Data Protection, "Findings from the conducted supervision in the SEC") (August 4, 2020) <<https://dzlp.mk/mk/content/наоди-од-спроведената-супервизија-во-дик>> accessed 23 April 2021.

342 Ibid.



APPD filed criminal charges for unauthorized publication of a list of names and addresses of patients with COVID-19 from Kumanovo, which appeared on social networks.<sup>343</sup> Additionally, the Prosecutor's Office in Ohrid opened a case after lists of patients from Ohrid were shared,<sup>344</sup> and lists of infected people were also published in Kicevo<sup>345</sup> and Strumica<sup>346</sup>, while deceased patients were photographed in Bitola.<sup>347</sup> Such publication makes the citizens even more affected by the virus, because they are subject to ridicule and lynching if their name is on the list, especially in smaller settlements.

The financial police opened an investigation into three betting houses due to indications of misuse of citizens' personal data, after the SCPC informed the public about this case. Personal data was misused to enter a false profit from a game of chance in the tax return of citizens that casts doubt of organized money laundering. Namely, the first such case appeared in the tax return of a state official who never played or received money from gambling.<sup>348</sup> Additionally, due to this misuse of personal data, the SCPC reported that there are cases of loss of social assistance, theft of personal data, taking loans.<sup>349</sup>

APPD and the Association for E-Commerce of Macedonia signed a memorandum of cooperation aimed at "strengthening mutual cooperation in providing information, education and support to the members of the Association in harmonizing their work with legal regulations." This is aimed at strengthening the awareness of citizens about the right to protection of personal data of the members of the association, ie e-commerce companies.<sup>350</sup>

- 
- 343 Канал 5, „Кривична пријава за објавување списоци со наслов корона вирус – Ковид 19 со лични податоци на социјалните мрежи“ (Kanal 5, “Criminal charges for publishing lists called Corona virus - Covid 19 with personal data on social networks”) (April 10, 2020) <<https://kanal5.com.mk/krivichna-prijava-za-objavuvanje-spisoci-so-naslov-korona-virus-kovid-19-so-lichni-podatoci-na-socijalnite-mrezhi/a417326>> accessed 23 April 2021.
- 344 dw.com, „Ковид-19 ги ‘инфицираше’ и социјалните мрежи – кружат списоци и фотографии“ dw.com, (“Covid-19 has ‘infected’ social networks as well - lists and photos are circulating”) (November 24, 2020) <<https://www.dw.com/mk/ковид-19-ги-инфицираше-и-социјалните-мрежи-кружат-списоци-и-фотографии/a-55715106>> .
- 345 360 степени, „Двојни жртви на корона-кризата: Заболени водат битка и за заштита на личните податоци“, (360 degrees, “Double-fold victims of the corona crisis: The sick are also fighting for the protection of personal data”) (December 21, 2020) <<https://360stepeni.mk/dvojni-zhrtvi-na-korona-krizata-zabolenite-vodat-bitka-i-za-zashtita-na-lichnite-podatotsi/>> accessed 23 April 2021. <<https://360stepeni.mk/dvojni-zhrtvi-na-korona-krizata-zabolenite-vodat-bitka-i-za-zashtita-na-lichnite-podatotsi/>> accessed 23 April 2021.
- 346 24.mk, „Во Струмица објавен список со имиња на одбојкарки како заболени од Ковид-19, клубот бара одговорност“, (24.mk, “In Strumica a list with the names of volleyball players that as suffering from Covid-19 was made public, the club demands responsibility”) (September 16, 2020) <[https://www.24.mk/details/vo-strumica-objaven-sписок-so-iminja-na-odbojkar-ki-kako-zaboleni-od-kovid-19-klubot-bara-odgovornost?fbclid=IwAR2BklwGrwy\\_f1SKzeZ6967vhDVPm\\_F-nl1iJFEH-BL5WiHvupJBQCLdCsA](https://www.24.mk/details/vo-strumica-objaven-sписок-so-iminja-na-odbojkar-ki-kako-zaboleni-od-kovid-19-klubot-bara-odgovornost?fbclid=IwAR2BklwGrwy_f1SKzeZ6967vhDVPm_F-nl1iJFEH-BL5WiHvupJBQCLdCsA)> .
- 347 dw.com, „Ковид-19 ги ‘инфицираше’ и социјалните мрежи – кружат списоци и фотографии“ (n 47)., (dw.com, “Covid-19 has ‘infected’ social networks as well - lists and photos are circulating”) (n 47)).
- 348 Алсат.мк, „Финансиската полиција врши истрага во три обложувалници“ (Alsat.mk, “The Financial Police is investigating in three betting shops”) (April 10, 2021) <<https://alsat.mk/mk/finansiskata-politsija-vrshi-istraga-vo-tri-oblozhuvalnitsi/>> accessed 23 April 2021.
- 349 Нова ТВ, „ДКСК откри сомнителни трансакции во обложувалници“ (Nova TV, “SCPC Reveals Suspicious Betting Transactions”) (April 9, 2021) <<https://novatv.mk/dsk-otkri-somnitelni-transaksii-vo-oblozhuvalnitsi/>> . <<https://novatv.mk/dsk-otkri-somnitelni-transaksii-vo-oblozhuvalnitsi/>> .
- 350 mkd.mk, „Со Меморандум за соработка ќе се крева свеста за правото на заштита на лични податоци“ (mkd.mk, “A Memorandum of Cooperation will raise awareness of the right to personal data protection”) (May 31, 2021)

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- » The expert commission provided by the Regulation for exercising the right to guaranteed assistance to timely resolve the cases of the citizens, especially in the period of the pandemic caused by COVID-19 when the citizens are more vulnerable and face a series of challenges.
- » It is necessary for the Ombudsman to restore the trust of the citizens in this institution through campaigns, appeals and familiarizing the citizens with the competencies and work of the Ombudsman.
- » The Ministry of Interior should conduct awareness raising trainings for the police officers during their work with marginalized groups, since during the reporting period several cases of unjustified use of force by police officers were noted.
- » It is necessary to improve the area of providing health care to prisoners in terms of employment of medical staff, procurement of medical equipment and medicines and providing specialized examinations of prisoners.
- » The competent authorities should draw up a law transposing Directive (EU) 2016/680 on the processing of personal data by the competent authorities for the purpose of preventing, investigating, detecting or prosecuting criminal offenses or committing criminal offenses and for the free movement of such data; and to ratify the Protocol amending the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (CETS No. 223).

## Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion

The State Department's Religious Freedom Report for 2020 for the Republic of Macedonia notes that the Skopje 2 Basic Court did not implement the 2017 ECtHR ruling ordering North Macedonia to register the Orthodox Ohrid Archbishopric and gain religious group status.<sup>351</sup> Moreover, the report notes the non-registration of the Bektashi community from Tetovo by the competent court.

51% of young people in North Macedonia consider themselves religious, 34% consider themselves somewhat religious, while 15% are atheists. 42% of them agree that the state respects religious rights and freedoms, while 36% somewhat agree with this opinion.<sup>352</sup> Every second voter in the country, ie 57.5 percent, would not vote for a politician who has a different religion, while, in general, citizens are against the use of religious symbols in a political campaign.<sup>353</sup>

The Dar al-Hadith Salafi Islamic Community was registered in late 2020, to which the Islamic Religious Community responded by claiming that it had "violated the Law on the Legal Status of the Church, Religious Communities and Religious Groups, and further violated its legal practice, according to which "The five constitutional communities in the country should give their opinion on every establishment of religious communities." Moreover, the IRC points out that, according to the law, religious communities with the same name, teachings and religious practices cannot be registered.<sup>354</sup>

351 The US Department of State Office of International Religious Freedom, "International Religious Freedom Report: North Macedonia 2020" (2021) <<https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-report-on-international-religious-freedom/north-macedonia/>> accessed 11 August 2021.

352 Канал 5, „Истражување: 51 Отсто од младите се сметаат за религиозни“, (Channel 5, „Research: 51% of young people are considered religious“) <<https://kanal5.com.mk/istrazhuvanje-51-otsto-od-mladite-se-smetaat-za-religiozni/a446635>> accessed 23 April 2021.

353 Сител, „Анкета: Секој втор гласач на избори не би гласал за политичар со религија различна од својата“ (Sitel, „Survey: Every second voter in the elections would not vote for a politician with a religion different from his own“) (July 30, 2020) <<https://sitel.com.mk/anketa-sekoj-vtor-glasach-na-izbori-ne-bi-glasal-za-politichar-so-religija-razlichna-od-svojata>> accessed 23 April 2021.

354 Нова Македонија, „Селефистите регистрирани како нова верска заедница во земјава, ИВЗ реагира“, (Nova Makedonija, "Salafists registered as a new religious community in the country, IRC reacts") (19 February 2021) <<https://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/makedonija/politika/celefistite-registrirani-kako-nova-v/>> accessed 23 April 2021.

## Freedom of expression

The Republic of North Macedonia was assessed as “partially free” with a score of 63/100 by “Freedom House”, which is four points more than in 2019 (59/100).<sup>355</sup> In addition, the country ranks 90th out of 180 countries in the Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index, an improvement of three places from 2020. However, the international organization notes that in 2020 the situation with the media in the country deteriorated, government officials continued to threaten and insult the media, while cyberbullying and verbal attacks on journalists increased on social networks.<sup>356</sup> In comparison, the US Report on the Human Rights Situation in North Macedonia for 2020 states that the situation with the media is improving, although emphasis is also placed on the authorities’ response to cases of violence and intimidation of journalists, which is estimated as slow and inefficient.<sup>357</sup>

As a result of the pandemic caused by COVID-19, the work of media workers was hampered by health protection protocols. Media workers were at risk in exercising their right to freedom of expression and the right to information. Based on the initiative of AJM and IUJM, the Ministry of Health provided vaccines for over 600 journalists and media workers, starting with those with chronic diseases and journalists over 40 years old.<sup>358</sup>

The US Human Rights Report notes that although the media is largely divided on political lines, the number of independent media outlets actively expressing differing views without apparent limitations has continued to grow.<sup>359</sup>

### IMPLEMENTATION OF LEGISLATION / INSTITUTIONS

Although the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption has indicated that amendments to the 2018 Electoral Code, which allow taxpayers’ money to be used for political campaigning in the commercial media, should be repealed, this has not yet been done.<sup>360</sup> Additionally, in June 2020, the Government adopted a Decree with legal force on subsidizing compulsory social security contributions for media employees, which subsidizes the entire amount of “compulsory social insurance contributions for media employees who have worked and reported on the situation with COVID-19 during the state of emergency, for June, July and August 2020”.<sup>361</sup>

The new amendments to the draft-law on amending the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services<sup>362</sup> provides for the members of the AVMS Council and the Programming Council of the

- 355 Freedom House, “Freedom in the World 2020 - North Macedonia” (2020) <<https://freedomhouse.org/country/north-macedonia/freedom-world/2020>> .
- 356 Reporters Without Borders, World Press Freedom Index - 2021 (2021) <<https://rsf.org/en/north-macedonia?nl=ok>> accessed 23 April 2021.
- 357 Bureau Of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, North Macedonia 2020 Human Rights Report (2021) <<https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NORTH-MACEDONIA-2020-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf>> accessed 23 April 2021.
- 358 aa.com.mk, „Филипче: „Во среда продолжува вакцинацијата според возрастната група на граѓани“ (“Vaccination continues according to the age group of citizens on Wednesday”) (April 12, 2021) <<https://www.aa.com.tr/mk/балкан/филипче-во-среда-продолжува-вакцинацијата-според-возрастната-група-на-граѓани-/2206739>> accessed April 29, 2021.
- 359 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (n 360).
- 360 Ibid.
- 361 Уредба со законска сила за субвенционирање на придонеси од задолжително социјално осигурување за вработени во медиумите („Службен весник на Република Северна Македонија“, бр. 156/2020). (Decree with legal force for subsidizing the contributions from the compulsory social insurance for media workers) (“Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia”, no. 156/2020)).
- 362 Собрание на Република Северна Македонија, „Предлог на Законот за изменување на Законот за аудио и аудиовизуелни медиумски услуги, по скратена постапка“ (Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, “Draft-law Amending the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, shortened procedure”) (January 26, 2021) <[https://www.sobranie.mk/materialdetails.nsp?material-id=e28fbc3f-e788-46ba-a44b-2c9dee7a8589&fbclid=IwAR0ySy-7\\_ssARMwQ\\_itcg16spJhCe22ymOx225mwc23yWdNNW4j1XJ4Bd-MwQ](https://www.sobranie.mk/materialdetails.nsp?material-id=e28fbc3f-e788-46ba-a44b-2c9dee7a8589&fbclid=IwAR0ySy-7_ssARMwQ_itcg16spJhCe22ymOx225mwc23yWdNNW4j1XJ4Bd-MwQ)> accessed April 29, 2021.

Macedonian Radio-Television to be elected by a majority of at least 61 MPs, instead of the current two-thirds majority. The election of members of these bodies has been stalled for several years as two-thirds majority could not be secured in the Assembly. Consequently, such changes represent an attempt to unblock the work of the reforms of MRT and AVMS.<sup>363</sup> Following public reactions, the draft amendments to the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services were withdrawn, and the Assembly on May 5 announced a call for the selection of new members of the councils of the Macedonian Radio and Television (MRT) and the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Services (AVMS).<sup>364</sup>

## PRESSURE ON JOURNALISTS

The Association of Journalists of Macedonia registered 16 attacks<sup>365</sup> on journalists, which is three times more than in 2019. 14 of the attacks were registered as verbal threats to the lives of journalists, while two as physical attacks.<sup>366</sup> After long term calls from journalists, amendments to the Criminal Code are in parliamentary procedure, and are expected to provide better protection for the journalists and media workers.<sup>367</sup> Consequently, the Ministry of Justice drafted amendments to the Criminal Code, which provides for criminal offenses that will raise the level of protection of journalists and media workers. The aim is to protect this group of persons by prosecuting the perpetrators ex officio for the acts of “murder, obstructing an official in the performance of official duties, endangering security and coercion.”<sup>368</sup> Moreover, amendments to the Law on Civil Liability for Defamation and Insult are proposed. Namely, the amendments envisage a five-fold reduction in the amounts awarded to journalists and editors and a three-fold reduction in the amount for the media as legal entities. With these changes, the maximum amount that can be awarded is 7,400 euros compared to 27,000 euros under the current law.<sup>369</sup>

On April 27, 2020, journalists and media workers filed lawsuits to establish the right to free expression and compensation for non-pecuniary damage regarding the attacks and events of April 27, 2017 in the Parliament. The court rejected the lawsuits of two journalists explaining that “the journalists had no right to seek compensation for non-pecuniary damage for the mental pain suffered and stated that both had no bodily injuries.”<sup>370</sup> Additionally, the court asked another journalist to prove that he was a journalist, because the court did not consider the internet portal as a medium.<sup>371</sup>

363 Призма, „Нов обид за деблокада на реформите во МРТ и АВМУ“ (27 јануари 2021), (Prizma, “A new attempt to unblock the reforms in MRT and AVMS”) (January 27, 2021) <<https://prizma.mk/nov-obid-za-deblokada-na-reformite-vo-mrt-i-vo-avmu/>>

364 360 степени, „Повторен обид на Собранието да избере нови совети на МРТ и на АВМУ: Ќе се отвори ли конечно патот за реформи?“ (360 degrees, “Repeated attempt of the Assembly to elect new councils of MRT and AVMS: Will the path to reform finally be opened?”) (May 12, 2021) <<https://360stepeni.mk/povtoren-obid-na-sobranieto-da-izbere-novi-soveti-na-mrt-i-na-avmu-ke-se-otvori-li-konechno-patot-za-reformi/>> accessed 11 August 2021.

365 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (n 360).

366 Ibid.

367 Слободна Европа, „Нападите врз новинарите тројно зголемени од лани“ (Free Europe, “Attacks on journalists tripled since last year”) (July 28, 2020) <<https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/новинари-избори-корона-напади/30751534.html>> accessed April 29, 2021.

368 dw.com, „Се бара крај за неказнивоста на нападите врз новинари“, (dw.com, “End to Impunity for Attacks on Journalists”) (November 25, 2020) <<https://www.dw.com/mk/се-бара-крај-за-неказнивоста-на-нападите-врз-новинари/a-55718875>> accessed April 29, 2021.

369 Васко Маглешов, „Помали износи за клевета и навреда и поголема заштита на новинарите“ (28 јули 2021), (Vasko Magleshev, “Lower amounts for defamation and insult and greater protection of journalists”) (July 28, 2021) <<https://prizma.mk/pomali-iznosi-za-kleveta-i-navreda-i-pogolema-zashtita-na-novinarite/>> . <<https://prizma.mk/pomali-iznosi-za-kleveta-i-navreda-i-pogolema-zashtita-na-novinarite/>> .

370 360 степени, „ЗНМ: Судот одби тужба од новинари за 27 април бидејќи немале докази дека имало упад и немале телесни повреди“ (360 degrees, “AJM: The court rejected the lawsuit of journalists regarding the April 27 events because they had no evidence that there was an intrusion and had no bodily injuries”) (December 11, 2020) <<https://360stepeni.mk/znm-sudot-odbi-tuzhba-od-novinari-za-27-april-bidejki-nemale-dokazi-deka-imalo-upad-i-nemale-telesni-povredi/>> .

371 dw.com, „Трнливиот пат на новинарите до правда за ‘крвавиот четврток’“ (dw.com, “Journalists’ thorny path to justice for ‘Bloody Thursday’”) (December 11, 2020) <<https://www.dw.com/mk/трнливиот-пат-на-новинарите-до-правда-за-крвавиот-четврток/a-55913142>> accessed April 29, 2021.

Journalist Ljupco Zlatev was attacked in a nightclub, which according to him, was motivated by his text that was published the night before, and was related to a luxury property on Lake Ohrid.<sup>372</sup> Moreover, the journalist Miroslava Burns was the target of attacks and life threats after she reported on a wedding in Tetovo organized contrary to the regulations for protection of the health of the citizens during the pandemic caused by COVID-19. Journalist Tanja Milevska was also the target of death threats and sexist insults through the social networks “Twitter” and “Facebook” because of her views she expressed on “Twitter”.<sup>373</sup>

At the protest organized on September 9, 2020 by VMRO-DPMNE, “Al Jazeera” team was attacked by some people attending the protest. Although there were no injuries and insignificant material damage was caused, the event can still be defined as pressure and causing insecurity on reporting journalists.

## PUBLIC BROADCASTING SERVICE

The 2020 US Human Rights Report on North Macedonia notes that media reforms have not been accompanied by systemic reforms regarding the political neutrality of the public service broadcaster and the media regulator.<sup>374</sup> Furthermore, the crisis caused by COVID-19 negatively affected the advertising market, which increased the dependence of the media on owners and state subsidies.<sup>375</sup>

For five years in a row, MRT’s revenues are declining, while for 2019<sup>376</sup> MRT recorded revenues of 15.1 million euros,<sup>377</sup> which is less by 300,000 euros compared to 2018. However, in the third quarter of 2020, MRT starts to record a profit of 300,000 euros. According to the report, most of the revenues (98.3%) come from the Ministry of Information Society.<sup>378</sup> The budget for 2021 allocates 10.9 million euros, which is a decrease of 3.6 million euros compared to the budget for 2020.<sup>379</sup>

The number of staff as of December 2020 in MRT is 814 people.<sup>380</sup> The debt currently stands at 10.2m euros, although in 2019 it was reduced by 1.5m euros.<sup>381</sup> In June 2020, MISA approved

- 
- 372 360 степени, „Нападнат новинарот Љупчо Златев“ (360 degrees, “Journalist Ljupcho Zlatev attacked”) (July 24, 2020) <<https://360stepeni.mk/napadnat-novinarot-lupcho-zlatev/>> accessed April 29, 2021.
- 373 meta.mk, „SafeJournalists: Ги осудуваме смртните закани и сексистичките навреди кон новинарката Тања Милевска“, (meta.mk, „SafeJournalists: We condemn the death threats and sexist insults against the journalist Tanja Milevska”) (July 17, 2020) <<https://meta.mk/safejournalists-gi-osuduvame-smrtnite-zakani-i-seksistichkite-navredi-kon-novinarokata-tanja-milevska/>> accessed April 29, 2021.
- 374 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (n 360).
- 375 Ibid.
- 376 meta.mk, „Приходите на МРТ продолжиле да опаѓаат и лани, заедно со бројот на вработени (инфографик)“ (meta.mk, “MRT’s revenues continued to decline last year, along with the number of employees (infographic)”) (April 2, 2020) <<https://meta.mk/prihodite-na-mrt-prodolzihle-da-opagaat-i-lani-zaedno-so-brojot-na-vraboteni-infografik/>> accessed April 29, 2021.
- 377 ЈРП Македонска радио-телевизија, „Консолидиран годишен финансиски извештај на ЈРП Македонска радио-телевизија ДООЕЛ, Аргус ДООЕЛ, Сцена и База ДООЕЛ за 2019 година“, (JRP Macedonian Radio-Television, “Consolidated annual financial report of JRP Makedonska Radio-Television DООЕЛ, Argus DООЕЛ, Scena and Baza DООЕЛ for 2019”) <<http://mrt.com.mk/sites/default/files/Годишен%20консолидиран%20извештај%20за%20МРТ%20и%20ДООЕЛ-и-те%20за%202019%20година.pdf>> accessed April 29, 2021. <<http://mrt.com.mk/sites/default/files/Годишен%20консолидиран%20извештај%20за%20МРТ%20и%20ДООЕЛ-и-те%20за%202019%20година.pdf>> accessed 29 April 2021.
- 378 ЈРП Македонска радио-телевизија, „Извештај за финансиското работење на ЈРП МРТ во периодот 01.07 – 30.09.2020 година“ (JRP Macedonian Radio-Television, “Report on the financial operations of JRP MRT in the period 01.07 - 30.09.2020”) <<http://mrt.com.mk/sites/default/files/Извештај%20за%20финансиското%20работење%20на%20ЈРП%20МРТ%20во%20период%2001%2007-30%2009%202020r.pdf>> accessed April 29, 2021
- 379 meta.mk, „МРТ со скратени 3,6 милиони евра во предлог-буџетот за 2021 година“ (meta.mk, “MRT with 3.6 million euros less in the draft budget for 2021”) (November 24, 2020) <<https://meta.mk/mrt-so-skrateni-36-milioni-evra-vo-predlog-budjetot-za-2021-godina/>> accessed April 29, 2021.
- 380 Плус Инфо, „Лани во медиумите работеле 2.600 лица, мажите главно како режисери и сниматели, жените како новинарки“ (Plus Info, “Last year, 2,600 people worked in the media, men mainly as directors and cameramen, women as journalists”) <12.25.2020> accessed on April 29, 2021.
- 381 meta.mk, „МРТ официјално и во третиот квартал работела со добивка, но бројот на вработените и понатаму опаѓа“ (meta.mk, “MRT officially operated with a profit in the third quarter, but the number of staff continues to decline”) (November 5, 2020) <<https://meta.mk/mrt-oficijalno-i-vo-tretiot-kvartal-rabotela-so-dobivka-no-brojot-na-vrabotените-i-ponatamu-opagja/>> accessed April 29, 2021.

the systematization of MRT provides an increase in the existing number of employees to 1,224 employees.<sup>382</sup>

The Program Council of the Macedonian Radio and Television adopted the Rulebook on Employment, Promotion and Deployment of Staff<sup>383</sup> and the Strategy for Development of the Public Service, until 2025.<sup>384</sup> The Rulebook regulates the process of recruitment of new staff and promotion of the existing ones. The Strategy provides for a plan to develop correspondence centers in the country, and to additionally open correspondence centers in Washington, Brussels and other foreign cities. Reconstruction of the headquarters of the public broadcasting service and procurement of equipment is planned, and it is also planned to open an educational center that will train journalists and increase visibility on social networks.

## ECONOMIC FACTORS

The Government of the RNM in May 2020 adopted an amendment to the Decree with legal force for the establishment of a Fund for assistance and support for addressing the crisis caused by COVID-19.<sup>385</sup> The amendments envisage covering the costs of the broadcasters towards the operator of the digital terrestrial multiplex for the broadcasting license for 2020.

Through the Print Media Support and Distribution Support Program for 2020,<sup>386</sup> The Government has allocated € 488,000 to support the print media, which continuously informs the public on current, political, cultural and other issues. Namely, the financial support was granted to 11 media companies.<sup>387</sup>

Information appeared in the public that the Government has an interest in restoring government advertising by amending Article 102 of the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media, which currently prohibits the allocation of public money to private broadcasters.<sup>388</sup> AJM, IUJM, MIM and CEMM are against amendments to the law, because according to them the law can encourage clientelism and state bribery of private media.

Media workers still face problems with income, but also with the absence of measures that would stimulate professional media work.<sup>389</sup>

382 meta.mk, „ММОА ја одобри новата систематизација за дополнителни 460 работни места во МРТ“ (meta.mk, “MISA approved the new systematization for additional 460 jobs in MRT”) (June 5, 2020) <<https://meta.mk/mioa-ja-odobri-novata-sistemizacija-za-dopolnitelni-460-rabotni-mesta-vo-mrt/>> accessed April 29, 2021.

383 „Правилник за вработување, унапредување и распоредување на даватели на услуги и помошно-технички лица во јавното радиодифузно претпријатие на македонската радиотелевизија“ (“Rulebook on employment, promotion and deployment of service providers and support staff in the public broadcasting company of the Macedonian Radio and Television”) <<http://mrt.com.mk/sites/default/files/Правилник%20за%20вработување%20и%20унапредување%20и%20распоредување%20на%20даватели%20на%20услуги%20и%20помошно-технички%20лица%20во%20ОРП%20МРТ.pdf>> accessed April 29, 2021.

384 Македонска радио-телевизија, „Петгодишна стратегија за развој на Македонската радио-телевизија“ (Macedonian Radio and Television, “Five-year strategy for development of the Macedonian Radio and Television”) <[http://mrt.com.mk/sites/default/files/ПЕТГОДИШНА%20СТРАТЕГИЈА%20ЗА%20РАЗВОЈ%20НА%20МРТ\\_0.pdf](http://mrt.com.mk/sites/default/files/ПЕТГОДИШНА%20СТРАТЕГИЈА%20ЗА%20РАЗВОЈ%20НА%20МРТ_0.pdf)> accessed April 29, 2021.

385 Уредба со законска сила за дополнување на Уредбата со законска сила за формирање фонд за помош и поддршка за справување со кризата предизвикана од коронавирусот COVID-19 („Службен весник на Република Северна Македонија“, бр. 139/2020). (Decree with legal force to supplement the Decree with legal force for establishing a fund for assistance and support for addressing the crisis caused by COVID-19 (“Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia”, no. 139/2020)).

386 Програма за поддршка за печатење и дистрибуција на печатените медиуми за 2020 година („Службен весник на РСМ“, бр. 287/2020 од 02.12.2020), (Program for support for printing and distribution of print media for 2020 (“Official Gazette of RNM”, No. 287/2020 from 02.12.2020)).

387 meta.mk, „Владата додели финансиска поддршка од 488.000 евра на 11 печатени медиуми“ (meta.mk, “The government granted financial support of 488,000 euros to 11 print media”) (December 30, 2020) <<https://meta.mk/vlada-dodeli-finansiska-poddrshka-od-488-000-evra-na-11-pechateni-mediumi/>> accessed May 1, 2021.

388 Закон за изменување и дополнување на Законот за аудио и аудиовизуелни медиумски услуги („Службен весник на Република Северна Македонија“, бр. 247/18 од 31.12.2018 година). (Law on Amendments to the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (“Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia”, No. 247/18 of 31.12.2018)).

389 civilmedia.mk, „Цивил: Постигнувањата во областа на слободата на изразувањето се евидентни, но придружени со низа слабости и предизвици“ (civilmedia.mk, “Civil: Achievements in the field of freedom of expression are evident, but accompanied by a series of weaknesses and challenges”) (May 3, 2020) <<https://civilmedia.mk/tsivil-postignuvanata-vo-oblasta-na-slobodata-na-izrazuvaneto-se-evidentni-no-privrzheni-so-niza-slabosti-i-predizvitsi/>> accessed May 1, 2021.

## INTERNET 2.

Surveys show that 74% of young people aged 15 to 30 claim that they can recognize fake news, while 21% can not, and 5% thought whether a particular news item they read was fake or not. 50% do not open a news source, and 32% of young people read a news item that was later found to be fake.<sup>390</sup>

North Macedonia ranks last in terms of people's' resistance to fake news according to the 2021 Media Literacy Index.<sup>391</sup> Out of a total of 35 countries, North Macedonia is ranked last, followed by the Balkan countries of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Serbia. The increased presence of people on the internet media is particularly worrying during the pandemic, as they become more susceptible to all kinds of false information and create a distorted image of reality. Moreover, this situation threatens to the trust in scientific information about vaccines and medical personnel and institutions that are daily on the front lines against the COVID-19 virus.<sup>392</sup>

North Macedonia does not have legislation targeting fake news. Namely, fake news and misinformation present on the Macedonian media internet space represent a hybrid threat against democracy.<sup>393</sup> Disinformation campaigns are most prevalent on social media, such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, but they also tend to appear on traditional media, especially local media.<sup>394</sup>

The Government of RNM in March 2021 published the document "Action 21 - European Standards at Home" stating the fight against misinformation as one of the priorities. This implies consultations with the media workers and the civil sector for finding solutions in the fight against fake news and hate speech. This should initially include working with fact-checkers, media access to relevant sources and information, and strengthening media literacy.<sup>395</sup>

The news agencies of North Macedonia and Bulgaria (MIA and BTA) agreed on cooperation in the fight against fake news in both countries. The co-operation envisages exchange of information, live broadcasts and transfer of the most important information about the two countries on a daily basis.<sup>396</sup>

## PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS / PROFESSIONAL CONDITIONS

The self-regulation through the Register of Professional Online Media works to raise the media literacy of the citizens by marking online media that meet the criteria for professional reporting. A step forward in this direction is the cooperation with the news aggregator "Time.mk" and the online media registry of "Promedia.mk". Namely, Time.mk offers version<sup>397</sup> of their aggregator which shows news from online media that are part of the Register of Professional Media. This approach offers the opportunity for citizens to read news from media that are ethical and not

390 Frontline, „Онлајн анкета: Младите велат дека можат да препознаат лажна вест, но често веруваат во дезинформациите за Ковид-19“ (Frontline, „Online Poll: Young people say they can recognize fake news, but often believe in misinformation about Covid-19“) (December 27, 2020) <<https://frontline.mk/2020/12/27/onla-n-anketa-mladite-velat-deka-mozhat-da-prepoznat-lazhna-vest-no-chesto-veruvaat-vo-dezinformaciite-za-kovid-19/>> accessed 2 May 2021.

391 Индекс на медијната грамотност 2021 – двойна заплата: Устойчивост на фалшиви новини по време на „инфодемията“ от Ковид-19] <[https://osis.bg/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/MediaLiteracyIndex2021\\_BG.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1ZJYmiK8aB-payZDkFD2HTWpdjMvoalyDLtkOV7D4MLX6\\_110k5HskpACg](https://osis.bg/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/MediaLiteracyIndex2021_BG.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1ZJYmiK8aB-payZDkFD2HTWpdjMvoalyDLtkOV7D4MLX6_110k5HskpACg)> accessed on 2 maj 2021.

392 Сител, „Лажни вести ја уриваат довербата во вакцинацијата“ (Sitel, "Fake news destroys trust in vaccination") (April 5, 2021) <<https://sitel.com.mk/lazhni-vesti-ja-urivaat-doverbata-vo-vakcinacijata>> accessed 2 May 2021.

393 civilmedia.mk, „Дивил: Постигнувањата во областа на слободата на изразувањето се евидентни, но придружени со низа слабости и предизвици“, (civilmedia.mk, „Civil: Achievements in the area of freedom of expression are evident, but accompanied by a number of weaknesses and challenges“) (n 88).

394 Department of Foreign Affairs, Directorate-General for Foreign Affairs of the Union, Mapping Fake News and Disinformation in the Western Balkans and Identifying Ways to Effectively Counter Them] (2021) <[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/653621/EXPO\\_STU\(2020\)653621\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/653621/EXPO_STU(2020)653621_EN.pdf)> .

395 Влада на РСМ, „Акција 21 – европски стандарди дома“ (2021)21, ( Government of RNM, "Action 21 - European standards at home") (2021) 21 <<https://vlada.mk/akcija21>> accessed 2 May 2021.

396 Плус Инфо, „МИА и БТА заедно ќе се борат против лажни вести“ (6 февруари 2021) (Plus Info, "MIA and BTA together will fight against fake news") (February 6, 2021) <<https://plusinfo.mk/mia-i-bta-zaedno-e-se-borat-protiv-lazhni-vesti/>> accessed 2 May 2021.

397 <https://time.mk/blue>



prone to spreading false news and misinformation. Regarding online media, the Council for Media Ethics in Macedonia, with the support of the OSCE Mission to Skopje, for the first time published Guidelines for Ethical Reporting in North Macedonia.<sup>398</sup> The guidelines as a self-regulatory tool aim to provide online media content created on the principles of professional and ethical online media reporting.

In the reporting period, CEMM received 111 complaints on all grounds of the Code of Journalists of Macedonia. 77 of the complaints were founded, while most of them related to the violation of Article 1 of the Code of Journalists<sup>399</sup>, which refers to the accuracy of the information transmitted by the journalist.

The Council of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services has decided to suspend the procedures related to the revocation of licenses because of the failure to pay the annual fee for radio and television broadcasting, but also not to initiate new revocation procedures for non-payment of the license fee for 2021.<sup>400</sup> This decision comes after earlier in February 2021, the Government of RNM approved funds in the amount of 50,000,000.00 denars to AVMS, in support of addressing the crisis caused by COVID-19. Namely, the support refers to the broadcasters “for reimbursement of funds paid in fees, charges and fees for performing broadcasting activity that are documented in the financial records of AVMS”.<sup>401</sup>

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- » The fight against fake news, which is a form of hybrid attack on a democratic society, needs to be enhanced by strengthening the financial sustainability of the media and their independence and increasing pluralism. Furthermore, continuous campaigns and awareness raising are needed for citizens to recognize fake news.
- » It is necessary to elect the members of the AVMS Council and the MRT Program Council, which will unblock the reforms of the work of MRT and AVMS.
- » The new Criminal Code should provide for ex-officio prosecution of acts involving journalists, providing greater protection. Moreover, the competent institutions should act more effectively when reporting threats to the safety of journalists in the country.

398 CEMM, „Насоки за етичко известување на онлајн медиумите (примена на Кодексот на новинарите во онлајн сферата)“ (CEMM, “Guidelines for ethical reporting of online media (application of the Code of Journalists in the online sphere)”) <<https://semm.mk/attachments/01-02-2021/Насоки%20за%20етичко%20известување%20во%20онлајн%20медиумите.pdf>> accessed May 3, 2021.

399 CEMM, „Кодекс на новинарите на Македонија“ (15 октомври 2014), (CEMM, “Code of Journalists of Macedonia”) (October 15, 2014) <<https://semm.mk/dokumenti/korisni-resursi/kodeks/91-kodeks-na-novinarite-na-makedonija>> accessed May 3, 2021.\

400 Агенција за аудио и аудиовизуелни услуги, „Финансиска поддршка за надомест на средствата за дозвола за РА и ТВ емитување“, (Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Services, “Financial support for reimbursement license fees for RA and TV broadcasting”) (March 2, 2021) <<https://avmu.mk/2021/03/02/финансиска-поддршка-за-надомест-на-ср/>> .

401 Влада на Р. Северна Македонија, „Од 48. седница на Владата: Донесена одлука за мерката финансиска поддршка за радиодифузери од пакетот 5“ (24 февруари 2021) (The Government of R. North Macedonia, “From the 48th session of the Government: Adopted decision on the financial support for broadcasters from package 5”) (February 24, 2021) <<https://vlada.mk/node/24359>> accessed May 3, 2021.

## Vulnerable groups and principle of non-discrimination

The National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2016-2020 has expired. In the reporting period, no evaluation of the contribution of the strategy was conducted, and the competent authorities did not implement activities for the development of a new strategy that would address the issues in this area.

### COMMISSION FOR PREVENTION AND PROTECTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

The Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination was re-enacted on October 27, 2020,<sup>402</sup> after, earlier in May, the Constitutional Court repealed it since it was not adopted with absolute majority in 2019.<sup>403</sup> The new law provides for an increased number of competencies of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination. In addition to the quantitatively larger number, the qualitative competencies are expanded while emphasis is placed on the preventive function, ie the prevention of discrimination. For the first time, the law provides for protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Regarding the criteria for election of members of the Commission, the new law provides for professionalization of the composition. Namely, in addition to the criteria of citizenship, residence in RNM, higher education and experience in the field of human rights, the new law supplemented that list with a minimum of seven years of work experience in the field of human rights, of which five years in the field of equality and non-discrimination.

The names of the new members of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination were voted by the Commission for Elections and Appointments at a session held on January 5, 2021.<sup>404</sup> The election was preceded by a public hearing of all candidates who had the opportunity to present themselves to MPs and the public, and in addition, to answer questions posed by MPs and other stakeholders who attended the hearing. On January 25, 2021, with a majority of 61 MPs, the Assembly voted the first composition of the new body under the Law on Prevention and Protection of Discrimination.<sup>405</sup> Opposition lawmakers opposed the composition claiming that it was unprofessional and politically motivated. The composition reflects the multiethnic character of the country and for the first time a member of the Roma ethnic community was elected as member of the Commission, which is a positive step in the fight against discrimination. However, the composition of the Commission is not gender balanced. Out of the seven elected members, only two are women, one of whom resigned for private reasons.<sup>406</sup>

402 Закон за спречување и заштита од дискриминација („Службен весник на Република Северна Македонија“, бр. 258/20), (Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination) (“Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia”, No. 258/20).

403 Constitutional Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, „Decision U. no. 115/2019 “<<http://ustavensud.mk/?p=18839>> accessed March 29, 2021.

404 Собрание на Р. Северна Македонија, „Седница бр. 8 на Комисијата за прашањата на изборите и именувањата закажана на 05.01.2021 год. во 13:00 часот“ (Parliament of R. North Macedonia, “Session no. 9 of the Committee on Elections and Appointments scheduled for 11.01.2021 at 13:00”) (November 1, 2021) <<https://www.sobranie.mk/sessiondetailsrabotni.nspix?sessionDetailsId=25375226-884f-4591-a5fc-ee08e167071f&date=11.1.2021>> accessed October 15, 2021.0

405 Собрание на Р. Северна Македонија, „Седница бр. 31 на Собранието на Р. Северна Македонија закажана на 12.01.2021 год. во 12:00 часот“ (Parliament of R. North Macedonia, “Session no. 31 of the Assembly of R. North Macedonia scheduled for January 12, 2021. at 12:00”) (January 25, 2021) <<https://sobranie.mk/sessiondetails.nspix?sessionDetailsId=d2375c-ca-06aa-47ae-816c-c5ac9a809cde&date=25.1.2021>> accessed May 3, 2021..

406 360 степени, „Падна оставка во Комисијата за заштита од дискриминација, неполн месец по нејзиното формирање“ (360 degrees, “A resignation from the Commission for Protection against Discrimination, less than a month after its establishment”) (February 16, 2021) <<https://360stepeni.mk/padna-ostavka-vo-komisijata-za-zashtita-od-diskriminatsija-nepoln-mesets-po-nejzinoto-formirane/>> accessed May 3, 2021.

At the moment, the Commission is in the final stage of establishing a professional service. The professional service is especially important from the aspect of technical and professional support to this body, and therefore in increasing its efficiency. Moreover, the Commission drafted the systematization acts, the Internal Organization Rulebook, the Rules of Procedure and the functional analysis.<sup>407</sup>

The Government of the RNM adopted in March 2021 a conclusion providing to the Commission the premises that are currently the seat of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption. The process of moving the SCPC is still ongoing, and it is expected to be completed by May 2021.<sup>408</sup> There are currently 74 active<sup>409</sup> complaints of discrimination that the new body took over under the Law on Prevention and Discrimination. These complaints usually date from 2019 until 2020.

Pursuant to the new Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, for the first time, a lawsuit was filed regarding a textbook intended for higher education students from the Faculty of Philosophy. In the textbook there is a part "blaming women for the increased number of divorces, condemning abortion and qualifying same-sex partnerships as debauchery", among other things.<sup>410</sup> In another case, the Ministry of Education and Science withdrew a discriminatory Macedonian language textbook for fifth grade students. The textbook had discriminatory content and texts that encouraged gender inequality.<sup>411</sup>

407 Радио МОФ, „Антидискриминаторска комисија со низа предизвици, граѓанскиот сектор бара поддршка за да ѝ се обезбедат услови за работа“ (Radio MOF, "The Anti-Discrimination Commission faces a series of challenges, the civil sector seeks support to provide working conditions") (April 23, 2021) <<https://www.radiomof.mk/antidiskriminatorska-komisija-so-niza-predizvici-gragjanskiot-sektor-bara-poddrshka-za-da-i-se-obezbedat-uslovi-za-rabota/>> accessed May 4, 2021.

408 civilmedia.mk, „Комисијата за спречување и заштита од дискриминација три месеци работи на институционално воспоставување“ civilmedia.mk, ("The Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination has been working on its institutional establishment for three months") (April 22, 2021) <<https://civilmedia.mk/komisijata-za-sprechuvane-i-zash-tita-od-diskriminatsija-tri-mesetsi-raboti-na-institutsionalno-voststavuvane/>> accessed May 3, 2021.

409 mms.mk, „Сакаме да им влееме доверба на граѓаните, ние сме им сојузници во борбата за еднаквост: Со Игор Јадровски за функционирањето на новата Комисија за заштита од дискриминација“ (mms.mk, "We want to instill confidence to the citizens, we are their allies in the fight for equality: With Igor Jadrovski on the work of the new Commission for Protection against Discrimination") (March 26, 2021) <[https://mms.mk/212145/sakame-da-im-vleeme-doverba-na-gragani/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=sakame-da-im-vleeme-doverba-na-gragani](https://mms.mk/212145/sakame-da-im-vleeme-doverba-na-gragani/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=sakame-da-im-vleeme-doverba-na-gragani)> accessed May 3, 2021.

410 Коалиција „Маргини“, „Прва тужба против учебник од високо образование врз основа на новиот закон за спречување и заштита од дискриминација“ (Coalition "Margins", "First lawsuit against a higher education textbook based on the new Law on prevention and protection against discrimination") (December 9, 2020) <<http://coalition.org.mk/prva-tuzba-protiv-uchebnik-od-visoko-ob/>> accessed May 1, 2021.

411 a1on.mk, „Учебник за шесто одделение: Изброј до 15 пред да ја заколеш жена ти, совет за трпение“ (a1on.mk, "Textbook for the sixth grade: Count to 15 before slaying your wife, a tip of patience") (October 28, 2020) <<https://a1on.mk/macedonia/uchebnik-za-shesto-oddelenie-izbroj-do-15-pred-da-ja-zakolesh-zhena-ti-sovet-za-trpenie/>> accessed May 1, 2021.

## Gender

The COVID-19 pandemic has strongly affected women, as they are more prevalent among health and social workers. Employment among women has increased enormously compared to men, and domestic violence has increased as well.<sup>412</sup> The government has adopted five packages of economic measures aimed at mitigating the economic consequences of the pandemic, and additional funds allocated to the health budget, but in the process of creating measures there is no systemic approach to addressing gender needs, although in general, the measures cover everyone regardless of sex and gender. In this regard, two thirds of the CSOs dealing with gender issues stated that they were not involved, or only slightly involved in creating the measures.<sup>413</sup> Out of a total of 46 measures that may contain a gender dimension, only 14 are gender positive. Economic measures have generally been limited in scope. To some extent, they only covered women who lost their income at the beginning of the crisis, such as the small percentage of self-employed women, self-employed artists or workers who were laid off. Analyses show that there is a lack of concrete measures for women in the informal economy, women farmers, single mothers (widows, single-parent families), victims of violence and domestic violence, and workers in manufacturing and basic sectors who are at constant risk of infection; and loss of their jobs (production facilities, production, textile factories, shops, markets, etc.).<sup>414</sup>

The care for the family, the home and the children during the pandemic was taken over mostly by women, and the measure for keeping the children at home when the kindergartens were not working had to be coped with by 77% of women and 23% of men. Increased women's labor at home can have consequences for woman's mental health. In political life, there is a great imbalance between the participation of women and men. There is a balance among heads of departments and units, but as far as mayors, presidents and council members and presidents of urban and local communities are concerned, men prevail in number and in municipal decision-making processes.<sup>415</sup> In contrast, women dominate as kindergarten principals over men.

In North Macedonia there is still a gap between the salaries of men and women. For the same level of education, job and qualifications, some women are still underpaid compared to men, especially in lower-paying professions such as the textile and leather industries.<sup>416</sup>

Roma women in North Macedonia still face challenges to enter the labor market due to long-standing systemic discrimination. In public institutions, only four Roma women are employed in managerial positions, while in non-managerial they are represented with only 0.47% of the total number of employees. Out of a total of 7,647 people who used active employment measures for 2019, only 169 are Roma, although 4,632, or 4.6 percent of the registered unemployed are Roma.<sup>417</sup> The fact that 95% of Roma women, registered as unemployed, have no education or have only a basic level of education is striking.<sup>418</sup>

412 European Commission, International Women's Day, 2021: COVID-19 pandemic is a major challenge to gender equality. (5 March 2021) <[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_21\\_1011](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_1011)> accessed May 17, 2021.

413 Центар за истражување и креирање политики (ЦИКП), „Справување со КОВИД-19: Како трошењето на јавните пари влијае на родовата еднаквост“ (Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM), “Dealing with COVID-19: How Spending Public Money Affects Gender Equality”) (2021) <<https://gbwn.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Fiskalna-Analiza-final-2.pdf>> accessed May 15, 2021.

414 Marija Bashevska, “The Influence of Covid-19 on Men and Women in North Macedonia” (UN Women, July 2020) <[https://www.preventionweb.net/files/73970\\_nmrgaassessmentmacedonian.pdf](https://www.preventionweb.net/files/73970_nmrgaassessmentmacedonian.pdf)>.

415 mms.mk, „Способната жена не е прифатена бидејќи на неа се гледа како на силна конкуренција: бројни предизвици на патот кон родовата рамноправност при донесувањето одлуки“ (n 117) (mms.mk, “A capable woman is not accepted because she is seen as a strong competitor: numerous challenges on the road to gender equality in decision making” (n 117)).

416 Voice of America, „Исто образование, а помали плати од мажите – поразителна родова нееднаквост во македонското општество“ (“Same education, but lower wages than men - devastating gender inequality in Macedonian society”) (March 10, 2021) <<https://mk.voanews.com/a/rodova-neednakvost-razlicni-primanja-voa/5809153.html>> accessed May 14, 2021.

417 libertas.mk, „Хера: За Ромките во државава сè уште има предрасуди, околу работните места“ (libertas.mk, “Hera: There are still prejudices against Roma women in the country, when it comes to jobs”) (April 8, 2021) <<https://libertas.mk/hera-zaromkite-vo-drzhavava-se-ushte-ima-predrasudi-otkolku-rabotnite-mesta/>> accessed May 6, 2021.

418 Ibid.

On January 27, 2021, the Assembly of the RNM passed the Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, which is in line with the Istanbul Convention. The purpose of the law is “prevention of gender-based violence against women and domestic violence, effective protection of victims of any form of gender-based violence against women, as well as victims of domestic violence by respecting the fundamental human rights and freedoms guaranteed by “The Constitution and international agreements ratified in line with the Constitution.”<sup>419</sup> The law defines the term “woman”, to include women under the age of 18, provides for penalties for institutions that do not comply with the law, obligations of trade unions, judiciary, media and companies to monitor gender status and promote policy against violence against women. Although the Law on Abortion was adopted in 2019<sup>420</sup>, which provides for medical abortion as an alternative method to surgical abortion, clinical guidelines have not been adopted for its implementation, while pills for this abortion are not available in pharmacies and health facilities.<sup>421</sup> This is especially important in a pandemic, which increases the risk of domestic violence, and the absence of adequate and timely contraception limits safe abortion. With the onset of the pandemic and the introduction of curfew, following additional requests and warnings from civil society organizations, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) said that victims of violence could leave their homes to report violence and seek support and assistance. Moreover, institutions such as the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy conducted information campaigns on domestic violence against women and on how to report it. Due to the lockdown, the Ministry of Interior, in the period April 12 to May 12, 2020, registered an increase of domestic violence by 44.6 percent compared to the same period in 2019.<sup>422</sup>

In the reporting period, a channel of private groups appeared on the “Telegram” application, in which photos and personal data of women with pornographic connotations were published. The founders of the groups were arrested, and yet the experience of women who were harassed and stalked was demeaned and the police failed to act, which raised the level of distrust in the institutions. According to the civil society organizations, the Public Prosecutor’s Office filed charges in an untimely, inefficient manner or managed the pre-investigation and investigation procedure without sufficient attention, that made the violence against women continue.<sup>423</sup>

The Gender Equality Platform in the reporting period claimed that omissions of police officer in handling reported cases of violence against women, were covered-up in the Ministry of Interior.<sup>424</sup> Moreover, as they claim, instead of filing criminal charges in such cases, the police officers filed misdemeanor charges. Further more, the Gender Equality Platform claims that the police act slowly or fail to act on gender-based violence reports, which can be fatal for the victim. 80% of murder cases took place in the home or in the home of the victim’s parents by the partner.<sup>425</sup>

The Criminal Code does not provide for greater protection when it comes to criminalizing violence against women. Consequently, Article 122 provides for the crime of “domestic violence”, but the CC fails to give a definition of “violence against women”, which would specify “human rights violations and forms of discrimination against women and would refer to all forms of gender-based violence that results or will result in injury of a physical, sexual, psychological

419 Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women (“Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia”, No. 24/2021)).

420 Law on Abortion (“Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia”, No. 101/19)).

421 makpress.mk, „Платформата за родова еднаквост бара МЗ да обезбеди абортус во време на КОВИД-19“, (makpress.mk, “The Gender Equality Platform requires the MoH to offer abortion during COVID-19”) (September 28, 2020) <<https://makpress.mk/Home/PostDetails?PostId=371015>> accessed May 14, 2021.

422 Bashevska (n 417).

423 civilmedia.mk, „Платформа за родова еднаквост: Институционалниот молк активно го охрабрува сексуалното вознемирување преку интернет“, (civilmedia.mk, „Gender Equality Platform: Institutional Silence Actively Encourages Sexual Harassment Online“) (April 15, 2021) <<https://civilmedia.mk/platforma-za-rodova-ednakvost-institucionalniot-molk-aktivno-go-ohrabruva-seksualnoto-voznemiruvane-preku-internet/>> accessed May 14, 2021.

424 civilmedia.mk, „Платформа за родова еднаквост: Институционалниот молк активно го охрабрува сексуалното вознемирување преку интернет“ (n 122), (Civilmedia.mk, “Platform for gender equality: Institutional silence actively encourages sexual harassment online “(n 122)).

425 radiomof.mk, „Ненавремената реакција на полицијата може да резултира во фемцид, реагираат од платформата за родова еднаквост“ (radiomof.mk, “Untimely reaction of the police may result in femicide, says the Gender Equality Platform”) (September 11, 2020) <<https://www.radiomof.mk/nenavremenata-reakcija-na-policijata-mozhe-da-rezultira-vo-femicid-reagiraat-od-platformata-za-rodova-ednakvost/>> accessed May 10, 2021.

or other nature and deprivation of liberty occurring in public or private life".<sup>426</sup> Moreover, the acts of sexual harassment and stalking are missing, where the victims are mostly women.<sup>427</sup> As a result of this, the Minister of Justice Bojan Maricic announced in public that the Criminal Code will introduce amendments that "put the protection and rights of the victim and specify the acts of gender-based violence" by introducing the acts of stalking and sexual harassment.<sup>428</sup>

The findings of the AVMS show that the election campaigns aim at greater promotion of the male candidates for MPs and "the male perspective and expertise on the developments regarding the parliamentary elections". Out of a total of 134 representatives of political parties in the campaigns, 128 were men versus six women, while in the election media programs, 86% of the speakers were men versus 14% women. Additionally, there were reports in the campaign in which women were gender stereotyped and sexually objectified.<sup>429</sup>

The MLSP is currently drafting the Law on Gender Equality and the Law on Mobbing, which are related to the area of gender discrimination. The purpose of the Law on Gender Equality is "to promote gender equality, by establishing visibility, strengthening the role of women in all spheres of social life, both in public, political and private life, equal access to resources and equal participation in decision-making."<sup>430</sup> The Law on Gender Equality provides for the establishment of the Secretariat for Gender Equality as the highest body with the authority to coordinate and monitor the work of institutions in the implementation of the law, and moreover established a Resource Center for training of civil servants and a National Coordination Body.<sup>431</sup> The law was sent for opinion to the ODIHR, the Venice Commission, the EU Delegation and the United Nations.

The MLSP has developed the new Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2026, which will succeed the existing one that ended in 2020. The content of the Strategy was developed with the involvement of civil society and international organizations and all other stakeholders. "The Strategy integrates policies for combating violence, stereotypes, for the promotion of the position of women in political life, in management, in supervisory boards, wherever decisions need to be made"<sup>432</sup>, and with this document it is planned to establish a training center for gender-responsive budgeting.<sup>433</sup> The Strategy was adopted by the Government in July 2021.<sup>434</sup>

426 opserver.mk, „Фетай: Актуелниот Кривичен законик не нуди многу за заштита од насилство врз жените“ opserver.mk, („Fetai: The current Criminal Code does not offer much protection from violence against women“) (February 25, 2021) <<https://opserver.mk/makedonija/fetai-aktuelniot-krivichen-zakonik-ne-nudi-mnogu-za-zashtita-od-nasilstvo-vrz-zhenite/>> accessed May 15, 2021.

427 Ibid.

428 vecer.press, „Маричиќ на трибина на СДММ: Измените на Кривичниот законик во центарот ја ставаат заштитата и правата на жртвата на родово базирано насилство“ (vecer.press, „Maricic at the tribune of SDMM: Amendments to the Criminal Code focus on protection and rights of victims of gender-based violence“) (March 8, 2021) <<https://www.vecer.press/maricik-na-tribina-na-sdmm-izmenite-na/>> accessed May 5, 2021.

429 mkd.mk, „Пораките им останаа нечуени и невидени: Жените кандидатки за пратенички во сенка на мажите кандидати“ (mkd.mk, „Their messages remained unheard and unseen: Women candidates for MPs in the shadow of men candidates“) (March 25, 2021) <<https://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/politika/porakite-im-ostanaa-nechueni-i-nevideni-zhenite-kandidatki-za-pratenichki-vo>> accessed 13 May 2021.

430 lokalno.mk, „Шахпаска: Со Законот за родова еднаквост ја зајакнуваме улогата на жените во секоја сфера на општественото живеење“ (lokalno.mk, „Shahpaska: With the Law on Gender Equality, we strengthen the role of women in every sphere of social life“) (March 8, 2021) <<https://lokalno.mk/shahpaska-so-zakonot-za-rodova-ednakvost-ja-zajaknuvame-ulogata-na-zhenite-vo-sekoja-sfera-na-opshtestvenoto-zhiveene/>> accessed May 15, 2021.

431 Government of R. North Macedonia, "From the 127th session of the Government of RNM: Се подготвува ИКТ стратегија за правосудството; 'Младинска картичка' за повеќе поволности; Стратегија за развој на женското претприемништво; ќе се формира ресурсен центар за родово одговорно креирање на политики“ (An ICT strategy for the judiciary is being prepared; 'Youth card' for more benefits; Strategy for development of women entrepreneurship; a resource center for gender responsive policy making will be established") (March 26, 2019) <<https://vlada.mk/node/17291>> accessed April 6, 2020.

432 mms.mk, „Способната жена не е прифатена бидејќи на неа се гледа како на силна конкуренција: Бројни предизвици на патот кон родовата рамноправност при донесувањето одлуки“, (mms.mk, "The capable woman is not accepted because she is seen as a strong competitor: Numerous Challenges on the Road to Gender Equality in Decision-Making") (April 8, 2021) <[https://mms.mk/215975/sposobnata-zhena-ne-e-prifatena-bidejki?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=sposobnata-zhena-ne-e-prifatena-bidejki](https://mms.mk/215975/sposobnata-zhena-ne-e-prifatena-bidejki-utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=sposobnata-zhena-ne-e-prifatena-bidejki)> accessed May 15, 2021.

433 Слободен печат, „Потребна поголема политичка волја за спроведување на Стратегијата за родова еднаквост“ (Free Press, "Greater political will needed to implement the Gender Equality Strategy") (March 5, 2021) <<https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/potrebna-pogolema-politichka-volja-za-sproveduvane-na-strategijata-za-rodova-ednakvost>> accessed May 15, 2021.

434 Влада на Р. Северна Македонија, „Владата ќе ја одржи редовната 88. седница“, (Government of R. North Macedonia, "The Government will hold its regular 88th session") (July 19, 2021) <<https://vlada.mk/node/25948>> accessed October 10, 2021.

The Government of RNM in March adopted the Concept for Primary Education which is aimed at creating educated and responsible citizens. It also contains the component of gender sensitivity / equality which aims to train teachers to implement gender sensitive teaching instead of gender stereotypes and to encourage gender critical attitude towards gender inequality.<sup>435</sup> Part of the public, civil movements and organizations<sup>436</sup> and the media<sup>437</sup> sharply criticized the Concept of Primary Education, spreading hatred and contempt for non-heterosexuals.

The MLSP in cooperation with UN Women provided 1,860 food and hygiene kits to 368 single-parent families, 95% of whom were women, beneficiaries of guaranteed minimum assistance, 329 victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence centers across the country. These packages are designed to overcome certain challenges posed by the pandemic.<sup>438</sup>

---

435 Министерство за образование и наука, „Концепција за основно образование“ (Ministry of Education and Science, “Primary education concept”) <<https://mon.gov.mk/stored/document/Koncepcija%20MK.pdf>> accessed May 14, 2021.

436 <https://www.odnaszanas.com/?cat=135>

437 Алфа телевизија, „Сексуално образование на основците по терк на Хера, од каде доаѓа Царовска“ (Alpha TV, “Sexual education of primary school students according to Hera, where does Carovska come from”) (July 12, 2021) <<https://alfa.mk/seksualno-obrazovanie-na-osnovczite-po-terk-na-hera-od-kade-doaga-czarovska/>>.

438 vecer.press, „Обезбедени 1.860 пакети храна и хигиенски производи за еднородителски семејства од ранливи категории“ (vecer.press, “Provided 1,860 packages of food and hygiene products for single-parent families from vulnerable categories”) (May 8, 2020) <<https://www.vecer.press/obezbedeni-1-860-paketi-hrana-i-higienski/>> accessed May 6, 2021.

## Hate speech

During the pandemic, when many citizens worked from home, the use of information technology increased like never before. Despite the technological benefits, the challenges in the field of hate speech have increased as never before.

In the reporting period, there were cases of hate speech against various groups of citizens in the country, and the number of reported cases to the Helsinki Committee - Macedonia is 830. Most of the basics of hate speech relate to ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and political affiliation.<sup>439</sup> Namely, verbal attacks and threats were registered on various grounds against politicians,<sup>440</sup>,<sup>441</sup> journalists,<sup>442</sup>,<sup>443</sup>,<sup>444</sup> civil activists,<sup>445</sup>,<sup>446</sup> analysts,<sup>447</sup> political party-related deceased persons.<sup>448</sup>,<sup>449</sup>

The health crisis caused by COVID-19 and the restrictive measures strengthened hate speech on ethnic grounds in the country.<sup>450</sup> The different actions of religious communities regarding health protocols increased hate speech on ethnic grounds as different ethnic communities also

- 
- 439 <http://www.govornaomraza.mk/reports#>
- 440 [civilmedia.mk, „Фотопирирана фотографија се користи за ширење говор на омраза кон Шекеринска“ \(civilmedia.mk, \(“Photoshopped photo is used to spread hate speech towards Sekerinska”\) \(November 12, 2020\) <https://civilmedia.mk/fotoshopirana-fotografija-se-koristi-za-shirene-govor-na-omraza-kon-shekerinska/> accessed May 10, 2021.](https://civilmedia.mk/fotoshopirana-fotografija-se-koristi-za-shirene-govor-na-omraza-kon-shekerinska/)
- 441 [civilmedia.mk, „Директорот на ЦУК, Стојанче Ангелов мета на говор на омраза“ \(civilmedia.mk, “The director of the CMC, Stojance Angelov is a target of hate speech” \(November 23, 2020\) <https://civilmedia.mk/direktorot-na-tsuk-stojanche-angelov-meta-na-govor-na-omraza/> accessed May 6, 2021.](https://civilmedia.mk/direktorot-na-cuk-stojance-angelov-meta-na-govor-na-omraza/)
- 442 [plusinfo.mk, „SSNM, AJM and CEMM: MBP и ОЈО да го санкционираат говорот на омраза кон новинари“ \(Mol and BPP0 to sanction hate speech against journalists”\) \(November 15, 2020\) <https://plusinfo.mk/ssnm-znm-i-semm-mvr-i-o-o-da-go-sankcioniраат-govorot-na-omraza-kon-novinari/> accessed May 6, 2021.](https://plusinfo.mk/ssnm-ajm-and-chemm-mbp-i-ojo-da-go-sankcioniраат-govorot-na-omraza-kon-novinari/)
- 443 [NovaTV.mk, „Уште еден Севердјанец со корона. Ке се помолиме да цркне“ – говор на омраза кон Марјан Забрчанец“ \(NovaTV.mk, “Another Severdjan with a crown. We will pray for him to die ‘- hate speech against Marjan Zabrcanec”\) \(October 29, 2020\) <https://novatv.mk/ushte-eden-severdhanets-so-korona-ke-se-pomolime-da-trkne-govor-na-omraza-kon-marjan-zabrchanets/> accessed May 7, 2021.](https://novatv.mk/ushte-eden-severdjanec-so-korona-ke-se-pomolime-da-crkne/)
- 444 [civilmedia.mk, „АЈМ: МБП и ОЈО веднаш да го најдат лицето кое се закани на новинарот Мишко Иванов“ \(The Ministry of Interior and the Public Prosecutor’s Office should immediately find the person who threatened the journalist Misko Ivanov”\) \(May 6, 2020\) <https://civilmedia.mk/znm-mvr-i-ojo-vednash-da-go-najdат-litseto-koe-se-zakani-na-novinarot-mishko-ivanov/> accessed May 7, 2021.](https://civilmedia.mk/ajm-mbp-i-ojo-vednash-da-go-najdат-лицето-koe-se-zakani-na-novinarot-mishko-ivanov/)
- 445 [frontline.mk, „Клевети, говор на омраза и закани против вработените на фондацијата ‘Метаморфозис“ \(Frontline.mk, “Defamation, hate speech and threats against staff of the Metamorphosis Foundation”\) \(November 13, 2020\) <https://frontline.mk/2020/11/13/kleveti-govor-na-omraza-i-zakani-protiv-vrabotenite-na-fondaci-ata-metamorfozis/> accessed May 7, 2021.](https://frontline.mk/11/13/kleveti-govor-na-omraza-i-zakani-protiv-vrabotenite-na-fondacijata-Metamorfozis/)
- 446 [civilmedia.mk, „Говор на омраза кон активистот Денис Јанкуловски и неговото семејство“ \(civilmedia.mk, “Hate speech against activist Denis Jankulovski and his family”\) \(October 10, 2020\) <https://civilmedia.mk/govor-na-omraza-kon-aktivistot-denis-jankulovski-i-negovoto-semejstvo> accessed May 7, 2021.](https://civilmedia.mk/govor-na-omraza-kon-aktivistot-Denis-Jankulovski-i-NEGOVOTO-semejstvo/)
- 447 [frontline.mk, „Ако те сретнам на улица, нема да те препознаат“ – закани и говор на омраза кон Ненад Јовановиќ“ \(frontline.mk, “If I meet you on the street, they will not recognize yourself - threats and hate speech against Nenad Jovanovic”\) \(October 24, 2020\) <https://frontline.mk/2020/10/24/ako-te-sretnam-na-ulica-nema-da-te-prepoznat-zakani-i-govor-na-omraza-kon-nenad-ovanovi/> accessed May 7, 2021.](https://frontline.mk/2020/10/24/ako-te-sretnam-na-ulica-nema-da-te-prepoznat-zakani-i-govor-na-omraza-kon-nenad-ovanovi/)
- 448 [civilmedia.mk, „Смртта на Амди Бајрам проследена со говор на омраза и дезинформации“ \(civilmedia.mk, “Amdi Bajram’s death followed by hate speech and misinformation”\) \(October 27, 2020\) <https://civilmedia.mk/smrтта-na-amdi-bajram-prosledena-so-govor-na-omraza-i-dezinformatsii/> accessed May 7, 2021.](https://civilmedia.mk/smrтта-na-amdi-bajram-prosledena-so-govor-na-omraza-i-dezinformatsii/)
- 449 [frontline.mk, „Еден комунар помалку, на сите од СДСМ им го посакувам тоа“ – говор на омраза не ја одмина ниту смртта на младиот пулмолог“ \(frontline.mk, “One less communist, I wish that to all of SDSM - hate speech did not even pass by the death of the young pulmonologist”\) \(October 15, 2020\) <https://frontline.mk/2020/10/15/eden-komu-ar-pomalku-na-site-od-sdsm-im-go-posakuvam-toa-govor-na-omraza-ne-a-odmina-nitu-smrтта-na-mladiot-pulmolog/> accessed May 7, 2021.](https://frontline.mk/15/eden-komu-ar-pomalku-na-site-od-sdsm-im-go-posakuvam-toa-govor-na-omraza-ne-a-odmina-nitu-smrтта-na-mladiot-pulmolog/)
- 450 [Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia, „Здравствената криза не смее да се претвори во меѓуетничка“ \(“The health crisis must not turn into an inter-ethnic one”\) \(July 8, 2020\) <https://mhc.org.mk/news/zdravstvenata-kriza-ne-smee-da-se-pretvori-vo-meguetnichka/> accessed May 8, 2021.](https://mhc.org.mk/news/zdravstvenata-kriza-ne-smee-da-se-pretvori-vo-meguetnichka/)



belong to different religions.<sup>451, 452</sup> Moreover, the holding of early parliamentary elections ignited social networks with hate speech based on political affiliation and ethnicity. As the political campaign was mainly conducted on social networks, it resulted with insults and threats against politicians and individuals noted in the Register of Hate Speech of the Helsinki Committee - Macedonia.<sup>453</sup> Ethnic-based hate speech was particularly visible among fan groups at various events that could escalate into violence. Namely, such events took place in the settlement of Gjorce Petrov,<sup>454</sup> when a fan group spread hate speech towards a wedding procession, and a similar incident occurred in the town square in Skopje.<sup>455</sup> The spread of hate speech on ethnic grounds through the use of fake news is an additional problem. Such an approach and non-sanctioning can lead to serious tensions in certain circumstances in the country.<sup>456</sup>

There are indications of networks of social media profiles that are spreading hate speech and false information in an organized manner, especially on the Twitter platform. This kind of hate speech is especially visible during election campaigns. According to the research of "Civil Media", these are anonymous profiles, but also public figures, ie politicians, current and former officials and the like. Hate speech is aimed at politicians from the opposite camp, but also civil activists, journalists and other profiles of people.<sup>457</sup> The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights also confirmed the increased hate speech during the election campaign in their report.<sup>458</sup> In this regard, a list of public figures, current and former government and opposition politicians, diplomats, journalists and similar others appeared on the social network "Facebook". The list contained photographs and information about the people and the reason they should be killed.<sup>459</sup>

The Roma and their language were also a target of hate speech because Oliver Spasovski congratulated the Roma Day in Romani in 2020.<sup>460</sup> Consequently, in 2021, there were many cases of degradation of the Roma language, but also the spreading of hatred towards the Roma community in the country.

- 
- 451 Хелсиншки комитет за човекови права на Република Македонија, „Годишен извештај за мониторинг на говорот на омраза на локално ниво во градовите Тетово, Битола и Штип“ (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia “Annual report on monitoring of hate speech at the local level in Tetovo, Bitola and Stip”) <<https://mhc.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/godishen-izveshtaj-za-monitoring-na-govor-na-omraza-na-lokalno-nivo-2020.pdf>> Accessed on May 8, 2021.
- 452 meta.mk, „Поттикнување етнички и верски тензии со манипулативната лажна вест за Грција“ (“Inciting ethnic and religious tensions with the manipulative false news about Greece”) (June 4, 2020) <<https://meta.mk/pottiknuvanje-etnichki-i-verski-tenzii-so-manipulativnata-lazhna-vest-za-grczija/>> accessed May 8, 2021.
- 453 Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia, „Годишен извештај за мониторинг на говорот на омраза на локално ниво во градовите Тетово, Битола и Штип“ (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia: “Annual report on monitoring of hate speech at the local level in Tetovo, Bitola and Stip” (n 146)
- 454 21.tv, „Избегнат инцидент на етничка основа – свадбари тргнале по невестата, ги пресретнале ‘Комити“ (“Ethnic-based incident avoided - wedding guests on their way to take the bride, met ‘Komiti” (September 20, 2020) <<https://mk.tv21.tv/izbegnat-intsident-na-etnichka-osnova-svadbardi-trgnale-po-nevestata-gi-presretnale-komiti/>> accessed May 5, 2021.
- 455 Слободен печат, „Мртво Шиптар – добар Шиптар“ се пее на скопскиот плоштад, кој да го спречи говорот на омраза? (видео) (“Dead Shiptar - Good Shiptar” is sung in Skopje Square, who can stop the hate speech? (video)”) (September 13, 2020) <<https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/mrtov-shiptar-dobar-shiptar-se-pee-na-skopskiot-ploshtad-koj-da-go-sprechi-govorot-na-omraza-video/>> accessed May 8, 2021.
- 456 civilmedia.mk, „Дезинформации и говор на омраза се шират со старо видео кое не е снимано во нашата држава“ (“Misinformation and hate speech are spread with an old video that was not recorded in our country”) (May 4, 2021) <<https://civilmedia.mk/dezinformatsii-i-govor-na-omraza-se-shirat-so-staro-video-koe-ne-e-snimano-vo-nashata-drzhava/>> accessed May 4, 2021.
- 457 frontline.mk, „Мрежа на Твитер профили – извор на говор на омраза и дезинформации во предизборната кампања“ (“Twitter account network - a source of hate speech and misinformation in the election campaign”) (August 11, 2020) <<https://frontline.mk/2020/08/11/mrezha-na-tviter-profilii-izvor-na-govor-na-omraza-i-dezinformacii-vo-predizbornata-kampa-a/>> accessed May 6, 2021.
- 458 Хелсиншки комитет за човекови права на Република Македонија, „Месечен извештај за човековите права во Република Северна Македонија – јули 2020“ (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia “Monthly Report on Human Rights in the Republic of North Macedonia - July 2020”) (7 August 2020) <<https://mhc.org.mk/reports/mesechen-izveshtaj-za-chovekovite-prava-vo-republika-severna-makedonija-juli-2020/>> accessed May 6, 2021.
- 459 24info.mk, „Листа за отстрел на познати јавни личности, кој и зошто сака да ги казни“ (“A shooting list of public figures, who and why wants to punish them”) (April 29, 2021) <<https://www.24.mk/details/lista-za-otstrel-na-poznati-javni-lichnosti-koj-i-zoshto-saka-da-gi-kazni>> accessed May 6, 2021.
- 460 libertas.mk, „Во ‘теовел’ омразата се приклучи и Антонио Милошоски“ (“Antonio Milososki joined the ‘teovel’ hatred”) (July 3, 2020) <<https://libertas.mk/vo-teovel-omrazata-se-prikluchi-i-antonio-milososki/>> accessed May 6, 2021.

Gender-based hate speech on social networks was also present. Journalist Tanja Milevska was the target of hate speech, insults and threats on the social network "Twitter",<sup>461</sup> which was condemned by the European Commission. Another case was noted, when Kristina Kostova was the target of misogyny and homophobic comments due to the opinion she expressed about the catering facilities during the epidemic, followed by threats of rape and death threats.<sup>462</sup> The actress Shenka Kolozova was a victim of hate speech.<sup>463</sup>

The media also play a key role in the way news is transmitted. Namely, the civil movement "Avaja" observed <sup>464</sup> case of labeling of the Roma community by reporting on Internet portals inciting a narrative of hate speech against the Roma community.<sup>465</sup> The report referred to the event when a group of people beat a child from the Roma ethnic community in Kocani, and later the child's family got into a fight with the perpetrators. The fragile situation, media coverage and news sharing on social media, followed by hate speech comments, could easily have led to a further escalation of the whole situation.

Research shows that young people most often use hate speech on ethnic grounds, as a result of public political rhetoric and interethnic topics that deviate the attention from corruption and crime.<sup>466</sup> This is particularly worrying given the fact that young people spend most of their time online, which makes them vulnerable to the influence of such and other similar speech. Hate speech against Macedonian or Albanian ethnic community can provoke acts of hatred where the most common victims and perpetrators are young people.<sup>467</sup>

## HATE CRIMES

In the reporting period, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights recorded about 90 incidents related to hate crime. Most of them are related to the crime of violence, and acts of property damage, bodily injury and inciting hatred, discord and intolerance. Most of the crimes are on ethnic lines, but sexual orientation and political affiliation are also observed as motives.

- 
- 461 civilmedia.mk, „Остри реакции за родово-базиран говор на омраза и заканите кон новинарката Тања Милевска“ (“Sharp reactions to gender-based hate speech and threats against journalist Tanja Milevska”) (July 3, 2020) <<https://civilmedia.mk/ostrii-reaktsii-za-rodoviot-baziran-govor-na-omraza-i-zakanite-kon-novinarkata-tanja-milevska/>> accessed May 6, 2021.
- 462 frontline.mk, „Шкријељ: Поддршка на Кристина Костова и на сите жени што претрпеа родово базиран говор на омраза на социјалните мрежи“ (Support for Kristina Kostova and all women who have suffered gender-based hate speech on social media “(May 16, 2020) <<https://frontline.mk/2020/05/16/shkri-e-poddrshka-na-kristina-kostova-i-na-site-zheni-shtopretra-rodovo-baziran-govor-na-omraza-na-soci-alnite-mrezhi/>> Accessed 5 May 2021.
- 463 civilmedia.mk, „Актерката Шенка Колозова мета на говор на омраза“ (“Actress Shenka Kolozova a victim of hate speech”) (April 29, 2021) <<https://civilmedia.mk/akterkata-shenka-kolozova-meta-na-govor-na-omraza/>> accessed on 4 May 2021.
- 464 24info.mk, „Аваја реагира: Новинарите да објавуваат точни информации, без говор на омраза“ (Avaja reacts: Journalists should publish accurate information, free of hate speech”) (April 13, 2021) <<https://24info.mk/avaja-reakira-novinartite-da-objavuvaat/>> accessed May 5, 2021.
- 465 infomax.mk, „Ја презеле правдата во свои раце“: Пукање во Кочани, четворица повредени“ (They took justice into their own hands: Shooting in Kocani, four people injured”) (April 11, 2021) <<https://infomax.mk/wp/ja-prezele-pravdata-vo-svoi-pace-pukaње-vo-kochani/?fbclid=IwAR11pDKLdlbJqZgLuBoqYikzTfy3ffxVVeM9pWf4cgmbTbNuJBQP-88FY8>> accessed May 5, 2021.
- 466 slobodnaevropa.mk, „Будење на говор на омраза меѓу младите во време на пандемија“ (slobodnaevropa.mk: “Awakening of hate speech among young people during a pandemic”) (December 18, 2020) <<https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/govor-omraza-mladi-pandemija/31003799.html>> accessed on May 5, 2021.
- 467 telma.com.mk, „Висок пораст на случаи на говор на омраза нотира Хелсиншкиот комитет во извештајот за ноември“ (telma.com.mk: “High increase of hate speech cases is noted by the Helsinki Committee in its November report”) (December 13, 2020) <<https://telma.com.mk/2020/12/13/висок-пораст-на-случаи-на-говор-на-омра/>> accessed on May 5, 2021.

## LGBTI +

On the International Human Rights Day, in December 2020, an Inter-Party Parliamentary Group for the Rights of LGBTI persons was formed.<sup>468</sup> The group will represent and promote the rights of this category of citizens through the mechanisms available in the Assembly. Currently, this group has 11 members from various parties, including the opposition, and there are announcements that more MPs will join, who in cooperation with civil society organizations will fight against stigmatization, hate speech and discrimination against the LGBT community.<sup>469</sup> Such a group was formed in the previous parliamentary composition in February 2018.

The concept of primary education, which includes comprehensive sexual education, has been under constant attack in the reporting period through intense transphobic speech and campaign by the "From Us to Us" movement. They created homophobic and demeaning content against the entire non-hetero-population, almost on a daily basis on their Facebook profile and website. The civil organization "Hera" filed a criminal report and a lawsuit for protection from discrimination against this civil organization for incitement to hatred towards this category of citizens.<sup>470</sup>

The National Action Plan for LGBT Rights has been drafted but has not yet been adopted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the local elections, the situation in the Parliament and the unpredictable outcome for the Government as a consequence of this situation, made the process of adopting the NAP more difficult, not being a priority on the agenda.

North Macedonia jumped 12 places on the "Rainbow Map".<sup>471</sup> Currently, our country is ranked 33rd out of a total of 49 countries.<sup>472</sup>

The Civil Registry continues to work the same way, despite the Judgment of the European Court of Human Rights, X against North Macedonia for changing the sex entries in the registry. Furthermore, the Civil Registry staff did not act upon the ECtHR ruling which indicates this institution "as responsible for the violation of the right due to arbitrary decisions regarding the request for change of data"<sup>473</sup>. The Ministry of Justice has prepared a draft law on the Law on Civil Registry, which will enable the recognition of the gender identity of transgender persons by regulating the procedure for changing the gender entry. This law was blocked in the parliamentary procedures by both ruling and opposition MPs, and an outcome is expected after the local elections, once the Assembly restarts its work in full capacity.

468 Собрание на Р. Северна Македонија, „Основање и промоција на 'Интерпартиската парламентарна група за правата на ЛГБТИ лицата'“ (Parliament of R. North Macedonia, "Establishment and Promotion of the 'Inter-Party Parliamentary Group for the Rights of LGBTI People'") (December 10, 2020) <[https://sobranie.mk/sredbi-2020-ns\\_article-osnovanje-i-promocija-na-interpartiskata-parlamentarna-grupa-za-pravata-na-lgbti-licata.aspx](https://sobranie.mk/sredbi-2020-ns_article-osnovanje-i-promocija-na-interpartiskata-parlamentarna-grupa-za-pravata-na-lgbti-licata.aspx)> accessed May 5, 2021.

469 opserver.mk, „Морачанин за МИА: Да придонесеме за целосно почитување на правата на ЛГБТИ-луѓето и нивна заштита од дискриминација, стигматизација, говор на омраза и насилство“ ("Moracanin for MIA: Let us contribute to full respect of the rights of LGBTI people and their protection against discrimination, stigmatization, hate speech and violence") (December 13, 2020) <<https://opserver.mk/politika/morachanin-za-mia-da-pridoneseme-za-celosno-pochituvanje-na-pravata-na-lgbti-lugjeto-i-nivna-zashtita-od-diskriminacija-stigmatizacija-govor-na-omraza-i-nasilstvo/>> accessed May 4, 2021.

470 Хера, „Кривична пријава против здружението 'Од нас за нас': Ширењето лаги и поттикнувањето омраза и дискриминација е неприфатливо и мора да се санкционира“ (Hera: "Criminal lawsuit against the association 'From us to us': Spreading lies and inciting hatred and discrimination is unacceptable and must be sanctioned") (March 25, 2021) <<https://hera.org.mk/krivichna-prijava-protiv-zdruzhenieto-od-nas-za-nas/>> accessed August 8, 2021.

471 ILGA EUROPE, "Rainbow Map 2021" <[https://www.ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/Attachments/Rainbow%20Europe%20Map%202021\\_0.pdf](https://www.ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/Attachments/Rainbow%20Europe%20Map%202021_0.pdf)> accessed 11 August 2021.

472 Voice of America, „Напредок од 12 позиции на состојбата со човековите права на ЛГБТ заедницата“ ("12 Positions higher regarding the Human Rights Situation of the LGBT Community") (May 17, 2021) <<https://mk.voanews.com/a/lgbt-skopje-/5893558.html>> accessed 11 August 2021.

473 Радио МОФ, „Коалиција 'Маргини': Директорот и службениците во Управата за водење на матични книги се изживуваат со животите на транс луѓето“ (Radio MOF, "Coalition 'Margins': The director and the staff in the Registry Office brutalize trans people") (August 13, 2020) <<https://www.radiomof.mk/koalicija-margini-direktorot-i-sluzhbenicite-vo-upravata-za-vodenje-na-matchni-knigi-se-izhivuvaat-so-zhivotite-na-trans-lugjeto/>> accessed May 4, 2021.

In June 2020, a strong hate speech against LGBT people appeared on the social network “Instagram” on profiles followed by as many as 40,000 users. The purpose was to express revolt against the presence of the LGBT community in the media space during the Month of Pride. The legal problem with such a hate speech is that it does not target a specific person, even though “everyone can report hate speech, but not everyone can conduct criminal proceedings, ie there must be a victim.”<sup>474</sup>

The president of the “LGBT United”, Bekim Asani, was assaulted again in August 2020 because of his sexual orientation, after being beaten for the same reason in 2019.<sup>475</sup> One week after the event, Bekim Asani received death and other threats to his psychophysical integrity. Such incidents may encourage other acts and hate speech if the perpetrators are not found and punished in a timely manner.

Bishop Petar spoke low of the LGBT community in relation to the sexual education, scheduled to start in September 2021 as a pilot program in several schools. He claimed that sexual education “under the lead of the LGBT community, will open the doors for the youth to debauchery, various mental disorders and chaotic states, by the unnatural relations of homosexuals, lesbians and all perverted types, they will be treated as natural, and perversion as normal.”<sup>476</sup> Such a speech can further intensify hate speech and acts motivated by citizens’ religious beliefs.

474 Радио МОФ, „Инстаграм профил шири говор на омраза, институциите бараат конкретна жртва за отворање на постапка“ (Radio MOF, “Instagram profile spreads hate speech, institutions seek concrete victim to open proceedings”) (June 30, 2020) <<https://www.radiomof.mk/instagram-profil-shiri-govor-na-omraza-instituciite-baraat-konkretna-zhrtva-za-otvoranje-na-postapka/>> accessed May 7, 2021.

475 Слободен печат, „Нападнат Беким Асани: Планирам да купам пиштол, не може кој како ќе стигне да ме тепа!“ (Sloboden Pечат “Bekim Asani was assaulted: I plan to buy a gun, no one can beat me!”) (August 5, 2020) <<https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/napadnat-bekim-asani-planiram-da-kupam-pishtol-ne-mozhe-koj-kako-ke-stigne-da-me-tepa/>> accessed May 4, 2021.

476 nezavisen.mk, „Владиката Петар ги нападна реформите во образованието, ЛГБТ заедницата, а јогата ја нарече квази религија“ (“Bishop Petar attacked the education reforms, the LGBT community, and called yoga a quasi-religion”) (January 6, 2021) <<https://nezavisen.mk/vladikata-petar-gi-napadna-reformite-vo-obrazovanieto-lgbt-zaednicata-a-jogata-ja-narече-kvazi-religija/>> accessed May 3, 2021.

## Roma

The pandemic caused by COVID-19 particularly affected the socially disadvantaged Roma living in the country. Namely, living in makeshift dwellings, lack of access to water, hygiene items and appropriate protective equipment, makes them more susceptible to disease and the spread of the virus through Roma settlements. In this regard, numerous NGOs and international organizations have organized to mitigate the challenges posed by the pandemic. Approximately 200 tablets for attending online classes were distributed in Suto Orizari.<sup>477</sup> Kumanovo, Kicevo, Kocani, Vinica, Bitola, Prilep, Stip, Delchevo,<sup>478</sup> Gostivar and Tetovo.<sup>479</sup>

At its session held on May 14, 2020, dedicated to addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government issued a decree rebalancing the budget, reducing the funds to support the Decade of Roma Strategy by 34%, which is a significant reduction from 73 million to 48 million denars.<sup>480</sup> In the state budget for 2021, 59.2 million denars were allocated to support the Roma community, which is about 13 million denars less compared to 2020.<sup>481</sup> In the field of education, "Primary and secondary education are compulsory in Macedonia, but in Roma settlements only three-quarters of children enroll in the first grade, less than two-thirds continue to the sixth, and about one-third enroll in secondary education."<sup>482</sup> The Strategy for Roma in the Republic of Macedonia 2014-2020 and the accompanying action plans have expired. The process of preparing a Strategy for Roma for the period 2022-2030 is currently underway. The new strategy is guided by the commitments of the Poznan Declaration for the Western Balkan countries for the integration of Roma within the EU enlargement process,<sup>483</sup> and following the guidelines provided by the EU Strategic Framework for Roma.<sup>484</sup> The development of the Strategy for Roma 2022-2030 is led by the Government through the Advisor for Roma Inclusion in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy with technical support from the "Integration of Roma 2020" project. The process is conducted in consultation with institutions and civil society organizations as stakeholders.<sup>485</sup>

477 opserver.mk, „Хуманитарна помош за децата Роми вклучени во градинката ‘Осми април’ во Шуто Оризари“ (“Humanitarian aid for Roma children in the kindergarten ‘Osmi April’ in Suto Orizari”) (May 28, 2020) <[https://opserver.mk/makedonija/humanitarna-pomosh-za-decata-romi-vklucheni-vo-gradinkata-8mi-april-vo-shuto-orizari/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=humanitarna-pomosh-za-decata-romi-vklucheni-vo-gradinkata-8mi-april-vo-shuto-orizari](https://opserver.mk/makedonija/humanitarna-pomosh-za-decata-romi-vklucheni-vo-gradinkata-8mi-april-vo-shuto-orizari/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=humanitarna-pomosh-za-decata-romi-vklucheni-vo-gradinkata-8mi-april-vo-shuto-orizari)> accessed May 3, 2021.

478 frontline.mk, „Доделување помош за онлајн настава за ученици Роми“ (“Assistance for online teaching for Roma students”) (July 24, 2020) <<https://frontline.mk/2020/07/24/dodeluva-e-pomosh-za-onla-n-nastava-za-uchenci-romi/>> accessed May 3, 2021.

479 makpress.mk, „Таблети за ученици Роми вклучени во основното училиште ‘Браќа Рамиз и Хамид’ во Шуто Оризари“ (“Tablets for Roma students in the primary school ‘Brothers Ramiz and Hamid’ in Suto Orizari”) (June 3, 2020) <<https://makpress.mk/Home/PostDetails?PostId=350766>> accessed May 3, 2021.

480 Влада на Р. Северна Македонија, „Од 52. седница на Владата: Донесен ребалансот на буџетот за 2020“ (Government of R. North Macedonia, “From the 52th session of the Government of RNM: The supplementary budget for 2020 was adopted”) (May 15, 2020) <<https://vlada.mk/node/21404>> .

481 Ministry of Finance, “Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia for 2021” <<https://finance.gov.mk/budget2021/>> accessed May 3, 2021.

482 libertas.mk, „360 степени: Младите Роми и натаму на маргините: Само четворица од десет завршуваат средно образование“ („360 degrees: Young Roma still marginalized: Only four out of ten complete high school”) (January 4, 2021) <<https://libertas.mk/360-stepeni-mladite-romi-i-natamu-na-marginite-samo-chetvorica-od-deset-zavrshuvaat-sredno-obrazovanie-video>> accessed 2 May 2021.

483 Regional Cooperation Council, “Declaration of the Western Balkan Partners on Roma Integration in the EU Enlargement Process” (5 July 2019) <<https://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/files/admin/docs/866ab25893dd6d9271ebccbfd195349e.pdf>> .

484 European Commission, “Guidelines for Planning and Implementing National Roma Strategic Frameworks”

485 NGO cooperation, “Consultative process for drafting the Strategy for Roma 2022-2030” <<https://www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk/?q=mk/node/503>> .

According to the research of civil society organizations, the infant mortality rate among Roma is 1.5 times higher compared to the Macedonian population in 2017. Moreover, about “50 percent of Roma deaths occurred before the age of 65, compared with 23 percent for the rest of the population.”<sup>486</sup> As many as 85.6 percent of Roma women have not visited a family gynecologist,<sup>487</sup> and due to lack of a family gynecologist in Suto Orizari, women can not get examined, while only 2% of Roma women from Suto Orizari are covered by the Cervical Cancer Screening Program of the Ministry of Health.<sup>488</sup> After a long period, 20,000 Romani women from Suto Orizari were provided a gynecologist in April 2021 when the Ministry of Health opened a private Public Health Institution.<sup>489</sup>

Several disturbing events motivated by ethnic discrimination occurred in the reporting period. On September 22, with excessive use of force, police officers beat three Roma in Bitola, after they had previously had a car accident, for which a video was published by a passer-by.<sup>490</sup> The event provoked huge reactions, a protest of the Roma community<sup>491</sup>, but also a counter-protest<sup>492</sup> in support of the police, which was followed by hate speech against the Roma community.<sup>493</sup> Additionally, in Kocani, a group of citizens beat and psychologically ill-treated a Roma child, and a disturbing video was posted in the media.<sup>494</sup> The situation escalated as the child’s family a few days later got into a fight with this group, and several people were injured.<sup>495</sup>

Roma women are more vulnerable to domestic violence than other communities living in the country. This is due to the two-fold discrimination based on gender and ethnicity, social exclusion and the systemic barriers they face in terms of bureaucratic procedures.<sup>496</sup>

Regarding the infrastructure, there are still Roma settlements that are not legalized, do not have access to water, electricity and paved streets,<sup>497</sup> which can directly contribute to the segregation of the Roma community.

486 makpress.mk, „Конференција за пристапот до здравствена заштита на жените, мајките и децата Роми“ (“Conference on access to health care for Roma women, mothers and children”) (July 23, 2020) <<https://makpress.mk/Home/PostDetails?PostId=360340>> accessed May 1, 2021.

487 21.tv, „Проблемите на Ромите се одолговлекуваат 30 години – расизмот и дискриминацијата сè уште се главен белег“ (“Roma’s problems drag on for 30 years - racism and discrimination are still a major feature”) (April 8, 2021) <<https://mk.tv21.tv/problemite-na-romite-se-odolgovlekuvaat-30-godini-rasizmot-i-diskriminatsijata-s-ushte-se-glaven-beleg/>> accessed 5 January 2021.

488 makpress.mk, “Conference on access to health care for Roma women, mothers and children” (n 489).

489 24.mk, „Шуто Оризари од денес има матичен гинеколог“ (“Suto Orizari has a registered gynecologist as of today”) (April 23, 2021) <<https://www.24.mk/details/shuto-orizari-od-deneska-ima-matichen-ginekolog>> accessed 5 January 2021.

490 Република.мк, „Се огласија претепаните Роми: Бевме тепани и малтретирани, во станица не држеа до пет часот изутрина“ (Republika.mk, (“The beaten Roma stated: We were beaten and abused, we were kept in the station until five o’clock in the morning”) (September 24, 2020) <<https://republika.mk/vesti/crna-hronika/se-oglasija-pretepanite-romi-bevme-tepani-i-maltretirani-vo-stanica-ne-drzea-do-pet-chasot-izutrina/>> accessed May 5, 2021.

491 dw.com, „Најавен протест против полициска бруталност“ (dw.com, “A protest against police brutality is announced”) (September 25, 2020) <<https://www.dw.com/mk/најавенпротест-против-полициска-бруталност/a-55050373>> accessed May 1, 2020.

492 apla, „Протест за поддршка на полицијата – полицаецот должен е да реагира, а не да се претвори во топовско месо“ (apla: “Protests in support of the police - the police officer had to react, to avoid becoming a cannon fodder”) (September 30, 2020) <<https://apla.mk/direktno/item/5964-bitolchani-masovno-na-protestot-za-poddrshka-na-policijata>> accessed May 1, 2021. (30 септември 2020) <<https://apla.mk/direktno/item/5964-bitolchani-masovno-na-protestot-za-poddrshka-na-policijata>> accessed 1 May 2021.

493 lokalno.mk, „Организаторот на протестот за поддршка на полицијците на СВР Битола бара ‘котек и барер за гупското – чергарско племе“ (lokalno.mk, “The organizer of the protest in support of the SIA Bitola police officers, demands ‘beating and excavator for the Gypsy - Cergar tribe” (September 30, 2020) <<https://lokalno.mk/organizatorot-na-protestot-za-poddrshka-na-politsajsite-na-svr-bitola-bara-kotek-i-bager-za-gupskoto-chergarsko-pleme/>> accessed May 1, 2021.

494 Avaja, „Физичко малтретирање на дете во Трајаново Трло, Кочани“ (Avaja: “Physical abuse of a child in Trajanovo Trlo, Kocani”) (April 12, 2021) <<https://avaja.org/maltretiranje-dete-kochani/?fbclid=IwAR1aVndAvGLG-7ePQxjAx7yBNNTQzX-WdLK5FuY-Nr4WuP07B6U8fhXLM>> accessed 5 January 2020.

495 civilmedia.mk, „Претепано дете, омраза, насилство, расизам, дискриминација... во кочанско ‘Трајаново Трло“ (“Beaten child, hatred, violence, racism, discrimination ... in Kocani ‘Trajanovo Trlo”) (April 13, 2021) <<https://civilmedia.mk/pretepano-dete-omraza-nasilstvo-rasizam-diskriminatsija-vo-kochansko-trajanovo-trlo/>> accessed May 1, 2021.

496 opserver.mk, „Семејно насилство: Многу жени Роми страдаат тивко“ (opserver.mk, “Domestic violence: Many Roma women suffer quietly”) (March 7, 2021) <<https://opserver.mk/makedonija/semejno-nasilstvo-mnogu-zheni-romi-stradaat-tivko/>> accessed May 1, 2021.

497 21.tv, “Roma’s problems drag on for 30 years - racism and discrimination are still a major feature” (n 490).

The implementation of the projects for scholarships for Roma high school children and free inclusion of Roma in preschool education continues, led by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in 18 units of local self-government. The inclusion of Roma in preschool education covers 350 to 400 Roma children, and 19 Roma caregivers are employed as part of the project.<sup>498</sup> The Ministry of Education and Science published a call for hiring 35 mediators, who shall assist Roma students in the education process.<sup>499</sup>

## PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The pandemic caused by COVID-19 particularly affected people with disabilities in their daily work and the “new normalcy”. Wearing masks, keeping distance and other protocols regarding the closure of social service centers, schools, etc. significantly affected them personally, but also their families. The disruption of the routine, the danger of the virus to their health and the observance of protocols can significantly affect the psychological development of certain categories.<sup>500</sup> In addition, access to health, education and social services is significantly hampered by the pandemic for all citizens in the country, which makes people with disabilities particularly vulnerable.<sup>501</sup> The Ombudsman pointed out that persons with disabilities are not envisaged as a priority category in the state vaccination plan, the vaccination application of the Ministry of Health and vaccination information should be available,<sup>502</sup> while family doctors should be informed in a timely and accurate manner about side effects on this category of citizens for each type of vaccine available in the country.<sup>503</sup>

In April 2021, the Parliamentary Committee on Labor and Social Policy approved the draft-law on amendments to the Law on Social Protection, which is in the first reading phase.<sup>504</sup> The amendments to the law apply to persons with very severe, severe disabilities and the completely blind, who can receive a personal assistance service from the age of six instead of the now provided age of 18. The changes would cover about 200 people who will be assisted in daily activities, and for that 200 people will be hired with funds from the MLSP.<sup>505</sup>

498 [kanal5.com.mk, „Средба Шахпаска – Чупи: Соработката со РЕФ продолжува со цел поголема вклученост на Ромите во сите сегменти на општественото живеење“ \(„Meeting Shahpaska - Cupi: Cooperation with REF continues with the aim of greater inclusion of Roma in all segments of social life“\)](https://kanal5.com.mk/sredba-shahpaska-chupi-sorabotkata-so-ref-prodolzhuva-so-cel-pogolema-vkluchenost-na-romite-vo-site-segmenti-na-opshchestvenoto-zhivееne) (October 5, 2020) <<https://kanal5.com.mk/sredba-shahpaska-chupi-sorabotkata-so-ref-prodolzhuva-so-cel-pogolema-vkluchenost-na-romite-vo-site-segmenti-na-opshchestvenoto-zhivееne/a442026>> accessed May 1, 2021.

499 [kanal5.com.mk, „Повик за 35 медијатори кои ќе им помагаат на ученици Роми во основното образование“](https://kanal5.com.mk/povik-za-35-medijatori-koi-ke-im-pomagaat-na-uchenici-romi-vo-osnovnoto-obrazovanie) (kanal5.com.mk, “Call for 35 mediators who will assist Roma students in primary education”) (August 24, 2020) <<https://kanal5.com.mk/povik-za-35-medijatori-koi-kje-im-pomagaat-na-uchenici-romi-vo-osnovnoto-obrazovanie/a435893>> accessed May 1, 2021.

500 [kumanovskimuabeti.mk, „Порака наша Куманово – Пандемијата предизвик за лицата со попреченост“](https://kumanovskimuabeti.mk/poraka-nasha-kumanovo-pandemijata-predizvik-za-licata-so-poprechenost) (Kumanovskimuabeti.mk, “Our Message Kumanovo - Pandemic Challenge for Persons with Disabilities”) (October 2, 2020) <[https://kumanovskimuabeti.mk/poraka-nasha-kumanovo-pandemijata-predizvik-za-licata-so-poprechenost/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=poraka-nasha-kumanovo-pandemijata-predizvik-za-licata-so-poprechenost](https://kumanovskimuabeti.mk/poraka-nasha-kumanovo-pandemijata-predizvik-za-licata-so-poprechenost/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=poraka-nasha-kumanovo-pandemijata-predizvik-za-licata-so-poprechenost)> accessed 2 May 2021.

501 [mkd.mk, „Не секој вид на попреченост е видлива, ниту се видливи сите бариери“](https://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/razno/ne-sekoj-vid-na-poprechenost-e-vidлива-nitu-se-vidливи-site-barieri) (mkd.mk, “Not every type of disability is visible, nor are all barriers visible”) (December 3, 2020) <<https://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/razno/ne-sekoj-vid-na-poprechenost-e-vidлива-nitu-se-vidливи-site-barieri>> accessed May 10, 2021.

502 [Академик.мк, „Народниот правобранител бара лицата со попреченост и давателите на услуги за нив да имаат приоритет за вакцинација“](https://akademik.mk/narodniot-pravobranitel-bara-licata-so-poprechenost-i-davatelите-na-uslugи-za-niv-da-imaat-prioritet-za-vakcinacija) (Академик.мк, “The Ombudsman demands that persons with disabilities and service providers are given priority in vaccination”) (April 9, 2021) <<https://akademik.mk/narodniot-pravobranitel-bara-licata-so-poprechenost-i-davatelите-na-uslugи-za-niv-da-imaat-prioritet-za-vaksinatsija/>> accessed 2 May 2021.

503 [tv21.tv, „Ќе се вакцинираат ли лицата со попреченост? Алишан: Нема истражување како делуваат вакцините“](https://mk.tv21.tv/ke-se-vakciniraat-li-licata-so-poprechenost-ali-shan-nema-istrazhuvane-kako-deluvaat-vakcinите) (There is no research on how vaccines work”) (April 13, 2021) <<https://mk.tv21.tv/ke-se-vakciniraat-li-licata-so-poprechenost-alis-han-nema-istrazhuvane-kako-deluvaat-vaksinите>> accessed 2 May 2021.

504 [Собрание на Р. Северна Македонија, „Седница бр. 11 на Комисијата за труд и социјална политика закажана за 27.04.2021 во 11:00 часот“](https://sobranie.mk/sessiondetailsrabotni.nspx?sessionDetailsId=78336043-a545-4240-9467-28d6a6e779f3&date=27.4.2021) (Parliament of R. North Macedonia, “Session no. 11 of the Committee on Labor and Social Policy scheduled for April 27, 2021 at 11:00 AM”) (April 27, 2021) <<https://sobranie.mk/sessiondetailsrabotni.nspx?sessionDetailsId=78336043-a545-4240-9467-28d6a6e779f3&date=27.4.2021>> accessed May 4, 2021.

505 [Собрание на Р. Северна Македонија, „Предлог на Законот за изменување на Законот за социјалната заштита“](https://sobranie.mk/materialdetails.nspx?materialId=2a9712a5-4fc8-4d6f-af8e-04107709761a) (Parliament of R. North Macedonia, “Draft Law amending the Law on Social Protection”) <<https://sobranie.mk/materialdetails.nspx?materialId=2a9712a5-4fc8-4d6f-af8e-04107709761a>> accessed 2 May 2021.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy is preparing to employ people with various disabilities, including the deaf and hard of hearing. Additionally, the MLSP develops models for the way in which this category of persons can be involved in the work processes and earn money for their existence.<sup>506</sup>

There are 34 day care centers for people with disabilities in the country, which according to the parents of these people are not enough, consequently the number should be increased to complete the deinstitutionalization process. In this regard, it is planned to build day care centers in Bogovinje and Caska which will accommodate a total of 36 people. There are currently 107 licensed personal assistants providing personal assistance. The interest of people to become a personal assistant is small due to the monthly income of 7,000 denars, while the position requires a university degree, and not being full-time employed.<sup>507</sup> The state has not developed accessible services for women with disabilities-victims of domestic violence (including shelter centers).

People with disabilities continue to face a lot of challenges in exercising their political rights, especially in the voting process because of the lack of accessibility and technical organization of polling stations. Consequently, in over 70 per cent of polling stations, persons with disabilities did not have access, only 70 per cent of polling stations had parking space, and only 17 per cent had marked parking.<sup>508</sup> In terms of accessibility to other institutions, out of a total of 77 institutions, 20 did not provide access for people with disabilities to the first floor, while 64 institutions did not provide access to the second floor of the institution.<sup>509</sup> In this regard, the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination found direct continued discrimination by the SEC against persons with physical disabilities in the regional office of the SEC in Karposh. Namely, the persons with disabilities were prevented from depositing their signature in support of the candidate list due to the inaccessibility of the facility for persons with physical disabilities.

Blind people still face several challenges in terms of equal access to rights as other citizens in society. Namely, blind people are not provided with access to “spatial environment, transport, information, communications and other services and facilities in urban and rural areas”, among others. There is also a lack of information and communication technologies that will provide unhampered access to information, assistance and support for the blind.<sup>510</sup>

506 МТМ.мк, „Шахпаска: Се подготвува ново законско решение за вработување на лицата со различна попреченост“ (23 септември 2021) (“Shahpaska: A new law for the employment of persons with different disabilities is being drafted”) (September 23, 2021) <<https://mtm.mk/makedonija/78831-shahpaska-se-podgotvuva-novo-zakonsko-reshenie-za-vrabotuvanje-na-licata-so-razlichna-poprechenost>> .

507 Слободен печат, „Во Македонија има 34 дневни центри за лица со попреченост, мајките на децата велат не се доволни“ (“There are 34 day care centers for people with disabilities in Macedonia, mothers of children say they are not enough”) (December 4, 2020) <<https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/video-vo-makedonija-34-dnevni-centri-za-licza-so-poprechenost-majkite-na-decza-so-poprechenost-velat-ne-se-dovolni/>> accessed 2 May 2021.

508 Радио МОФ, „Инклузива“: Половина од гласачките места со скали немаат пристапни рампи за лицата со попреченост (Radio MOF, “Inkluziva”: Half of the polling stations with stairs do not have access ramps for people with disabilities) (March 10, 2021) <<https://www.radiomof.mk/inkluziva-polovina-od-glasachkite-mesta-so-skali-nemaat-pristapni-rampi-za-licata-so-poprechenost/>> accessed May 3, 2021.

509 mkd.mk, „‘Волшебен тепих’ за влез во институциите во Тетово“ (mkd.mk, “A Magic Carpet for access to the institutions in Tetovo”) (December 30, 2020) <<https://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/razno/volsheben-tepих-za-vlez-vo-instituciite-vo-tetovo>> accessed May 10, 2021.

510 makpress.mk, „Народен правобранител: Слепите сè уште на маргините“ („Ombudsman: “The blind are still on the margins.”) <<https://makpress.mk/Home/PostDetails?PostId=374343>> accessed 12 May 2021.



## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- » The Assembly should vote as soon as possible to select for the seventh member of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, which would increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of this body for equality.
- » The Government of R. North Macedonia through a systemic approach to develop gender sensitive economic measures that will contribute to mitigating the harmful consequences of the pandemic caused by COVID-19.
- » The Government of R. North Macedonia should make efforts to bring Roma women into the labor market by eliminating the systemic challenges they face. Moreover, it should show political will to enable more Roma women to work in official and managerial positions in the state establishment.
- » Adopt clinical guidelines for the application of the Law on Abortion.
- » In cases of domestic violence against women, members of the Ministry of Interior should file criminal charges instead of misdemeanor charges in accordance with the Criminal Code. Moreover, it is necessary to raise the awareness and sensitivity of police officers when dealing with these cases.
- » The Criminal Code should be amended to include “stalking” as a crime to better protect women.
- » The Cybercrime Department at the Ministry of Interior should be proactive regarding the cases of hate speech on social media, especially on “Facebook”, where racial, ethnic, homophobic and xenophobic hatred is most prevalent.
- » The National Action Plan for the rights of the LGBT community should be adopted, which will provide greater protection for this group of citizens.
- » The Government of R. North Macedonia should allocate more funds to fulfill the new strategy for Roma that is being developed. In conditions of a pandemic, it is necessary to improve the situation in the field of housing, social security and education of the Roma ethnic community.
- » The Government in cooperation with the Ministry of Health should provide physical accessibility to the vaccination points in the country. In this regard, in the future, the State Election Commission should provide physical access to all polling stations which would ensure the right to vote of persons with physical disabilities.
- » Accessible services for women with disabilities-victims of domestic violence (including shelter centers) need to be developed.

## References

1. 21.tv, „Избегнат инцидент на етничка основа – свадбари тргнале по невестата, ги пресретнале 'Комити'“ (“Ethnic-based incident avoided - wedding guests on their way to take the bride, met 'Komiti'”) (September 20, 2020) <<https://mk.tv21.tv/izbegnat-intsident-na-etnichka-osnova-svadbari-trgnale-po-nevestata-gi-presretnale-komiti/>> accessed May 5, 2021.
2. 21.tv, „Проблемите на Ромите се одолговлекуваат 30 години – расизмот и дискриминацијата сè уште се главен белег“ (“Roma’s problems drag on for 30 years - racism and discrimination are still a major feature”) (April 8, 2021) <<https://mk.tv21.tv/problemite-na-romite-se-odolgovlekuvaat-30-godini-rasizmot-i-diskriminatsijata-s-ushte-se-glaven-beleg/>> accessed 5 January 2021.
3. 21.tv, „9.500 евра за секој затвореник – условите и полицискиот професионализам остануваат главни предизвици“, (21.tv, “9,500 euros for each prisoner - conditions and police professionalism remain a major challenges”) (May 22, 2021)<<https://mk.tv21.tv/9-500-evra-za-sekoj-zatvorenik-uslovite-i-politsiskiot-profesionalizam-ostanuvaat-glavni-predizvitsi/>> accessed 11 August 2021.
4. 24info.mk, „Аваја реагира: Новинарите да објавуваат точни информации, без говор на омраза“ (Avaja reacts: Journalists should publish accurate information, free of hate speech”) (April 13, 2021) <<https://24info.mk/avaja-reakira-novinarite-da-objavuvaat/>> accessed on May 5, 2021.
5. „Листа за отстрел на познати јавни личности, кој и зошто сака да ги казни“ (“A shooting list of public figures, who and why wants to punish them”) (April 29, 2021) <<https://www.24.mk/details/lista-za-otstrel-na-poznati-javni-lichnosti-koj-i-zoshto-saka-da-gi-kazni>> accessed May 6, 2021.
6. 24.mk, „Во Струмица објавен список со имиња на одбојкарки како заболени од Ковид-19, клубот бара одговорност“, (24.mk, “In Strumica a list with the names of volleyball players that as suffering from Covid-19 was made public, the club demands responsibility”) (September 16, 2020) <[https://www.24.mk/details/vo-strumica-objaven-spisok-so-iminija-na-odbojkarki-kako-zaboleni-od-kovid-19-klubot-bara-odgovornost?fbclid=IwAR2Bkl-wGrwy\\_-f1SKzeZ6967vhDVPm\\_F-n1iJFEHBL5WiHvupJBQCldCsA](https://www.24.mk/details/vo-strumica-objaven-spisok-so-iminija-na-odbojkarki-kako-zaboleni-od-kovid-19-klubot-bara-odgovornost?fbclid=IwAR2Bkl-wGrwy_-f1SKzeZ6967vhDVPm_F-n1iJFEHBL5WiHvupJBQCldCsA)> .
7. 24.mk, „Шуто Оризари од денес има матичен гинеколог“ (“Suto Orizari has a registered gynecologist as of today”) (April 23, 2021)<<https://www.24.mk/details/shuto-orizari-od-deneska-ima-matichen-ginekolog>> accessed 5 January 2021.
8. 360 степени, „Нападнат новинарот Љупчо Златев“ (360 degrees, “Journalist Ljupcho Zlatev attacked”) (July 24, 2020)<<https://360stepeni.mk/napadnat-novinarot-lupcho-zlatev/>> accessed April 29, 2021.
9. „ЗНМ: Судот одби тужба од новинари за 27 април бидејќи немале докази дека имало упад и немале телесни повреди“ (360 degrees, “The court rejected the lawsuit of journalists regarding the April 27 events because they had no evidence that there was an intrusion and had no bodily injuries”) (December 11, 2020) <<https://360stepeni.mk/znm-sudot-odbi-tuzhba-od-novinari-za-27-april-bidejki-nemale-dokazi-deka-imalo-upad-i-nemale-telesni-povredi/>>.
10. „Двојни жртви на корона-кризата: заболените водат битка и за заштита на личните податоци“ (“Double-fold victims of the corona crisis: The sick are also fighting for the protection of personal data”) (December 21, 2020) <<https://360stepeni.mk/dvojni-zhrtvi-na-korona-krizata-zabolenite-vodat-bitka-i-za-zashtita-na-lichnite-podatotsi/>> accessed 23 April 2021.
11. „Падна оставка во Комисијата за заштита од дискриминација, неполн месец по нејзиното формирање“ (“A resignation from the Commission for Protection against Discrimination, less than a month after its establishment”) (February 16, 2021) <<https://360stepeni.mk/padna-ostavka-vo-komisijata-za-zashtita-od-diskriminatsija-nepoln-mesets-po-nejzino-to-formirane/>> accessed May 3, 2021.

12. „Некому му пречи мојот избор па сака да ме дискредитира, вели новата претседателка на Судскиот совет за обвинувањата од оштетени штедачи во Еуро стандард банка“, („Someone is bothered by my selection and wants to discredit me, says the new President of the Judicial Council on the accusations of damaged depositors in Eurostandard) Bank<<https://360stepeni.mk/nekomu-mu-prechi-mojot-izbor-pa-saka-da-me-diskreditira-veli-novata-pretседателка-na-sudskiot-sovet-za-obvinuvanata-od-oshteteni-shtedachi-vo-eurostandard-banka/>>.
13. ‘ДКСК Отвори Предмет За Новата Претседателка На Судскиот Совет’, (SCPC Initiated a Case against the New President of the Judicial Council’) (6 May 2021) <<https://360stepeni.mk/dksk-otvori-predmet-za-novata-pretседателка-na-sudskiot-sovet/>>.
14. „Повторен обид на Собранието да избере нови совети на МРТ и на АВМУ: Ќе се отвори ли конечно патот за реформи?“ („Repeated attempt of the Assembly to elect new councils of MRT and AVMS: Will the path to reform finally be opened?")(May 12, 2021) <<https://360stepeni.mk/povtoren-obid-na-sobranieto-da-izbere-novi-soveti-na-mrt-i-na-avmu-ke-se-otvori-li-konechno-patot-za-reformi/>> accessed 11 August 2021.
15. „Советот на јавни обвинители избра нов претседател“, (‘The Council of Public Prosecutors Elects the New President’) (29 September 2021) <<https://360stepeni.mk/sovetot-na-javni-obviniteli-izbra-nov-pretседател/>>.
16. Алсат М ,360 степени, „Груевски, Мијалков, Јанкулошка, Јанаклески... меѓу ексфункционерите кои во Стразбур се повикуваат на аболитијата“ (Alsat M, 360 stepeni “Gruevski, Mijalkov, Jankuloska, Janakieski ... among the ex-officials that invoke the abolition in Strasbourg”) (October 5, 2021) <<https://360stepeni.mk/gruevski-mijalkov-jankuloska-janakieski-megu-eksfunktsionerite-koi-vo-strazbur-se-povikuvaat-na-abolitsijata/>> accessed 19 April 2021.
17. a1on.mk, „Спасовски: Кривична пријава и суспензии за полицајци по претепувањето во Битола“ (25 септември 2020), („Spasovski: Criminal charges and suspensions for police officers after the beating in Bitola”) (September 25, 2020) <<https://a1on.mk/uncategorized/spasovski-krivichna-prijava-i-suspenzija-za-policaecot-od-bitola-koj-napadna-rom-suspendiran-ushte-eden-policaec/>>
18. “Sixth grade textbook: Изброј до 15 пред да ја заколеш жена ти, совет за трпение“ (a1on.mk, „Textbook for sixth grade: Count to 15 before Slaying Your Wife, a Tip of Patience”) (October 28, 2020) <<https://a1on.mk/macedonia/uchebnik-za-shesto-oddelenie-izbroj-do-15-pred-da-ja-zakolesh-zhena-ti-sovet-za-trpenie/>> accessed May 1, 2021.
19. aa.com.mk, „Филипче: „Во среда продолжува вакцинацијата според возрастната група на граѓани“ („Filipce: Vaccination continues according to the age group of citizens on Wednesday”) (April 12, 2021) <<https://www.aa.com.tr/mk/балкан/филипче-во-среда-продолжува-вакцинацијата-според-возрастната-група-на-граѓани-/2206739>> accessed April 29, 2021.
20. ACIT and EPIK Institute, “Balkan Barometer 2021 Public Opinion Analytical Report” (Балкански барометар – аналитички извештај за јавно мислење 2021 година) <file:///C:/Users/Angel%20EPI/Downloads/Balkan\_Barometer\_Public\_opinion\_2021v4%20(1).pdf>
21. akademik.mk, „Уставниот суд поведе постапка за законските одредби за избор на претседател на Судскиот совет“, (akademik.mk: “The Constitutional Court initiated a procedure for the legal provisions for the election of the President of the Judicial Council”) (29 April 2021) <<https://akademik.mk/ustavniot-sud-povede-postapka-za-zakonskite-odredbi-za-izbor-na-pretседател-na-sudskiot-sovet/>> accessed 9 September 2021.
22. apla, „Протест за поддршка на полицијата – полицаецот должен е да реагира, а не да се претвори во топовско месо“ (apla: “Protests in support of the police - the police officer had to react, to avoid becoming a cannon fodder”) (September 30, 2020)<<https://apla.mk/direktno/item/5964-bitolchani-masovno-na-protestet-za-poddrshka-na-policijata>> accessed May 1, 2021.
23. Avaja, „Физичко малтретирање на дете во Трајаново Трло, Кочани“ (Avaja: “Physical abuse of a child in Trajanovo Trlo, Kocani”) (April 12, 2021) <[https://avaja.org/maltretiranje-dete-kochani/?fbclid=IwAR1aVndAvGLG-7ePQxjAx7yBNNTQzxWdLK5\\_FuY-Nr4Wyp07B6U8fhXLM](https://avaja.org/maltretiranje-dete-kochani/?fbclid=IwAR1aVndAvGLG-7ePQxjAx7yBNNTQzxWdLK5_FuY-Nr4Wyp07B6U8fhXLM)> accessed 5 January 2020.

24. Barrett MR and others, "Opinion on the Draft Amendments to the Law on Courts, Adopted by the Venice Commission at Its 117th Plenary Session" (Venice Commission 2018) Opinion No. 944/2018 <[https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2018\)033-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2018)033-e)>
25. Barrett MR, Dimitrov MP and Ribičič C, "Opinion on the Draft Law on the Judicial Council, Adopted by the Venice Commission at Its 118th Plenary Session" (Venice Commission 2019) Opinion No. 947/2019 <[https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2019\)008-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2019)008-e)>
26. Marija Bashevskа, "The Influence of Covid-19 on Men and Women in North Macedonia" (UN Women, July 2020) <[https://www.preventionweb.net/files/73970\\_nmrgaassessmentmacedonian.pdf](https://www.preventionweb.net/files/73970_nmrgaassessmentmacedonian.pdf)>.
27. civilmedia.mk, „Цивил: Постигнувањата во областа на слободата на изразувањето се евидентни, но придружени со низа слабости и предизвици“ (civilmedia.mk, „Civil: Achievements in the field of freedom of expression are evident, but accompanied by a series of weaknesses and challenges“) (May 3, 2020) <<https://civilmedia.mk/tsivil-postignuvanata-vo-oblasta-na-slobodata-na-izrazuvaneto-se-evidentni-no-pridruzheni-so-niza-slabosti-i-predizvitsi/>> accessed May 1, 2021.
28. „ЗНМ: МВР и ОЈО веднаш да го најдат лицето кое се закани на новинарот Мишко Иванов“ (AJM: The Ministry of Interior and the Public Prosecutor's Office should immediately find the person who threatened the journalist Misko Ivanov“) (May 6, 2020) <<https://civilmedia.mk/znm-mvr-i-ojo-vednash-da-go-najdat-litseto-koe-se-zakani-na-novinarot-mishko-ivanov/>> accessed May 7, 2021.
29. „Остри реакции за родово-базиран говор на омраза и заканите кон новинарката Тања Милевска“ (“Sharp reactions to gender-based hate speech and threats against journalist Tanja Milevska“) (July 3, 2020) <<https://civilmedia.mk/ostri-reaktsii-za-rodoviot-baziran-govor-na-omraza-i-zakanite-kon-novinarkata-milevska/>> accessed May 6, 2021.
30. „Говор на омраза кон активистот Денис Јанкуловски и неговото семејство“ (“Hate speech against activist Denis Jankulovski and his family“) (October 10, 2020)<<https://civilmedia.mk/govor-na-omraza-kon-aktivistot-denis-jankulovski-i-negovoto-semejstvo>> accessed May 7, 2021.
31. „Смртта на Амди Бајрам проследена со говор на омраза и дезинформации“ (“Amdi Bajram's death followed by hate speech and misinformation“) (October 27, 2020)<<https://civilmedia.mk/smrtta-na-amdi-bajram-prosledena-so-govor-na-omraza-i-dezinformatsii/>> accessed May 7, 2021.
32. civilmedia.mk, „Фотошопирана фотографија се користи за ширење говор на омраза кон Шекеринска“ (civilmedia.mk, “Photoshopped photo is used to spread hate speech towards Sekerinska“) (November 12, 2020) <<https://civilmedia.mk/fotoshopirana-fotografija-se-koristi-za-shirene-govor-na-omraza-kon-shekerinska/>> accessed May 10, 2021.
33. „Директорот на ЦУК, Стојанче Ангелов мета на говор на омраза“ (“The director of the CMC, Stojance Angelov is a target of hate speech“) (November 23, 2020)<<https://civilmedia.mk/direktorot-na-tsuk-stojanche-angelov-meta-na-govor-na-omraza/>> accessed May 6, 2021.
34. „Претепано дете, омраза, насилство, расизам, дискриминација... во кочанско 'Трајаново Трло'" (“Beaten child, hatred, violence, racism, discrimination ... in Kocani 'Trajanovo Trlo'“) (April 13, 2021) <<https://civilmedia.mk/pretepano-dete-omraza-nasilstvo-rasizam-diskriminatsija-vo-kochansko-trajanovo-trlo/>> accessed May 1, 2021.
35. „Платформа за родова еднаквост: Институционалниот молк активно го охрабрува сексуалното вознемирување преку интернет“, („Platform for gender equality: Institutional Silence Actively Encourages Sexual Harassment Online“) (April 15, 2021) <<https://civilmedia.mk/platforma-za-rodova-ednakvost-institucionalniot-molk-aktivno-go-ohrabruva-seksualnoto-voznemiruvane-preku-internet/>> accessed May 14, 2021.
36. „Комисијата за спречување и заштита од дискриминација три месеци работи на институционално воспоставување“ (“The Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination has been working on institutional establishment for three months“) (April 22, 2021) <<https://civilmedia.mk/komisijata-za-sprechuvane-i-zashtita-od-diskriminatsija-tri-mesetsi-raboti-na-institucionalno-vospstavuvane/>> accessed May 3, 2021.

37. „Актерката Шенка Колозова мета на говор на омраза“ (“Actress Shenka Kolozova a target of hate speech”) (April 29, 2021) <<https://civilmedia.mk/akterkata-shenka-kolozova-meta-na-govor-na-omraza/>> accessed 4 May 2021.
38. „Дезинформации и говор на омраза се шират со старо видео кое не е снимано во нашата држава“ (“Misinformation and hate speech are spread with an old video that was not recorded in our country”) (May 4, 2021) <<https://civilmedia.mk/dezinformatsii-i-govor-na-omraza-se-shirat-so-staro-video-koe-ne-e-snimano-vo-nashata-drzhava/>> accessed May 7, 2021.
39. Conevska I and Kamberi I, “Shadow Report on Chapter 23 for the Period June 2019 – March 2020” (European Policy Institute – Skopje 2020) <[https://epi.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/lzvestaj\\_vo\\_senka\\_2020.pdf](https://epi.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/lzvestaj_vo_senka_2020.pdf)>
40. Council of Europe, „Извештај до властите на Северна Македонија за посетата на Северна Македонија од страна на Европскиот комитет за спречување тортура и нечовечко или понижувачко постапување или казнување (КПТ) од 2 до 10 декември 2019 година“ (Report to the Authorities of North Macedonia on the Visit to North Macedonia Carried out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) from 2 to 10 декември 2019) (2021) <[https://rm.coe.int/1680a26b-8f?fbclid=IwAR32ifHb9q0icAyp\\_XnwABkr\\_snbGvaMtgBbDYIHbBgYGek-tQN3mSNSzVw](https://rm.coe.int/1680a26b-8f?fbclid=IwAR32ifHb9q0icAyp_XnwABkr_snbGvaMtgBbDYIHbBgYGek-tQN3mSNSzVw)>
41. dw.com, „Најавен протест против полициска бруталност“ (“Announced protest against police brutality”) (September 25, 2020) <<https://www.dw.com/mk/најавенпротест-против-полициска-бруталност/a-55050373>> accessed May 1, 2020.
42. „Ковид-19 ги ‘инфицираше’ и социјалните мрежи – кружат списоци и фотографии“ (“Covid-19 has ‘infected’ social networks as well - lists and photos are circulating”) (November 24, 2020) <<https://www.dw.com/mk/ковид-19-ги-инфицираше-и-социјалните-мрежи-кружат-списоци-и-фотографии/a-55715106>> .
43. „Се бара крај за неказнивоста на нападите врз новинари“, (“End to Impunity for Attacks on Journalists”) (November 25, 2020) <<https://www.dw.com/mk/се-бара-крај-за-неказнивоста-на-нападите-врз-новинари/a-55718875>> accessed April 29, 2021.
44. „Трнливиот пат на новинарите до правда за ‘крвавиот четврток’“ (“Journalists’ thorny path to justice for ‘Bloody Thursday’”) (December 11, 2020) <<https://www.dw.com/mk/трнливиот-пат-на-новинарите-до-правда-за-крвавиот-четврток/a-55913142>> accessed April 29, 2021.
45. „Забрзано се проветрува судството, ‘падна’ уште една судијка поради злоупотреби“, (“The Judiciary is being Refreshed Rapidly, Another Judge’ Fell ‘Due to Abuses’”) (20 January 2021) <<https://www.dw.com/mk/%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%BE-%D1%81%D0%B5-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%82%D1%80%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B0-%D1%81%D1%83%D0%B4%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%BE-%D0%BF%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D1%83%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B5-%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D1%81%D1%83%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%BA%D0%B0-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B8-%D0%B7%D0%BB%D0%BE%D1%83%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B1%D0%B8/a-56293653>>.
46. „Рашковски и сопственикот на ‘Инвока’ во куќен притвор“ (16 април 2021) (‘Rashkovski and the Owner of ‘Invoka’ in House Detention) (16 April 2021).
47. „Жежок август за предметите на СЈО – Дали конечно ќе има завршница?“ (27 јули 2021), (“Hot August for SPO cases - Will there finally be an end?”) (July 27, 2021) <<https://www.dw.com/mk/%D0%B6%D0%B5%D0%B6%D0%BE%D0%BA-%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%B3%D1%83%D1%81%D1%82-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%BC%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D1%81%D1%98%D0%BE-%D0%B4%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B8-%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%BE-%D1%9C%D0%B5-%D0%B8%D0%BC%D0%B0-%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%B2%D1%80%D1%88%D0%B-D%D0%B8%D1%86%D0%B0/a-58577949>> accessed on 9 September 2021.

48. „Ќе се конфискува имот вреден над 30 илјади евра без доказ за потекло“, («Property worth over 30 thousand euros without proof of origin will be confiscated») (September 22, 2021) <<https://www.dw.com/mk/%D1%9C%D0%B5-%D1%81%D0%B5-%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD%D1%84%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BA%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B0-%D0%B8%D0%BC%D0%BE%D1%82-%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%B5-%D0%BD-%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%B4-30-%D0%B8%D0%BB%D1%98%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B8-%D0%B5%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%B0-%D0%B1%D0%B5%D0%B7-%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%B7-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BA%D0%BB%D0%BE/a-59263535>>.
49. EUR Lex, „Директива (ЕУ) 2016/680 на Европскиот парламент и на Советот од 27 април 2016 година“ (Directive (EU) 2016/680 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 април 2016) (27 април 2016) <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32016L0680>> accessed April 23, 2021
50. European Commission, “Update on the Republic of North Macedonia” (European Commission, 3 February 2020) <<https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/update-on-the-republic-of-north-macedonia.pdf>>
51. Freedom House, “Freedom in the World 2020 - North Macedonia” (2020)<<https://freedomhouse.org/country/north-macedonia/freedom-world/2020>> .
52. Frontline, „Онлајн анкета: Младите велат дека можат да препознаат лажна вест, но често веруваат во дезинформациите за Ковид-19“ (Frontline, „Online Survey: Young people say they can recognize fake news, but often believe in misinformation about Covid-19“) (December 27, 2020) <<https://frontline.mk/2020/12/27/onla-n-anketa-mladite-velat-deka-mozhat-da-prepoznaat-lazhna-vest-no-chesto-veruvaat-vo-dezinformaciite-za-kovid-19/>> accessed 2 May 2021.
53. frontline.mk, „Шкријел: Поддршка на Кристина Костова и на сите жени што претрпеа родово базиран говор на омраза на социјалните мрежи“ (Frontline.mk, “Skrijelj: Support for Kristina Kostova and all women who have suffered gender-based hate speech on social media “(May 16, 2020) <<https://frontline.mk/2020/05/16/shkrije-poddrshka-na-kristina-kostova-i-na-site-zheni-shto-pretrpea-rodovo-bazaran-govor-na-omraza-na-soci-alnite-mrezhi/>> Accessed 5 May 2021.
54. „Доделување помош за онлајн настава за ученици Роми“ (“Assistance for online teaching for Roma students”) (July 24, 2020)<<https://frontline.mk/2020/07/24/dodeluva-e-pomosh-za-onla-n-nastava-za-uchenici-romi/>> accessed May 3, 2021.
55. „Мрежа на Твитер профили – извор на говор на омраза и дезинформации во предизборната кампања“ (“Twitter account network - a source of hate speech and misinformation in the election campaign”) (August 11, 2020) <<https://frontline.mk/2020/08/11/mrezha-na-tviter-profil-i-izvor-na-govor-na-omraza-i-dezinformacii-vo-predizbornata-kampa-a/>> accessed May 6, 2021.
56. „Еден комуњар помалку, на сите од СДСМ им го посакувам тоа“ – говорот на омраза не ја одмина ниту смртта на младиот пулмолог“ («One communist less, I wish that to all of SDSM» (- hate speech did not even pass by the death of the young pulmonologist») (October 15, 2020) <<https://frontline.mk/2020/10/15/eden-komu-ar-pomalku-na-site-od-sdsm-im-go-posakuvam-toa-govor-na-omraza-ne-a-odmina-nitu-smrtta-na-mladiot-pulmolog/>> accessed May 7, 2021.
57. „Ако те сретнам на улица, нема да те препознаат – закани и говор на омраза кон Ненад Јовановиќ“ (“If I see you on the street, others will not recognize yourself” - threats and hate speech against Nenad Jovanovic”)(October 24, 2020) <<https://frontline.mk/2020/10/24/ako-te-sretnam-na-ulica-nema-da-te-prepoznaat-zakani-i-govor-na-omraza-kon-nenad-ovanovi/>> accessed May 7, 2021.
58. „Клевети, говор на омраза и закани против вработените на фондацијата ‘Метаморфозис’“ (“Defamation, hate speech and threats against staff of the Metamorphosis Foundation”) (November 13, 2020) <<https://frontline.mk/2020/11/13/kleveti-govor-na-omraza-i-zakani-protiv-vrabotenite-na-fondaci-ata-metamorfozis/>> accessed May 7, 2021.
59. ILGA EUROPE, “Rainbow Map 2021” <[https://www.ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/Attachments/Rainbow%20Europe%20Map%202021\\_0.pdf](https://www.ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/Attachments/Rainbow%20Europe%20Map%202021_0.pdf)> accessed 11 August 2021

60. infomax, „Ja презеле правдата во свои раце: Пукање во Кочани, четворица повредени“ (They took justice into their own hands: Shooting in Kocani, four people injured”) (April 11, 2021) <<https://infomax.mk/wp/ja-prezele-pravdata-vo-svoi-pace-pukaње-vo-kocani/?fbclid=IwAR11pDKLdlbJqZgLuBoqYikzTfy3ffxfVVeM9pWf4cgmTbNuJBQP-88FY8>> accessed May 5, 2021.
61. International Republican Institute, “North Macedonia” <<https://www.iri.org/search/node/north%20macedonia>>
62. kanal5.com.mk, „Повик за 35 медијатори кои ќе им помагаат на ученици Роми во основното образование“ (“Call for 35 mediators who will help Roma students in primary education”) (August 24, 2020) <<https://kanal5.com.mk/povik-za-35-medijatori-koi-kje-im-pomagaat-na-uchenici-romi-vo-osnovnoto-obrazovanie/a435893>> accessed May 1, 2021.
63. —, „Средба Шахпаска - Чупи: Соработката со РЕФ продолжува со цел поголема вклученост на Ромите во сите сегменти на општественото живеење“ („Meeting Shahpaska - Cupi: Cooperation with REF continues with the aim of greater inclusion of Roma in all segments of social life”) (October 5, 2020) <<https://kanal5.com.mk/sredba-shahpaska-chupi-sorabotkata-so-ref-prodolzhuva-so-cel-pogolema-vkluchenost-na-romite-vo-site-segменти-na-opshtestvenoto-zhiveenje/a442026>> accessed May 1, 2021.
64. Kotevska B, „Ефективност на националните институции за човекови права на Западен Балкан – Црна Гора, Северна Македонија, Србија: Report on North Macedonia “(Effectiveness of National Human Rights Institutions in the Western Balkans - Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia: Country Report on North Macedonia) (Civil Rights Defenders 2019) <<https://epi.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Effectiveness-of-National-Human-Rights-Institutions-in-the-Western-Balkans.pdf>> .
65. kumanovskimuabeti.mk, „‘Порака наша Куманово’ – Пандемијата предизвик за лицата со попреченост“ (“Our Message Kumanovo” - Pandemic Challenge for Persons with Disabilities”) (October 2, 2020) <[https://kumanovskimuabeti.mk/poraka-nasha-kumanovo-pandemijata-predizivik-za-licata-so-poprechenost/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=poraka-nasha-kumanovo-pandemijata-predizivik-za-licata-so-poprechenost](https://kumanovskimuabeti.mk/poraka-nasha-kumanovo-pandemijata-predizivik-za-licata-so-poprechenost/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=poraka-nasha-kumanovo-pandemijata-predizivik-za-licata-so-poprechenost)> accessed 2 May 2021.
66. libertas.mk, „Во ‘теовел’ омразата се приклучи и Антонио Милошоски“ (“Antonio Milososki joined the ‘teovel’ hatred”) (July 3, 2020) <<https://libertas.mk/vo-teovel-omrazata-se-prikluchi-i-antonio-miloshoski/>> accessed May 6, 2021.
67. —, „360 степени: Младите Роми и натаму на маргините: Само четворица од десет завршуваат средно образование“ („360 stepeni: Young Roma still on the sidelines: Only four out of ten complete high school”) (January 4, 2021) <<https://libertas.mk/360-stepeni-mladite-romi-i-natamu-na-marginite-samo-chetvorica-od-deset-zavrshuvaat-sredno-obrazovanie-video>> accessed 2 May 2021.
68. —, „Hera: За Ромките во државата сè уште има предрасуди, отколку работните места“ („Hera: There are still prejudices against Roma women in the country, rather than jobs”) (April 8, 2021) <<https://libertas.mk/hera-za-romkite-vo-drzhavava-se-ushte-ima-predrasudi-otkolku-rabotnite-mesta/>> accessed May 6, 2021.
69. lokalno.mk, „Организаторот на протестот за поддршка на полицајците на СВР Битола бара ‘котек и багер за гупското – чергарско племе“ (“The organizer of the protest in support of the SIA Bitola police officers demands ‘beating and excavator for the Gypsy - Cergar tribe”) (September 30, 2020) <<https://lokalno.mk/organizatorot-na-protetot-za-poddrshka-na-politsajtsite-na-svr-bitola-bara-kotek-i-bager-za-gupskoto-chergarsko-pleme/>> accessed May 1, 2021.
70. —, „Шахпаска: Со Законот за родова еднаквост ја зајакнуваме улогата на жените во секоја сфера на општественото живеење“ („Shahpaska: With the Law on Gender Equality, we strengthen the role of women in every sphere of social life”) (March 8, 2021) <<https://lokalno.mk/shahpaska-so-zakonot-za-rodova-ednakvost-ja-zajaknuvame-ulogata-na-zhenite-vo-sekoja-sfera-na-opshtestvenoto-zhiveenje/>> accessed May 15, 2021.
71. makpress.mk, „Таблети за ученици Роми вклучени во основното училиште ‘Браќа Рамиз и Хамид’ во Шуто Оризари“ (“Tablets for Roma students in the primary school ‘Brothers Ramiz and Hamid’ in Suto Orizari”) (June 3, 2020) <<https://makpress.mk/Home/PostDetails?PostId=350766>> accessed May 3, 2021.

72. --, „Конференција за пристапот до здравствена заштита на жените, мајките и децата Роми“ («Conference on access to health care for Roma women, mothers and children») (July 23, 2020) <<https://makpress.mk/Home/PostDetails?PostId=360340>> accessed May 1, 2021.
73. --, „Платформата за родова еднаквост бара МЗ да обезбеди абортус во време на КОВИД-19“, («The Gender Equality Platform requires the MoH to provide abortion during KOVID-19») (September 28, 2020) <<https://makpress.mk/Home/PostDetails?PostId=371015>> accessed May 14, 2021.
74. --, „Народен правобранител: Слепите сè уште на маргините“ („Ombudsman: “The blind are still on the margins.”) <<https://makpress.mk/Home/PostDetails?PostId=374343>> accessed 12 May 2021.
75. meta.mk, „Приходите на МРТ продолжиле да опаѓаат и лани, заедно со бројот на вработени (инфографик) (meta.mk, “MRT’s revenues continued to decline last year, along with the number of staff (infographic)”) (April 2, 2020) <<https://meta.mk/prihodite-na-mrt-prodolzhile-da-opafaat-i-lani-zaedno-so-brojot-na-vraboteni-infografik/>> accessed April 29, 2021.
76. --, „Поттикнување етнички и верски тензии со манипулативната лажна вест за Грција“ (“Incitement of ethnic and religious tensions with the manipulative false news about Greece”) (June 4, 2020) <<https://meta.mk/pottiknuvanje-etnichki-i-verski-tenzii-so-manipulativnata-lazhna-vest-za-grczija/>> accessed May 8, 2021.
77. --, „МИОА ја одобри новата систематизација за дополнителни 460 работни места во МРТ“, („MISA approved the new systematization for additional 460 jobs in MRT”) (June 5, 2020) <<https://meta.mk/mioa-ja-odobri-novata-sistematizacija-za-dopolnitelni-460-rabotni-mesta-vo-mrt/>> accessed April 29, 2021. (5 јуни 2020) <<https://meta.mk/mioa-ja-odobri-novata-sistematizacija-za-dopolnitelni-460-rabotni-mesta-vo-mrt/>> accessed 22 April 2021
78. --, „SafeJournalists: Ги осудуваме смртните закани и сексистичките навреди кон новинарката Тања Милевска“, („SafeJournalists: We condemn the death threats and sexist insults against the journalist Tanja Milevska”) (July 17, 2020) <<https://meta.mk/safejournalists-gi-osuduvame-smrtnite-zakani-i-seksistichkite-navredi-kon-novinarkata-tanja-milevska/>> accessed April 29, 2021.
79. --, „МРТ официјално и во третиот квартал работела со добивка, но бројот на вработените и понатаму опаѓа“ (meta.mk, “MRT officially operated with a profit in the third quarter, but the number of staff continues to decline”) (November 5, 2020) <<https://meta.mk/mrt-oficijalno-i-vo-tretiot-kvartal-rabotela-so-dobivka-no-brojot-na-vrabotenite-i-ponatamu-opagja/>> accessed April 29, 2021.
80. --, „МРТ со скратени 3,6 милиони евра во предлог-буџетот за 2021 година“ (“MRT with 3.6 million euros less in the draft budget for 2021”) (November 24, 2020) <<https://meta.mk/mrt-so-skrateni-36-milioni-evra-vo-predlog-budjetot-za-2021-godina/>> accessed April 29, 2021.
81. --, „Владата додели финансиска поддршка од 488.000 евра на 11 печатени медиуми“ (“The government granted financial support of 488,000 euros to 11 print media”) (December 30, 2020) <<https://meta.mk/vlada-dodeli-finansiska-poddrshka-od-488-000-evra-na-11-pechateni-mediumi/>> , accessed on 1 May 2020
82. --, „Не секој вид на попреченост е видлива, ниту се видливи сите бариери“ (“Not every type of disability is visible, nor are all barriers”) (December 3, 2020) <<https://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/razno/ne-sekoj-vid-na-poprechenost-e-vidлива-nitu-se-vidливи-site-barieri>> accessed May 10, 2021.
83. --, „‘Волшебен тепих’ за влез во институциите во Тетово“ («Magic Carpet’ to access institutions in Tetovo») (December 30, 2020) <<https://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/razno/volsheben-tepих-za-vlez-vo-instituciite-vo-tetovo>> accessed May 10, 2021.
84. --, „Пораките им останаа нечуени и невидени: Жените кандидатки за пратенички во сенка на мажите кандидати“ (“Their messages remained unheard and unseen: Women candidates for MPs in the shadow of men candidates”) (March 25, 2021) <<https://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/politika/porakite-im-ostanaa-nechueni-i-nevideni-zhenite-kandidatki-za-pratenichki-vo>> accessed 13 May 2021.



85. —, „Со Меморандум за соработка ќе се крева свеста за правото на заштита на лични податоци“ (“A Memorandum of Cooperation will raise awareness of the right to personal data protection”) (May 31, 2021) <<https://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/politika/so-memorandum-za-sorabotka-kje-se-kreva-svesta-za-pravoto-na-zashtita-na-lichni>> accessed 11 August 2021
86. —, „Денес Сашо Мијалков ќе ја чуе четвртата пресуда, овој пат за ‘Тортура’“ (јуни 2021), («Today Sasho Mijalkov will hear the fourth verdict, this time for ‘Torture’») (June 2021) <<https://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/sudstvo/denes-sasho-mijalkov-kje-ja-chue-chetvrtata-presuda-ovoj-pat-za-tortura>>.
87. mms.mk, „Дали затворите се вистинска казна само за сиромашните?: Во ‘Стадион’ се дебатираше за затворскиот систем (видео)“ (mms.mk, “Are prisons a real punishment only for the poor?: ‘The prison system was debated in ‘Stadion’ (video)”) (May 30, 2020) <[https://mms.mk/142847/дали-затворите-се-вистинска-казна-сам/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=%25d0%25b4%25d0%25b0%25d0%25b0%25d0%25b7%25d0%25b0%25d1%2582%25d0%25b2%25d0%25b0%25d1%2580%25d0%25b8%25d1%2582%25d0%25b5-%25d1%2581%25d0%25b5-%25d0%25b2%25d0%25b8%25d1%2581%25d1%2582%25d0%25b8%25d0%25bd%25d1%2581%25d0%25ba%25d0%25b0-%25d0%25ba%25d0%25b0%25d0%25b7%25d0%25bd%25d0%25b0-%25d1%2581%25d0%25b0%25d0%25bc](https://mms.mk/142847/дали-затворите-се-вистинска-казна-сам/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=%25d0%25b4%25d0%25b0%25d0%25b0%25d0%25b7%25d0%25b0%25d1%2582%25d0%25b2%25d0%25b0%25d1%2580%25d0%25b8%25d1%2582%25d0%25b5-%25d1%2581%25d0%25b5-%25d0%25b2%25d0%25b8%25d1%2581%25d1%2582%25d0%25b8%25d0%25bd%25d1%2581%25d0%25ba%25d0%25b0-%25d0%25ba%25d0%25b0%25d0%25b7%25d0%25bd%25d0%25b0-%25d1%2581%25d0%25b0%25d0%25bc)> accessed 22 April 2021.
88. —, „Сакаме да им влееме доверба на граѓаните, ние сме им сојузници во борбата за еднаквост: Со Игор Јадровски за функционирањето на новата Комисија за заштита од дискриминација“ (“We want to instill confidence to the citizens, we are their allies in the fight for equality: With Igor Jadrovski on the work of the new Commission for Protection against Discrimination”) (March 26, 2021) <[https://mms.mk/212145/сакаме-да-им-влееме-доверба-на-граѓани/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=сакаме-да-им-влееме-доверба-на-граѓани](https://mms.mk/212145/сакаме-да-им-влееме-доверба-на-граѓани/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=сакаме-да-им-влееме-доверба-на-граѓани)> accessed May 3, 2021.
89. —, „Способната жена не е прифатена бидејќи на неа се гледа како на силна конкуренција: Бројни предизвици на патот кон родовата рамноправност при донесувањето одлуки“, (“A capable woman is not accepted because she is seen as a strong competitor: Numerous Challenges on the Road to Gender Equality in Decision-Making”) (April 8, 2021) <[https://mms.mk/215975/способната-жена-не-е-прифатена-бидејќ/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=способната-жена-не-е-прифатена-бидејќ](https://mms.mk/215975/способната-жена-не-е-прифатена-бидејќ/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=способната-жена-не-е-прифатена-бидејќ)> accessed May 15, 2021.
90. nezavisen.mk, „Владиката Петар ги нападна реформите во образованието, ЛГБТ заедницата, а јогата ја нарече квази религија“ (nezavisen.mk: “Bishop Petar attacked the education reforms, the LGBT community, and called yoga a quasi-religion”) (January 6, 2021) <<https://nezavisen.mk/vladikata-petar-gi-napadna-reformite-vo-obrazovaniето-lgbt-zaednicata-a-jogata-ja-nareche-kvazi-religija/>> accessed May 3, 2021.
91. NovaTv.mk, „Уште еден Северџанец со корона. Ќе се помолиме да цркне‘ – говор на омраза кон Марјан Забрчанец“ (Novatv.mk, “Another Severdjan with a crown. We will pray for him to die - hate speech against Marjan Zabrcanec”) (October 29, 2020) <<https://novatv.mk/ushte-eden-severdhanets-so-korona-ke-se-pomolime-da-trskne-govor-na-omraza-kon-marjan-zabrchanets/>> accessed May 7, 2021.
92. opserver.mk, „Хуманитарна помош за децата Роми вклучени во градинката ‘Осми април’ во Шуто Оризари“ (“Humanitarian aid for Roma children in the kindergarten ‘Osmi April’ in Suto Orizari”) (May 28, 2020) <[https://opserver.mk/makedonija/humanitarna-pomosh-zadecata-romi-vklucheni-vo-gradinkata-8mi-april-vo-shuto-orizari/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=humanitarna-pomosh-za-decata-romi-vklucheni-vo-gradinkata-8mi-april-vo-shuto-orizari](https://opserver.mk/makedonija/humanitarna-pomosh-zadecata-romi-vklucheni-vo-gradinkata-8mi-april-vo-shuto-orizari/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=humanitarna-pomosh-za-decata-romi-vklucheni-vo-gradinkata-8mi-april-vo-shuto-orizari)> accessed May 3, 2021.
93. —, “Moracanin for MIA: Да придонесеме за целосно почитување на правата на ЛГБТИ-лугјето и нивна заштита од дискриминација, стигматизација, говор на омраза и насилство“ (“Moracanin for MIA: Let us contribute to full respect for the rights of LGBTI people and their protection against discrimination, stigmatization, hate speech and violence”) (December 13, 2020) <<https://opserver.mk/politika/moracanin-za-mia-da-bridoneseme-za-целосно-pochituvanje-na-pravata-na-lgbti-lugjeto-i-nivna-zashtita-od-diskriminacija-stigmatizacija-govor-na-omraza-i-nasilstvo/>> accessed May 4, 2021.

94. —, „Фетаи: Актуелниот Кривичен законик не нуди многу за заштита од насилство врз жените“ opserver.mk, („Fetai: The current Criminal Code does not offer much protection from violence against women“) (February 25, 2021) <<https://opserver.mk/makedonija/fetai-aktuelniot-krivichen-zakonik-ne-nudi-mnogu-za-zashtita-od-nasilstvo-vrz-zhenite/>> accessed May 15, 2021.
95. —, „Семејно насилство: Многу жени Роми страдаат тивко“ („Domestic violence: Many Roma women suffer quietly“) (March 7, 2021)<<https://opserver.mk/makedonija/semejno-nasilstvo-mnogu-zheni-romi-stradaat-tivko/>> accessed May 1, 2021.
96. Petrovska N and Hadzi-Zafirov Z, “Legal Implications for Court Proceedings during a State of Emergency” (2021) <<http://blueprint.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/%D0%9F%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%BD%D0%B8-%D0%B8%D0%BC%D0%BF%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D0%B8-%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%B7-%D1%81%D1%83%D0%B4%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BF%D0%BA%D0%B8-%D0%B2%D0%BE-%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%BD%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D1%81%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%BE%D1%98%D0%B1%D0%B0.pdf>> accessed 5 August 2021
97. plusinfo.mk, „ССНМ, ЗНМ и СЕММ: МВР и ОЈО да го санкционираат говорот на омраза кон новинари“ (IUJM, AJM, СЕММ: Mol and BPPO to sanction hate speech against journalists“) (November 15, 2020)<<https://plusinfo.mk/ssnm-znm-i-semm-mvr-i-o-o-da-go-sankcioniraat-govorot-na-omraza-kon-novinari/>> accessed May 6, 2021.
98. Pravidiko.mk, „Судот им го замрзна имотот на Рашковски и на неговите деца“ (6 јули 2021) ravidiko.mk, (‘The Court Froze the Property of Rashkovski and His Children’) (6 July 2021) <<https://www.pravidiko.mk/sudot-im-go-zamrzna-imotot-na-rashkovski-i-na-negovite-detsa/>>.
99. press24, „Антикорупциска ќе ги бара имињата на мистериозните хонорарци во Владата“, (Anticorruption will seek the names of mysterious contracted staff in the Government’) (9 April 2021) <<https://press24.mk/antikorupciska-kje-gi-bara-iminjata-na-misterioznite-honorarci-vo-vladata>>.
100. radiomof.mk, „Ненавремената реакција на полицијата може да резултира во фемцид, реагираат од платформата за родова еднаквост“ (radiomof.mk, “Untimely reaction of the police may result in femicide, says the Gende4r Equality Platform“) (September 11, 2020) <<https://www.radiomof.mk/nenavremenata-reakcija-na-policijata-mozhe-da-rezultira-vo-femicid-reagiraat-od-platformata-za-rodova-ednakvost/>> accessed May 10, 2021.
101. Regional Cooperation Council, “Declaration of the Western Balkan Partners on Roma Integration in the EU Enlargement Process” (5 July 2019)<<https://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/files/admin/docs/866ab25893dd6d9271ebccbf195349e.pdf>> .
102. Senior Experts’ Group, “The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Recommendations of the Senior Experts’ Group on Systemic Rule of Law Issues Relating to the Communications Interception Revealed in Spring 2015” (2015) <[https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/news\\_corner/news/news-files/20150619\\_recommendations\\_of\\_the\\_senior\\_experts\\_group.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/news_corner/news/news-files/20150619_recommendations_of_the_senior_experts_group.pdf)>; Senior Experts’ Group, “The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Assessment and Recommendations of the Senior Experts’ Group on Systemic Rule of Law Issues 2017” (2017) <[https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/2017.09.14\\_seg\\_report\\_on\\_systemic\\_rol\\_issues\\_for\\_publication.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/2017.09.14_seg_report_on_systemic_rol_issues_for_publication.pdf)>
103. —, “The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Assessment and Recommendations of the Senior Experts’ Group on Systemic Rule of Law Issues 2017” (2017) <[https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/2017.09.14\\_seg\\_report\\_on\\_systemic\\_rol\\_issues\\_for\\_publication.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/2017.09.14_seg_report_on_systemic_rol_issues_for_publication.pdf)>
104. slobodnaevropa.mk, „Будење на говор на омраза меѓу младите во време на пандемија“ (slobodnaevropa.mk: “Awakening of hate speech among young people during a pandemic“) (December 18, 2020) <<https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/говор-омраза-млади-пандемија/31003799.html>> accessed on May 5, 2021.
105. State Department, “North Macedonia 2020 Human Rights Report” (2021) <<https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/north-macedonia/>>
106. telma.com.mk, „Висок пораст на случаи на говор на омраза нотира Хелсиншкиот комитет во извештајот за ноември“ (telma.com.mk: “High increase of hate speech cases is noted by the Helsinki Committee in its November report“) (December 13, 2020) <<https://telma.com.mk/2020/12/13/висок-пораст-на-случаи-на-говор-на-омра>> accessed on May 5, 2021.

107. Transparency International, "2018 Corruption Perceptions Index" (Transparency International, 29 јануари 2019) <[https://www.transparency.org/news/pressrelease/corruption\\_perceptions\\_index\\_2018](https://www.transparency.org/news/pressrelease/corruption_perceptions_index_2018)>
108. —, "Corruption Perception Index 2020" (2021) <<https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/mkd>> accessed 9 September 2021
109. —, "2019 Corruption Perceptions Index" <<https://www.transparency.org/cpi2019#report>>
110. tv21.tv, „Ќе се вакцинираат ли лицата со попреченост? (tv21.tv, "Will people with disabilities be vaccinated?) Алишан: Нема истражување како делуваат вакцините" (Alishan: There is no research on how vaccines work") (April 13, 2021) <<https://mk.tv21.tv/ke-se-vaktsiniraat-li-lit-sata-so-poprechenost-alishan-nema-istrzhuvane-kako-deluvaat-vaktsinite/>> accessed 2 May 2021.
111. vecer.press, „Обезбедени 1.860 пакети храна и хигиенски производи за еднородителски семејства од ранливи категории" (vecer.press, "Provided 1,860 packages of food and hygiene products for single-parent families from vulnerable categories") (May 8, 2020) <<https://www.vecer.press/obezbedeni-1-860-paketi-hrana-i-higienski/>> accessed May 6, 2021.
112. —, "Maricic at the SDMM tribune: Измените на Кривичниот законик во центарот ја ставаат заштитата и правата на жртвата на родово базирано насилство" ("Maricic at the tribune of SDMM: Amendments to the Criminal Code focus on protection and rights of victims of gender-based violence") (March 8, 2021) <<https://www.vecer.press/maricic-na-tribuna-na-sdmm-izmenite-na/>> accessed May 5, 2021.
113. Глас на Америка, „Исто образование, а помали плати од мажите – поразителна родова нееднаквост во македонското општество" (Воице оф Америка, "Same education, but lower wages than men - devastating gender inequality in Macedonian society") (March 10, 2021) <<https://mk.voanews.com/a/rodova-neednakvost-razlicni-primanja-voa/5809153.html>> accessed May 14, 2021.
114. —, „Напредок од 12 позиции на состојбата со човековите права на ЛГБТ заедницата" ("12 Positions higher regarding the Human Rights Situation of the LGBT Community") (May 17, 2021) <<https://mk.voanews.com/a/lgbt-skopje-/5893558.html>> accessed 11 August 2021.
115. Агенција за аудио и аудиовизуелни услуги, „Финансиска поддршка за надомест на средствата за дозвола за РА и ТВ емитување", (Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Services, "Financial support for reimbursement license fees for RA and TV broadcasting") (March 2, 2021) <<https://avmu.mk/2021/03/02/finansiska-poddrшка-za-nadomest-na-sr/>> .
116. Агенција за заштита на личните податоци, „Наоди од спроведената супервизија во ДИК" (Agency for Personal Data Protection, "Findings from the conducted supervision in the SEC") (August 4, 2020) <<https://dzlp.mk/mk/content/naodi-od-sprovedenata-supervizija-vo-dik>> accessed 23 April 2021
117. —, „Годишен извештај на Агенцијата за заштита на личните податоци 2020" (2021 година), ("Annual Report of the Agency for Personal Data Protection 2020") <[https://www.dzlp.mk/sites/default/files/u4/pdf-azlp-godisen\\_izvestaj\\_z\\_2020\\_mk.pdf](https://www.dzlp.mk/sites/default/files/u4/pdf-azlp-godisen_izvestaj_z_2020_mk.pdf)> accessed on 23 April 2021.
118. Академија за судии и јавни обвинители, „Известување – почетна обука" (Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors, "Reporting - Initial Training") (May 2021) <[https://jpacademy.gov.mk/initial\\_training/izvestuvane/](https://jpacademy.gov.mk/initial_training/izvestuvane/)> .
119. —, „Меморандуми за соработка" ("Memoranda of Cooperation") <<https://jpacademy.gov.mk/memorandumi-za-sorabotka/>>
120. —, „Почетна обука – документи" ("Initial training - documents") <<https://jpacademy.gov.mk/initial-training/>>
121. Академик, „Конституиран советот за координирање на ИКТ во правосудството" ("Council for Coordination of ICT in the Judiciary Constituted") (August 11, 2019) <<https://akademik.mk/konstituiran-sovetot-za-koordinirane-na-ikt-vo-pravosudstvoto/>>
122. Академик.мк, „Онлајн судење за разбојништво во Основниот суд Кавадарци", (Akademik.mk, "Online robbery trial in the Basic Court Kavadarci") (April 2020) <<https://akademik.mk/onlajn-sudene-za-razbojnishтво-vo-osnovniot-sud-kavadartsi/>>.

123. —, „Стапува во примена Законот за електронски документи, електронска идентификација и доверливи услуги“, (“The Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Identification and Confidential Services enters into force”) (September 1, 2020) <<https://akademik.mk/stapuva-vo-primena-zakonot-za-elektronski-dokumenti-elektronska-identifikatsija-i-doverlivi-uslugi/>>.
124. —, „Јавното обвинителство: Сашо Мијалков во попладневните часови се јави во Обвинителството“ (“The Public Prosecutor’s Office: Sasho Mijalkov appeared in the Prosecutor’s Office in the afternoon”) (February 23, 2021).
125. —, „Народниот правобранител бара лицата со попреченост и давателите на услуги за нив да имаат приоритет за вакцинација“ (“The Ombudsman demands that persons with disabilities and service providers have priority for vaccination”) (April 9, 2021) <<https://akademik.mk/narodniot-pravobranitel-bara-litsata-so-poprechenost-i-davatelite-na-uslugi-za-niv-da-imaat-prioritet-za-vaktsinatsija/>> accessed 2 May 2021.
126. —, „Се зголемуваат платите на судиите“, (“Judges’ salaries raised”) (June 14, 2021) <<https://akademik.mk/se-zgolemuvaat-platite-na-sudiite/>> accessed on 9 September 2021.
127. Алсат.мк, „Финансиската полиција врши истрага во три обложувалници“ (Alsat.mk, “The Financial Police is investigating in three betting house”) (April 10, 2021)<<https://alsat.mk/mk/finansiskata-politsija-vrshi-istraga-vo-tri-oblozhuvalnitsi/>> accessed 23 April 2021.
128. Алфа телевизија, „Сексуално образование на основците по терк на Хера, од каде доаѓа Царовска“ (Alpha TV, “Sexual education of primary school students according to Hera, where does Carovska come from”) (July 12, 2021)<<https://alfa.mk/seksualno-obrazovanie-na-osnovcizite-po-terk-na-hera-od-kade-doaga-czarovska/>>.
129. Bureau Of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, North Macedonia 2020 Human Rights Report (2021) <<https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NORTH-MACEDONIA-2020-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf>> accessed 23 April 2021
130. Блупринт група за правосудство, „Анализа на капацитетите и ресурсите на Јавното обвинителство во Република Северна Македонија“ (2020), (Blueprint Judiciary Group, “Analysis of the Capacities and Resources of the Public Prosecutor’s Office in the Republic of North Macedonia”) (2020) <<https://epi.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Resursi-kapaciteti-jo-2020.pdf>>.
131. —, „Следење на спроведувањето на Стратегијата за реформа на правосудниот сектор 2017-2022 година (период на следење јануари 2021 – јуни 2021 година)“ (Blueprint Judiciary Group, “Monitoring the Implementation of the Judicial Sector Reform Strategy 2017-2022 (monitoring period January 2021 - June 2021)”) (August 2021) <<http://blueprint.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/%D0%9F%D1%80%D0%B2-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B%D1%83%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%88%D0%B5%D0%BD-%D0%B%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B3-%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B8%D1%84-2021-3.pdf>> Accessed 9 September 2021
132. Васко Маглевешов, „Помали износи за клевета и навреда и поголема заштита на новинарите“ (28 јули 2021), (Vasko Magleshov, “Lower amounts for defamation and insult and greater protection of journalists”) (July 28, 2021)<<https://prizma.mk/pomali-iznosi-za-kleveta-i-navreda-i-pogolema-zashtita-na-novinarite/>> . <<https://prizma.mk/pomali-iznosi-za-kleveta-i-navreda-i-pogolema-zashtita-na-novinarite/>>.
133. Влада на Р. Северна Македонија, „Од 127. седница на Владата на РСМ: Се подготвува ИКТ стратегија за правосудството; ‘Младинска картичка’ за повеќе поволности; Стратегија за развој на женското претприемништво; ќе се формира ресурсен центар за родово одговорно креирање на политики“ ( Government of R. North Macedonia, «From the 127th session of the Government of RNM: An ICT strategy for the judiciary is being developed; ‘Youth card’ for more benefits; Strategy for the development of women entrepreneurship; a resource center for gender responsive policy making will be established”) (March 26, 2019)<<https://vlada.mk/node/17291>> accessed April 6, 2020.
134. —, „Од 52. седница на Владата: Донесен ребалансот на буџетот за 2020“ (Government of R. North Macedonia, “From the 52th session of the Government of RNM: The supplementary budget for 2020 was adopted”) (May 15, 2020)<<https://vlada.mk/node/21404>> .

135. --, „Од 30. седница на Владата: Донесени дополнителни рестриктивни мерки во периодот од 18 декември до 20 јануари; транспортот на дел од вакцините против КОВИД-19 ќе се реализира преку УНИЦЕФ“ (The Government on its 30th session: adopted additional restrictive measures in the period from December 18 to January 20; The transport of part of the vaccines against COVID-19 will be done through UNICEF) (December 15, 2020) <<https://vlada.mk/node/23565>> accessed 19 April 2021.
136. --, „Владата на Република Северна Македонија е цврсто решена да ја промени сликата и перцепцијата во борбата против корупцијата, тоа е еден од главните приоритети на владината 'Акција 21 – европски стандарди дома', ( “The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia is firmly determined to change the image and perception in the fight against corruption, it is one of the main priorities of the government ‘Action 21 - European standards at home’” (January 28, 2021) <<https://vlada.mk/node/24047?ln=mk>>.
137. --, „Од 48. седница на Владата: Донесена одлука за мерката финансиска поддршка за радиодифузери од пакетот 5“ (24 февруари 2021) (“At the 48th session the Government: adopted a decision on the financial support for broadcasters from package 5”) (February 24, 2021) <<https://vlada.mk/node/24359>> accessed May 3, 2021.
138. --, „'Акција 21' план за борба против корупција» («Action 21 Anti-Corruption Plan») (March 2021)
139. --, „Од 50. седница на Владата: усвоен планот за борба против корупцијата; усвоен здравствениот протокол за непречено спроведување на пописот; одобрен предлог-законот за прогласување на дел од Шар Планина за национален парк“ (“At the 50th session the Government adopted: the Plan for Fight against Corruption; the Health Protocol for Uninterrupted Conduct of the Census; approved the Draft Law on Declaring Part of Shar Mountain as a National Park (2 March 2021) <<https://vlada.mk/node/24418>>.
140. --, „ЗПВ Николовски, Ивановска и Мирчевски на увид во новите простории на ДКСК: Сите ресурси ги ставаме во служба на реализација на планот за борба против корупција, ДКСК наскоро се вселува во новите простории“ (10 март 2021), (“DPM Nikolovski, Ivanovska and Mirceviski visiting the new premises of the SCPC: We are putting all our resources in the service of the implementation of the anti-corruption plan, the SCPC will soon move into the new premises”) (March 10, 2021) <<https://vlada.mk/node/24514>> . <<https://vlada.mk/node/24514>>.
141. --, „Заедничка прес-конференција на премиерот Заев, министерот Маричиќ и судијата Нанев: Дигитализација на судството за зголемување на ефикасноста и пристапот до правда“ (26 април 2021) (“Joint press conference of Prime Minister Zaev, Minister Maricic and Judge Nanev: Digitalization of the judiciary to increase efficiency and access to justice”) (April 26, 2021).
142. --, „Владата ќе ја одржи редовната 88. седница“, (The Government will hold its regular 88th session”) (July 19, 2021) <<https://vlada.mk/node/25948>> accessed October 10, 2021.
143. --, „Заменик на претседателот на Владата за борба против корупцијата и криминал, одржлив развој и човечки ресурси“ (“Deputy Prime Minister for Fight against Corruption and Crime, Sustainable Development and Human Resources”) <<https://vlada.mk/minister/LjurchoNikolovski>> .
144. --, „Филипче: Имунизацијата ја почнуваме со вакцината Синофарм, медицински работници и сите лица над 70 години со приоритет за вакцинирање“, (“Filipce: “We start the immunization with the Sinofarm vaccine, for medical workers and all people over 70 with priority for vaccination.”) <<https://vlada.mk/node/24140>> accessed September 10, 2021.
145. Влада на Република Северна Македонија, „Од 134. седница на Владата“ Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, (“From the 134 Government Session) (5 August 2019) <<https://vlada.mk/node/17749>> .
146. Влада на РСМ, „Акција 21 – европски стандарди дома“ (2021) 21 (Government of RNM, “Action 21 - European standards at home”) (2021) 21 <<https://vlada.mk/akcija21>> accessed 2 May 2021.
147. --, „Заев: Нема недоприви, а во исто време никој не е виновен додека не се докаже спротивното, имаме правна држава која брзо ги расчистува случаите“, (Zaev: No one is untouchable, and at the same time no one is guilty until proven otherwise, we have a rule of law that quickly clears up cases”) (April 16, 2021) <<https://vlada.mk/node/24906>> accessed on 9 September 2021.

148. Владата на Република Северна Македонија, „Маричиќ од Волковија: Децата-штитеници добиваат нов воспитно поправен дом вреден 4.000.000 евра“ (The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, “Maricic from Volkovija: The protégés receive a new correctional facility worth 4,000,000 euros”) (November 25, 2020) <<https://vlada.mk/node/23328>> accessed 22 April 2021.] (25 ноември 2020) <<https://vlada.mk/node/23328>> accessed 22 April 2021.
149. Врховен суд, „Решение (2/2020) по барање за слободен пристап до информации“ (Supreme Court, “Decision (2/2020) on the request for free access to information”) (29 January 2020).
150. Врховен суд на Република Северна Македонија, „СПИ бр. 18/2021 – Решение по барање за слободен пристап до информации“, Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, („STI no.18/2021 - Decision on the request for free access to information” (May 2021).
151. Георгиевски Д, „Анализа на квалитетот и воедначеноста на судските одлуки во граѓанско правната област“ (Институт за европска политика и Асоцијација „Зенит“, август 2021) (Georgievski D, “Analysis of the quality and uniformity of court decisions in the field of civil law” (European Policy Institute and Association “Zenith”, August 2021)) <<https://epi.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/%D0%90%D0%9D%D0%90%D0%9B%D0%98%D0%97%D0%90-%D0%9D%D0%90-%D0%9A%D0%92%D0%90%D0%9B%D0%98%D0%A2%D0%95%D0%A2-%D0%98-%D0%92%D0%9E%D0%95%D0%94%D0%9D%D0%90%D0%A7%D0%95%D0%9D%D0%9E%D0%A1%D0%A2-%D0%9D%D0%90-%D0%A1%D0%A3%D0%94%D0%A1%D0%9A%D0%98%D0%A2%D0%95-%D0%9E%D0%94%D0%9B%D0%A3%D0%9A%D0%98-%D0%92%D0%9E-%D0%93%D0%A0%D0%90%D0%83%D0%90%D0%9D%D0%A1%D0%9A%D0%9E-%D0%9F%D0%A0%D0%90%D0%92%D0%9D%D0%90%D0%A2%D0%90-%D0%9E%D0%91%D0%9B%D0%90%D0%A1%D0%A2.pdf>>
152. Гоџо А и Митов О, „Функционална анализа на Судскиот совет на Република Северна Македонија“ (Gojo A and Mitov O, “Functional Analysis of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia”) (April 2020) <[http://www.vsrn.mk/wps/wcm/connect/ssrm/d905f12b-310c-4552-ac69-95539c6cfb13/%D0%A4%D0%A3%D0%9D%D0%9A%D0%A6%D0%98%D0%9E%D0%9D%D0%90%D0%9B%D0%9D%D0%90+%D0%90%D0%9D%D0%90%D0%9B%D0%98%D0%97%D0%90+%D0%9D%D0%90+%D0%A1%D0%A1%D0%A0%D0%A1%D0%9C-%D0%A4%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BD%D0%B0.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE.Z18\\_L8CC1J41LOB520APQFKICD0CR4-d905f12b-310c-4552-ac69-95539c6cfb13-kZ5emCU](http://www.vsrn.mk/wps/wcm/connect/ssrm/d905f12b-310c-4552-ac69-95539c6cfb13/%D0%A4%D0%A3%D0%9D%D0%9A%D0%A6%D0%98%D0%9E%D0%9D%D0%90%D0%9B%D0%9D%D0%90+%D0%90%D0%9D%D0%90%D0%9B%D0%98%D0%97%D0%90+%D0%9D%D0%90+%D0%A1%D0%A1%D0%A0%D0%A1%D0%9C-%D0%A4%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BD%D0%B0.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE.Z18_L8CC1J41LOB520APQFKICD0CR4-d905f12b-310c-4552-ac69-95539c6cfb13-kZ5emCU)>
153. Деловски В и др., „Извештај во сенка за Поглавјето 23 за периодот од мај 2016 до јануари 2018 година“ (Delovski Vet al., “Shadow Report on Chapter 23 for the period from May 2016 to January 2018” (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia, 2018) <[https://epi.org.mk/docs/Mreza23\\_izvestaj%20vo%20senka\\_2018.pdf](https://epi.org.mk/docs/Mreza23_izvestaj%20vo%20senka_2018.pdf)>. (Хелсиншкиот комитет за човекови права на Република Македонија 2018) <[https://epi.org.mk/docs/Mreza23\\_izvestaj%20vo%20senka\\_2018.pdf](https://epi.org.mk/docs/Mreza23_izvestaj%20vo%20senka_2018.pdf)>
154. “Policy Dialogue ‘Reforms in Chapter 23’, 17 April 2019” (17 April 2019).
155. „Дијалог за политики ‘Имплементација на Стратегијата за реформа на правосудниот сектор 2017-2022 година со Акциски план – До каде сме и што понатаму?’“, (Policy Dialogue ‘Implementation of the Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 with Action Plan - How far are we and what next?) <<https://www.facebook.com/EPI.Skopje/videos/408804293926251>> accessed on 15 September 2021.
156. “SCPC press-release” (July 26, 2021) <<https://dsk.mk/%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%BE%D0%BF%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5-3/>> .
157. Државен завод за ревизија, „Институционални капацитети на единките корисници на судска власт за реализација на надлежностите“ (15 мај 2020), (State Audit Office, ‘Institutional capacities of the beneficiary unites of judicial power for the execution of Competencies’) (15 May 2020) <<https://dzt.mk/mk/200515-revizija-na-usoglasenost-2019-institucionalni-kapacitети-na-edinkite-korisnici-na-sudska>>.
158. —, „Извршена е ревизија на Специјалното јавно обвинителство за периодот 2015-2019 година на тема ‘Плати и додатоци на плати и други надоместоци’“ (29 септември 2020), (‘Audit of the Special Public Prosecutor’s Office for the period 2015-2019 on ‘Salaries and salary supplements and other allowances’) (September 29, 2020) <<https://dzt.mk/mk/200929-izvrshena-e-revizija-na-specijalnoto-javno-obvinitelstvo-za-periodot-2015-2019-godina-na>>.

159. Државна комисија за спречување на корупција, „Одлука бр. 12-88/10 од 22.10.2020“, (State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, „Decision no. 12-88 / 10 from 22.10.2020)“ (22 October 2020) <[https://old.dsk.mk/fileadmin/user\\_upload/2020/odluki/2020-88-10.pdf](https://old.dsk.mk/fileadmin/user_upload/2020/odluki/2020-88-10.pdf)> accessed on 20 April 2021.
160. —, „Одлука бр. 09-2034/9“, —, („Decision no. 09-2034 / 9“) (November 27, 2020)
161. —, „Годишен извештај за работата на ДКСК за 2020 година“ (State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, „Annual Report on the Work of the SCPC for 2020“) <<https://dsk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/%D0%93%D0%98-%D1%84%D0%B8%D0%B-D%D0%B0%D0%BB.pdf>> accessed 9 September 2021.
162. —, „Одлука бр. 12-465/5 од 15.04.2021“ (15 април 2021) („Decision no. 12-465 / 5 from 15.04.2021“) (15 April 2021)<<https://dsk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2021-465-5-v.v.-12-3210-2020.pdf>> accessed 21 April 2021
163. —, „Буџет на ДКСК“, („Budget of the SCPC“) <<https://dsk.mk/%D0%B1%D1%83%D1%9F%D0%B5%D1%82-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%B4%D0%BA%D1%81%D0%BA/>> .
164. European Commission, „International Women’s Day, 2021: COVID-19 pandemic is a major challenge to gender equality. (5 March 2021)<[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_21\\_1011](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_1011)> accessed 17 May 2021.
165. European Commission, „Guidelines for Planning and Implementing National Roma Strategic Frameworks“
166. European Court of Human Rights, „Gelevski Case v. North Macedonia (Application No. 28032/12)“ (8 October 2020)<<https://biroescp.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CASE-OF-GELEVSKI-v.-NORTH-MACEDONIA.pdf>> accessed April 29, 2021.
167. —, „Случај Бошкоски против Северна Македонија“ („Boskoski v. North Macedonia“) <<http://biroescp.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/БОШКОСКИ-ПРОТИВ-СЕВЕРНА-МАКЕДОНИЈА.pdf>> accessed 19 April 2021.
168. European Court of Human Rights, Press Country Profile – The Republic of North Macedonia (2021)<[https://echr.coe.int/Documents/CP\\_Republic\\_of\\_North\\_Macedonia\\_ENG.pdf](https://echr.coe.int/Documents/CP_Republic_of_North_Macedonia_ENG.pdf)> accessed 19 April 2021.
169. —, „Decision - Application no. 30415/18, Nehru Redzepov and Dzemile Redzepova v. North Macedonia“ (21 January 2021)<[https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{"itemid":\["001-208155"\]}](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{)> accessed 19 April 2021.
170. —, „Decision - Application no. 59492/18, Mizafer Jusinova v. North Macedonia“ (21 January 2021)<[https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{"appno":\["59492/18"\],"itemid":\["001-208156"\]}](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{)> accessed 19 April 2021.
171. ЕНЕР, „Предлог-закон за изменување и дополнување на Законот за судскиот буџет“ (ENER, „Draft-law on Amending the Law on Court Budget“) (May 10, 2021)<[https://ener.gov.mk/Default.aspx?item=pub\\_regulation&subitem=view\\_reg\\_detail&itemid=67287](https://ener.gov.mk/Default.aspx?item=pub_regulation&subitem=view_reg_detail&itemid=67287)>.
172. —, „Regulation: Предлог на Законот за вештачење“ („Regulation: Draft Law on Expertise“) (September 2021)<[https://ener.gov.mk/Default.aspx?item=pub\\_regulation&subitem=view\\_reg\\_detail&itemid=70466](https://ener.gov.mk/Default.aspx?item=pub_regulation&subitem=view_reg_detail&itemid=70466)>.
173. „За претседателка на Судскиот совет на Република Северна Македонија е избрана Павлина Црвенковска – прв избор на претседател според новиот закон за Судски совет“ („Pavlina Crvenkovska elected President of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia - the first election of a President under the new law on the Judicial Council“) (April 20, 2021)<<https://urlzs.com/4Nq6W>>
174. „Report from the second annual survey on the satisfaction of users of the courts“ (Association „Zenit“, 2021).
175. „Report From the Monitoring of the Strategy for Reform of the Judicial Sector 2017-2022 - For 2020 Year“ (European Policy Institute - Skopje, Association ZENIT, September 2021).
176. Илиевска М., „Анализа на одлуките на ДКСК за постапки за вработување во втората половина на 2020 година“ (2021), (Ilievska M, „Analysis of the SCSP decisions on the employment procedures in the second half of 2020“) (2021)<<http://www.antikorupcija.mk/uploads/records/file/A%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B0%20%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0%20%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D0%B4%D0%BA%D1%81%D0%BA%20KOR-2.pdf>>.

177. Институт за европска политика, „Извештај од следење на Стратегијата за реформа на правосудниот сектор 2017-2022 година – за 2020 година“ (2019) (European Policy Institute, “Report from the monitoring of the Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 - for 2020”) (2019) <<https://epi.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/%D0%94%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B3-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D1%98%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%82-%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B8-%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B8%D1%84.pdf>>
178. —, „Дијалог за политики: Ветингот како вонредна мерка ќе создаде вонредни проблеми“, (European Policy Institute, “Policy Dialogue: Vetting as an emergency measure will create emergency problems”) (June 3, 2020) <<https://epi.org.mk/post/14608>>.
179. —, „Дигитално судство – Нова ера на реформите на македонскиот правосуден систем“, (“Digital Judiciary - A New Era of the Reforms of the Macedonian Judicial System”) <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vVowUktO\\_68](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vVowUktO_68)>.
180. Институт за човекови права и Транспаренси Интернешнал Македонија, „Втор квартален извештај септември-ноември 2019 од следењето на работата на Државната комисија за спречување корупција“ (2019), (Institute for Human Rights and Transparency International Macedonia, “Second Quarterly Report September-November 2019 from the monitoring of the work of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption”) (2019) <[http://ihr.org.mk/uploads/%D0%A1%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B8/%D0%9F%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B7%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0%20%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%98%20%D0%94%D0%9A%D0%A1%D0%9A/Vtor\\_Kvartalen\\_Izveshtaj.pdf](http://ihr.org.mk/uploads/%D0%A1%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B8/%D0%9F%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B7%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0%20%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%98%20%D0%94%D0%9A%D0%A1%D0%9A/Vtor_Kvartalen_Izveshtaj.pdf)>.
181. ЈРП Македонска радио-телевизија, „Извештај за финансиското работење на ЈРП МРТ во периодот 01.07 – 30.09.2020 година“ (РВС Македонска Радио-Television, “Report on the financial operations of РВС МРТ in the period 01.07 - 30.09.2020”) <<http://mrt.com.mk/sites/default/files/Извештај%20за%20финансиското%20работење%20на%20ЈРП%20МРТ%20во%20период%2001%2007-30%2009%202020.pdf>> accessed 29 April 2021
182. —, „Консолидиран годишен финансиски извештај на ЈРП Македонска радио-телевизија ДООЕЛ, Аргус ДООЕЛ, Сцена и База ДООЕЛ за 2019 година“, (“Consolidated annual financial report of JRP Makedonska Radio-Television DOOEL, Argus DOOEL, Scena and Baza DOOEL for 2019”) <<http://mrt.com.mk/sites/default/files/Годишен%20консолидиран%20извештај%20за%20МРТ%20и%20ДООЕЛИ-те%20за%202019%20година.pdf>> accessed April 29, 2021. <<http://mrt.com.mk/sites/default/files/Годишен%20консолидиран%20извештај%20за%20МРТ%20и%20ДООЕЛИ-те%20за%202019%20година.pdf>> accesses 29 April 2021.
183. Канал 5, „Кривична пријава за објавување списоци со наслов корона вирус – Ковид 19 со лични податоци на социјалните мрежи“ (Kanal 5, “Criminal charges for publishing lists with personal data on social networks under the name Corona virus - Covid 19”) (April 10, 2020) <<https://kanal5.com.mk/krivichna-prijava-za-objavuvanje-spisoci-so-naslov-korona-virus-kovid-19-so-lichni-podatoci-na-socijalnite-mrezhi/a417326>> accessed 23 April 2021.
184. —, “Истражување: 51 Отсто од младите се сметаат за религиозни“, (“Survey: 51% of young people consider themselves religious”) <<https://kanal5.com.mk/istrazhuvanje-51-otsto-od-mladite-se-smetaat-za-religiozni/a446635>> accessed 23 April 2021.
185. US Department of State Office of International Religious Freedom, “International Religious Freedom Report: “2020 Report on International Religious Freedom: North Macedonia (2021) <<https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-report-on-international-religious-freedom/north-macedonia/>> accessed 11 August 2021.
186. „Ќе направиме сè за барем еден степен да ја подигнеме довербата на граѓаните во судството, вели новата претседателка на Судскиот совет“, (“We will do everything to raise for at least one degree the level of citizens’ trust in the judiciary, says the new President of the Judicial Council”) (April 29, 2021) <<https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/ke-napravime-s-za-barem-eden-stepen-da-ja-podigneme-doverbata-na-graganite-vo-sudstvoto-veli-novata-pretседателка-na-sudskiot-sovet-pavlina-tsvenkovska/>>.
187. Коалиција „Маргини“, „Прва тужба против учебник од високо образование врз основа на новиот закон за спречување и заштита од дискриминација“ (Coalition “Margins”, “First lawsuit against a higher education textbook based on the new law on prevention and protection against discrimination” (December 9, 2020) <<http://coalition.org.mk/прва-тужба-против-учебник-од-високо-об/>> accessed 1 May 2021.



188. Lady Biancu and Hannah Smith, "Independence and Impartiality of the Judiciary – Review of the Relevant Case-Law of the European Court of Human Rights" (2021) <<https://www.rolplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/independence-and-impartiality-of-judiciary-mkd.pdf>>
189. Љубомир Јовевски, јавен обвинител на РСМ, „Извештај за работата на јавните обвинителства на Република Северна Македонија во 2020 година“ (2020), (Ljubomir Jovevski, Public Prosecutor of RNM, "Report on the work of the Public Prosecutor's Offices of the Republic of North Macedonia in 2020") (2020) <<https://jorm.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/izveshta%D1%98-za-2020-%D1%98o-na-rsm.pdf>>.
190. Македонска радио-телевизија, „Петгодишна стратегија за развој на Македонската радио-телевизија“ (Macedonian Radio and Television, "Five-year strategy for development of the Macedonian Radio and Television") (2021)<[http://mrt.com.mk/sites/default/files/ПЕТГОДИШНА%20СТРАТЕГИЈА%20ЗА%20РАЗВОЈ%20НА%20МРТ\\_0.pdf](http://mrt.com.mk/sites/default/files/ПЕТГОДИШНА%20СТРАТЕГИЈА%20ЗА%20РАЗВОЈ%20НА%20МРТ_0.pdf)> accessed April 29, 2021.
191. Марин Лесенски, „Индекс на медиумската писменост – двојна закана: Отпорност на лажни вести за време на 'инфодемјата' од Ковид-19“ [Индекс на медијната грамотност 2021 – двојна заплата: Устойчивост на фалшиви новини по време на „инфодемјата“ од Ковид-19] (2021) <[https://osis.bg/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/MediaLiteracyIndex2021\\_BG.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1ZJYmiK8aBpayZDkfd2HTWpdjMvoalyDLtKOV7D4MLX6\\_110k5HskpACg](https://osis.bg/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/MediaLiteracyIndex2021_BG.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1ZJYmiK8aBpayZDkfd2HTWpdjMvoalyDLtKOV7D4MLX6_110k5HskpACg)> accessed 2 May 2021
192. Министерство за информатичко општество и администрација, „Антикорупциската програма со Акциски план“ (Ministry of Information Society and Administration, "Anti-Corruption Program with Action Plan") (March 2021) <[https://www.mioa.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl\\_files/documents/antikorupciska\\_programa\\_-\\_05.05.2021.pdf](https://www.mioa.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl_files/documents/antikorupciska_programa_-_05.05.2021.pdf)> .
193. Министерство за образование и наука, „Концепција за основно образование“ (Ministry of Education and Science, "Concept for primary education") (2021)<<https://mon.gov.mk/stored/document/Концепција%20МК.pdf>> accessed May 14, 2021.
194. Министерство за правда, „Извештај од извршен увид во функционалноста на информатичкиот систем и надзор над примената на одредбите од судскиот деловник во судовите“ (2018), (The Ministry of Justice, "Report on the Executive Inspection of the Functionality of the Information System and Supervision over the Application of the Provisions of the Court Rulebook in the Courts") (2018) <<https://www.pravda.gov.mk/Upload/Documents/%D0%90%D0%9A%D0%9C%D0%98%D0%A1%20%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%98.pdf>>.
195. —, „Маричиќ во Стразбур ја потпиша Конвенција за борба против фалсификување лекови и Протоколот 16“ ('Maricic Signed the Convention on the Counterfeiting of Medical Products and Protocole 16 in Strasbourg') (September 2021) 16<<https://www.pravda.gov.mk/vest/6236>> .
196. —, "Response to a request for free access to public information".
197. —, „Совет за ИКТ, Министерство за правда“ (Ministry of Justice, "ICT Council, Ministry of Justice")<<https://www.pravda.gov.mk/toc1/1958>> accessed 9 September 2021.
198. Министерство за финансии, „Буџет на Република Северна Македонија за 2021 година“ (Ministry of Finance, "Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia for 2021") <<https://finance.gov.mk/budget2021/>> accessed May 3, 2021.
199. МТМ.мк, „Шахпаска: Се подготвува ново законско решение за вработување на лицата со различна попреченост“ ("Shahpaska: A new draft law for employment of persons with different disabilities is being developed") (September 23, 2021) <<https://mtm.mk/makedonija/78831-shahpaska-se-podgotvuvano-novo-zakonsko-reshenie-za-vrabortuvanje-na-licata-so-razlichna-poprechenost>> .
200. Народен правобранител, „Годишен извештај за степенот на обезбедувањето, почитувањето, унапредувањето и заштита на човековите слободи и права – 2020“ (Ombudsman, "Annual Report on the level of provision, respect, promotion and protection of human rights and freedoms - 2020") (March 2021)<<http://ombudsman.mk/upload/Godisni%20izvestai/GI-2020/GI-2020.pdf>> accessed 21 April 2021.

201. „Националната стратегија за спречување на корупцијата и судирот на интереси (2021-2025) со Акционен план за нејзино спроведување“, („National Strategy for Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest (2021-2025) with Action Plan for its implementation“) (December 2020) <<https://dksk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Nacionalna-strategija-DKSK-KONECNA.pdf>>.
202. HBO соработка, „Консултативен процес за изработка на стратегија за Роми 2022-2030“ (NGO cooperation, „Consultative process for drafting the Strategy for Roma 2022-2030“) <<https://www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk/?q=mk/node/503>> . <<https://www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk/?q=mk/node/503>>
203. Нова Македонија, „Селефистите регистрирани како нова верска заедница во земјава, ИВЗ реагира“, (Nova Makedonija, „Salafists registered as a new religious community in the country, IRC reacts“) (19 February 2021) <<https://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/makedonija/politika/селефистите-регистрирани-како-нова-в/>> accessed 23 April 2021.
204. Нова ТВ, „ДКСК откри сомнителни трансакции во обложувалници“ (Nova TV, „SCPC Discovered Suspicious Betting Transactions“) (April 9, 2021) <<https://novatv.mk/dsk-otkri-somnitelni-transaksii-vo-oblozhuvalnitsi/>> . <<https://novatv.mk/dsk-otkri-somnitelni-transaksii-vo-oblozhuvalnitsi/>>.
205. Department of Foreign Affairs, Directorate-General for Foreign Affairs of the Union, Mapping Fake News and Disinformation in the Western Balkans and Identifying Ways to Effectively Counter Them] (2021) <[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/653621/EXPO\\_STU\(2020\)653621\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/653621/EXPO_STU(2020)653621_EN.pdf)> .
206. Петровска Н и Аврамовски Д, „Практичната примена на мерката конфискација во кривичните постапки во Република Северна Македонија“ (2021) (Petrovska N. and Avramovski D, „Practical application of confiscation in criminal proceedings in the Republic of North Macedonia“) (2021).
207. —, „Влијание на мерит-системот врз судската независност и професионалност во Северна Македонија“ ((Impact of the Merit System on Judicial Independence and Professionalism in North Macedonia) (2021) <<https://all4fairtrials.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/%D0%90%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%94%D0%B5%D0%BC%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BC-%D0%9C%D0%9A%D0%94.pdf>>
208. Петровска Н, Амет С и Хаџи-Зафиров Ж, „Ефикасна кривична правда: Преглед на предметите иницирани од СЈО“ (2020), (Petrovska N., Amet S. and Hadzi-Zafirov Z, „Effective criminal justice: Review of cases initiated by the SPO“) (2020).
209. Плус Инфо, „Лани во медиумите работеле 2.600 лица, мажите главно како режисери и сниматели, жените како новинарки“ (Plus Info, „Last year, 2,600 people worked in the media, men mainly as directors and cameramen, women as journalists“) (2 November 2020) &t;12.25.2020> accessed on April 29, 2021.
210. —, „МИА и БТА заедно ќе се борат против лажни вести“ („MIA and BTA together will fight fake news“) (February 6, 2021) <<https://plusinfo.mk/mia-i-bta-zaedno-e-se-borat-protiv-lazhni-vesti/>> accessed 2 May 2021.
211. Поповиќ М, „Извештај за работата на Државната комисија за спречување корупција за 2020 година“ (2021), (Popovic M. „Report on the Work of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption for 2020“) (2021) <[http://www.antikorupcija.mk/uploads/records/file/%D0%98%D0%B7%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%98%20%D0%B7%D0%B0%20%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0%20DKSK%20-%20KOR2%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.antikorupcija.mk/uploads/records/file/%D0%98%D0%B7%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%98%20%D0%B7%D0%B0%20%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0%20DKSK%20-%20KOR2%20(1).pdf)> accessed 9 September 2021.
212. Правдико, „Јовески: За доверливост двапати се делеле надоместоци во СЈО“, (Pravdiko, „Joveski: Fees for confidentiality were awarded twice in the SPO“) (November 28, 2019) <<https://www.pravdiko.mk/joveski-za-doverlivost-dvapati-se-delele-nadomestotsi-vo-sjo/>>.
213. —, „Маричиќ потпиша правилник за зголемување на платите на судската полиција“ „Маричиќ потпиша правилник за зголемување на платите на судската полиција“, („Maricic signed a rulebook on increasing the salaries of the court police“) (March 5, 2021) <<https://www.pravdiko.mk/marichik-potpisha-pravilnik-za-zgolemuwane-na-platite-na-sudskata-politsija/>>.

214. „Правилник за вработување, унапредување и распоредување на даватели на услуги и помошно-технички лица во јавното радиодифузно претпријатие на македонската радиотелевизија“ (13 November 2020) («Rulebook on employment, promotion and deployment of service providers and support staff in the public broadcasting company of the Macedonian Radio and Television») <<http://mrt.com.mk/sites/default/files/Правилник%20за%20вработување%2C%20унапредување%20и%20распоредување%20на%20даватели%20на%20услуги%20и%20помошно-технички%20лица%20во%20ЈРП%20МРТ.pdf>> accessed 29 April 2021.
215. Призма, „Нов обид за деблокада на реформите во МРТ и АВМУ“ (27 јануари 2021), (Prizma, “A new attempt to unblock the reforms in MRT and AVMS”) (January 27, 2021)<<https://prizma.mk/nov-obid-za-deblokada-na-reformite-vo-mrt-i-vo-avmu/>> .
216. Радио МОФ, „Инстаграм профил шири говор на омраза, институциите бараат конкретна жртва за отворање на постапка“ (Radio MOF, “Instagram profile spreads hate speech, institutions seek concrete victim to open proceedings”) (June 30, 2020) <<https://www.radiomof.mk/instagram-profil-shiri-govor-na-omraza-instituciite-baraat-konkretna-zhrtva-za-otvoranje-na-postapka/>> accessed 7 May 2021.
217. —, Коалиција „Маргини“: „Директорот и службениците во управата за водење на матични книги се изживуваат со животите на транс луѓето“ (“Coalition ‘Margins’: The director and the staff in the Registry Office brutalize trans people”) (August 13, 2020) <<https://www.radiomof.mk/koalicija-margini-direktorot-i-sluzhbenicite-vo-upravata-za-vodenje-na-matichni-knigi-se-izhivuvaat-so-zhivotite-na-trans-lugjeto/>> accessed May 4, 2021.
218. —, „Мрежа за заштита од дискриминација: Собранието го сокри огласот за Народен правобранител од јавноста“ (24 декември 2020) (The Anti-discrimination Network: The Assembly hid the announcement for the Ombudsman from the public” (December 24, 2020) <<https://www.radiomof.mk/mrezha-za-zashtita-od-diskriminacija-sobranieto-go-sokri-oglasot-za-naroden-pravobranitel-od-javnosta/>> accessed April 20, 2021.
219. —, „Инклузива“: Половина од гласачките места со скали немаат пристапни рампи за лицата со попреченост (“Inkluziva”: Half of the polling stations with stairs do not have access ramps for people with disabilities) (10 March 2021) <<https://www.radiomof.mk/inkluziva-polovina-od-glasachkite-mesta-so-skali-nemaat-pristapni-rampi-za-licata-so-poprechenost/>> accessed 3 May 2021.
220. —, „Антидискриминаторска комисија со низа предизвици, граѓанскиот сектор бара поддршка за да ѝ се обезбедат услови за работа“ (“Anti-Discrimination Commission with a series of challenges, the civil sector seeks support to provide working conditions») (23 April 2021) <<https://www.radiomof.mk/antidiskriminatorska-komisija-so-niza-predizvici-gragjanskiot-sektor-bara-poddrshka-za-da-i-se-obezbedat-uslovi-za-rabota/>> accessed 4 May 2021.
221. Reporters Without Borders, World Press Freedom Index - 2021 (2021)<<https://rsf.org/en/north-macedonia?nl=ok>> accessed 23 April 2021.
222. Република.мк, „Се огласија претепаните Роми: Бевме тепани и малтретирани, во станица нè држеа до пет часот изутрина“ Republika.mk, (“The beaten Roma stated: We were beaten and abused, we were kept in the station until five o’clock in the morning”) (24 September 2020) <<https://republika.mk/vesti/crna-hronika/se-oglasija-pretepanite-romi-bevme-terpani-i-maltretirani-vo-stanica-ne-drzea-do-pet-chasot-izutrina/>> accessed January 5, 2021.
223. Сакам да кажам, „Судскиот совет ги охрабрува граѓаните да пријавуваат неправди во судството, но да не чекаат многу, рокот е 6 месеци“ (Sakam da Kazam “The Judicial Council Encourages Citizens To Report Injustices In The Judiciary But Not Wait Too Long, The Deadline Is 6 Months” (23 September 2021) <<https://urlzs.com/rdc75>>.
224. СДК.мк, „Војна кај Народниот правобранител – замениците го обвинуваат омбудсманот Мемети за деспотизам, тој вели 5 месеци не доаѓаат на работа“ (SDK.mk, “War with the Ombudsman - the deputies accuse the Ombudsman Memeti of despotism, he says they have not come to work for 5 months” (August 21, 2020) <<https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/vojna-kaj-narodniot-pravobranitel-zamenitsite-go-obvinuvaat-ombudsmanot-memeti-za-despotizam-toj-veli-5-mesetsi-ne-dogaat-na-rabota/>> accessed 21 April 2021.

225. СЕММ, „Кодекс на новинарите на Македонија“ (15 октомври 2014), (CEJM, “Code of Ethics of Journalists of Macedonia”) (October 15, 2014) <<https://semm.mk/dokumenti/korisni-resursi/kodeks/91-kodeks-na-novinarite-na-makedonija>> accessed 3 May 2021.
226. —, „Насоки за етичко известување на онлајн медиумите (Примена на Кодексот на новинарите во онлајн сферата)“ (“Guidelines for ethical reporting of online media (application of the Code of Journalists in the online sphere)”) (1 Фебруарс 2021) <<https://semm.mk/attachments/01-02-2021/Насоки%20за%20етичко%20известување%20во%20онлајн%20медиумите.pdf>> accessed May 3, 2021.
227. Сител, „Сведоштво од затворениците во Шутка: Владее страв и паника по вториот смртен случај“ (Sitel, “Testimony of the prisoners in Shutka: Fear and panic prevail after the second death”) (April 15, 2020) <<https://sitel.com.mk/svedoshtvo-od-zatvorenicate-vo-shutka-vladee-strav-i-panika-po-vtoriot-smrten-sluchaj>> accessed 22 April 2021
228. —, „Анкета: Секој втор гласач на избори не би гласал за политичар со религија различна од својата“ („Survey: Every second voter in the elections would not vote for a politician with a religion different from his/her own”) (30 July 2020) <<https://sitel.com.mk/anketa-sekoj-vtor-glasach-na-izbori-ne-bi-glasal-za-politichar-so-religija-razlichna-od-svojata>> accessed 23 April 2021.
229. —, „Лажни вести ја уриваат довербата во вакцинацијата“ (“Fake news destroys trust in vaccination”) (April 5, 2021) <<https://sitel.com.mk/lazhni-vesti-ja-urivaat-doverbata-vo-vakcinacijata>> accessed 2 May 2021.
230. Слободен печат, „Нападнат Беким Асани: Планирам да купам пиштол, не може кој како ќе стигне да ме тепа!“ (Sloboden Pечат: “Bekim Asani was assaulted: I plan to buy a gun, no one can beat me!”) (August 5, 2020) <<https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/napadnat-bekim-asani-planiram-da-kupam-pishtol-ne-mozhe-koj-kako-ke-stigne-da-me-tepa/>> accessed May 4, 2021.
231. —, „Мртов Шиптар – добар Шиптар“ се пее на скопскиот плоштад, кој да го спречи говорот на омраза? (видео) (“Dead Shiptar - Good Shiptar” is sung in Skopje Square, who can stop the hate speech? (video)”) (13 September 2020) <<https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/mrtov-shiptar-dobar-shiptar-se-pee-na-skopskiot-ploshtad-koj-da-go-sprechi-govorot-na-omraza-video/>> accessed May 8, 2021.
232. —, „Полициска бруталност на дело: —, „Полициска бруталност на дело: тројца полицајци претепaa Роми во Битола“, (“Police Brutality in Action: Three Police Officers Beat Roma in Bitola”) ( 24 September 2020) <<https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/policziska-brutalnost-na-delo-trojca-policijaczi-pretepa-a-romi-vo-bitola-video/>>
233. — „Во Македонија има 34 дневни центри за лица со попреченост, мајките на децата велат не се доволни“ (“There are 34 day care centers for people with disabilities in Macedonia, mothers of children say they are not enough”) (4 December 2020) <<https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/video-vo-makedonija-34-dnevni-czentri-za-licza-so-poprechenost-majkite-na-decza-so-poprechenost-velat-ne-se-dovolni/>> accessed 2 May 2021.
234. — „Потребна поголема политичка волја за спроведување на Стратегијата за родова еднаквост“ (Greater political will needed to implement the Gender Equality Strategy”) (5 March 2021) <<https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/potrebna-pogolema-politichka-volja-za-sproveduvane-na-strategijata-za-rodova-ednakvost>> accessed 15 May 2021.
235. —, „Нападите врз новинарите тројно зголемени од лани“ (“Attacks on journalists tripled from last year”) (28 July 2020) <<https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/новинари-избори-корона-напади/30751534.html>> accessed 29 April 2021.
236. — „Затворениците со минимум лекарска грижа“ (30 јули 2021), (“Prisoners with Minimum Medical Care”) (30 July 2021) <<https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/затворениците-со-минимум-лекарска-грижа/31384525.html>>.
237. „Службен весник на Република Северна Македонија“, бр. 285 од 30.11.2020 (“Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia”, no. 285 from 30.11.2020) (30 November 2020) <<https://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/26a4cfeef77748a0adb7c6d1d064d846.pdf>> accessed 20 April 2021.

238. Собрание на Р. Северна Македонија, „Основање и промоција на 'Интерпартиската парламентарна група за правата на ЛГБТИ лицата'" (Parliament of R. North Macedonia, "Establishment and Promotion of the 'Inter-Party Parliamentary Group for the Rights of LGBTI People'") (10 December 2020) <[https://sobranie.mk/sredbi-2020-ns\\_article-osnovanje-i-promocija-na-interpartiskata-parlamentarna-grupa-za-pravata-na-lgbti-licata.nspix](https://sobranie.mk/sredbi-2020-ns_article-osnovanje-i-promocija-na-interpartiskata-parlamentarna-grupa-za-pravata-na-lgbti-licata.nspix)> accessed 5 May 2021.
239. -- „Седница бр. 8 на Комисијата за прашањата на изборите и именувањата закажана на 05.01.2021 год. во 13:00 часот" (Parliament of R. North Macedonia, "Session no. 9 of the Committee on Elections and Appointments scheduled for 11.01.2021 at 13:00") (1 November 2021) <<https://www.sobranie.mk/sessiondetailsrabotni.nspix?sessionDetailsId=25375226-884f-4591-a5fc-ee08e167071f&date=11.1.2021>> accessed 15 October 2021.
240. -- „Седница бр. 31 на Собранието на Р. Северна Македонија закажана на 12.01.2021 год. во 12:00 часот" (Parliament of R. North Macedonia, "Session no. 31 of the Assembly of R. North Macedonia scheduled for January 12, 2021. at 12:00") (25 January 2021) <<https://sobranie.mk/sessiondetails.nspix?sessionDetailsId=d2375cca-06aa-47ae-816c-c5ac9a809c-de&date=25.1.2021>> accessed 3 May 2021.
241. -- „Седница бр. 11 на Комисијата за труд и социјална политика закажана за 27.04.2021 во 11:00 часот" (Parliament of R. North Macedonia, "Session no. 11 of the Committee on Labor and Social Policy scheduled for April 27, 2021 at 11:00 AM") (27 April 2021) <<https://sobranie.mk/sessiondetailsrabotni.nspix?sessionDetailsId=78336043-a545-4240-9467-28d6a6e779f3&date=27.4.2021>> accessed 4 May 2021.
242. -- „Седница бр. 9 на Комисијата за прашања на изборите и именувањата закажана на 11.01.2021 година во 13:00 часот" ("9th Session of the Committee on Elections and Appointments scheduled for 11.01.2021 at 13:00") (1 November 2021) <<https://www.sobranie.mk/sessiondetailsrabotni.nspix?sessionDetailsId=25375226-884f-4591-a5fc-ee08e167071f&date=11.1.2021>> accessed 15 October 2021
243. -- „Материјали – Предлог-закон за Академија за судии и јавни обвинители" ("Materials - Draft-Law on the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors")<<https://www.sobranie.mk/materialdetails.nspix?materialId=543628f3-2109-4bd5-8b99-22d543901888>> . <<https://www.sobranie.mk/materialdetails.nspix?materialId=543628f3-2109-4bd5-8b99-22d543901888>>
244. -- „Предлог на Законот за изменување на Законот за социјалната заштита" (Parliament of R. North Macedonia, ("Draft Law amending the Law on Social Protection")<<https://sobranie.mk/materialdetails.nspix?materialId=2a9712a5-4fc8-4d6f-af8e-04107709761a>> accessed 2 May 2021.
245. Собрание на Република Северна Македонија, „135. седница на Собранието на РСМ" („135th Session of the Assembly of RNM") (16 February 2020) <<https://www.sobranie.mk/sessiondetails.nspix?sessionDetailsId=960776a1-bef0-4c2b-a514-a325b5a6b7b9&date=16.2.2020>> .
246. -- „Седница бр. 123 на Собранието на Република Северна Македонија" ( „123rd Session of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia") (16 February 2020)
247. -- „Предлог на одлуката за избор на Народен правобранител" ("Draft Decision on the Election of the Ombudsman") (25 January 2021)<<https://sobranie.mk/materialdetails.nspix?materialId=9956e741-8df8-44fc-9329-beb5b023>> .
248. -- „Предлог на Законот за изменување на Законот за аудио и аудиовизуелни медиумски услуги, по скратена постапка" ("Draft-law Amending the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, shortened procedure") (26 January 2021) <[https://www.sobranie.mk/materialdetails.nspix?materialId=e28f3e3f-e788-46ba-a44b-2c9dee7a8589&fbclid=IwAR0ySy-7\\_ssARMwO\\_itcg16spJhCe22ymOx22Smwc23yWDNW4j1XJ4BdMwQ](https://www.sobranie.mk/materialdetails.nspix?materialId=e28f3e3f-e788-46ba-a44b-2c9dee7a8589&fbclid=IwAR0ySy-7_ssARMwO_itcg16spJhCe22ymOx22Smwc23yWDNW4j1XJ4BdMwQ)> accessed 29 April 2021.
249. -- „Предлог-одлука за распишување оглас за избор на Народен правобранител" ("Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, "Draft-decision to publish an announcement for the election of the Ombudsman") (26 November 2021)<<https://sobranie.mk/materialdetails.nspix?>
250. Protocol Amending the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with Regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (10 October 2018) <<https://rm.coe.int/16808ac918>> accessed 23 April 2021

251. Совет на јавни обвинители, „Годишен извештај за работата на Советот на јавни обвинители на Република Северна Македонија за 2020 година“ (Council of Public Prosecutors, “Annual Report on the Work of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia) (2021) <<http://sjorm.gov.mk/%d0%b3%d0%be%d0%b4%d0%b8%d1%88%d0%b5%d0%bd-%d0%b8%d0%b7%d0%b2%d0%b5%d1%88%d1%82%d0%b0%d1%98/>>.
252. —, „Етички кодекс на јавните обвинители во Република Северна Македонија“ (20 мај 2021) (Code of Ethics of Public Prosecutors in the Republic of North Macedonia) (20 May 2021) <<https://zjorm.org.mk/news/%d0%b5%d1%82%d0%b8%d1%87%d0%ba%d0%b8-%d0%ba%d0%be%d0%b4%d0%b5%d0%ba%d1%81-%d0%bd%d0%b0-%d1%98%d0%b0%d0%b2%d0%bd%d0%b8%d1%82%d0%b5-%d0%be%d0%b1%d0%b2%d0%b8%d0%bd%d0%b8%d1%82%d0%b5%d0%bb%d0%b8-%d0%b2/>”> accessed 9 September 2021.
253. —, „Интернет-страница – Закони и подзаконски акти“ (“Website – Laws and bylaws) <<http://sjorm.gov.mk/%d0%b7%d0%b0%d0%ba%d0%be%d0%bd%d0%b8-%d0%b8-%d0%bf%d0%be%d0%b4%d0%b7%d0%b0%d0%ba%d0%be%d0%bd%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%b8-%d0%b0%d0%ba%d1%82%d0%b8/>”>Bylaws”.</http:>
254. —, Совет на јавни обвинители (scouncil of Public Prosecutors <<http://sjorm.gov.mk/>>
255. Советот на јавните обвинители на Република Северна Македонија, „Записник од 21. седница на Советот на јавните обвинители на Република Северна Македонија“ (Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, “Minutes of the 21st session of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia.”). (12 February 2021) <<http://sjorm.gov.mk/%d0%b7%d0%b0%d0%bf%d0%b8%d1%81%d0%bd%d0%b8%d0%ba-2/>”>.</http:>
256. „Стратегија за реформа на правосудниот сектор 2017-2022 со Акциски план“ (Министерство за правда, 2017) ( «Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 with Action Plan» (Ministry of Justice, 2017)).
257. Судски портал на Република Северна Македонија, Судски совет на РСМ (Judicial Portal of the Republic of North Macedonia, Judicial Council of the RNM) <[http://sud.mk/wps/portal/ssrm/sud/!ut/p/z1/hY49D4lwFEV\\_iwOj7eOrVrcuYtSeiYhvMUBqIaGUQLXx31tHEw13u7nnJc iLSkO1bNTe3MUPW-X5HdWJYkwE9wzKcgyjygm0P-6goYnpZAtDP8CcCvI9LyJFiV2viGk2A8DBO44izNikSvmHh56EY6pgrip08y0I05DH5462147wLIADnHFHGqF6SxugAfimtmS0tvOk66hLWWL-cWK3eVbdaWg!!/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/](http://sud.mk/wps/portal/ssrm/sud/!ut/p/z1/hY49D4lwFEV_iwOj7eOrVrcuYtSeiYhvMUBqIaGUQLXx31tHEw13u7nnJc iLSkO1bNTe3MUPW-X5HdWJYkwE9wzKcgyjygm0P-6goYnpZAtDP8CcCvI9LyJFiV2viGk2A8DBO44izNikSvmHh56EY6pgrip08y0I05DH5462147wLIADnHFHGqF6SxugAfimtmS0tvOk66hLWWL-cWK3eVbdaWg!!/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/)>.
258. Судски совет, „Врз основа на сумирањето и утврдувањето на резултатите од гласањето за избор на член на Судски совет на Република Северна Македонија од редот на судиите од апелациското подрачје Битола, избрана е Мери Радевска, судија на Основниот суд Битола“ Judicial Council, («Based on the summing up and determination of the voting results for the election of a member of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia from the ranks of judges from the appellate area of Bitola, Meri Radevska, Judge of the Basic Court Bitola was elected») (27 August 2020 )<<https://urlzs.com/d6eyh>> .
259. Судски совет на Република Северна Македонија, „Правилникот за начинот на рангирање на кандидатите за избор на судија во повисок суд“ (Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia, «Regulation on the manner of ranking candidates for election of a judge in a higher court») (4 February 2020) <[http://sud.mk/wps/wcm/connect/ssrm/c7213a55-036c-4a1f-88ff-3f52ab8290d2/Pravilnik+%D0%B7%D0%B0+%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%87%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%82+%D0%BD%D0%B0+%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B3%D0%B8%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%9A%D0%B5+%D0%BD%D0%B0+%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%B4%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5+%D0%B7%D0%B0+%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%80+%D0%BD%D0%B0+%D1%81%D1%83%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0+%D0%B2%D0%BE+%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%BA+%D1%81%D1%83%D0%B4.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE.Z18\\_L8CC1J41L0B520APQFKICD0CR4-c7213a55-036c-4a1f-88ff-3f52ab8290d2-kZargVy](http://sud.mk/wps/wcm/connect/ssrm/c7213a55-036c-4a1f-88ff-3f52ab8290d2/Pravilnik+%D0%B7%D0%B0+%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%87%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%82+%D0%BD%D0%B0+%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B3%D0%B8%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%9A%D0%B5+%D0%BD%D0%B0+%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%B4%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5+%D0%B7%D0%B0+%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%80+%D0%BD%D0%B0+%D1%81%D1%83%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0+%D0%B2%D0%BE+%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%BA+%D1%81%D1%83%D0%B4.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE.Z18_L8CC1J41L0B520APQFKICD0CR4-c7213a55-036c-4a1f-88ff-3f52ab8290d2-kZargVy)>.
260. —, „Соопштение за јавност“ (“Press Release”) (20 October 2020)<<https://urlzs.com/Hgt-jN>> accessed 9 September 2021
261. —, „Годишен извештај за работата на Судскиот совет на Република Северна Македонија за 2020 година“ (“Annual Report on the Work of the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia for 2020”) (2021)<[shorturl.at/ikJP3](http://shorturl.at/ikJP3)>

262. —, „Соопштение од 369. седница на Судскиот совет на РСМ – 12.04.2021 година“ (“Press-release from the 369th session of the Judicial Council of RNM - April 12, 2021”) (April 12, 2021)<shorturl.at/jA169>
263. —, „Соопштение од 369. седница на Судскиот совет на РСМ – 12.04.2021 година“ (“Press-release from the 369th session of the Judicial Council of RNM - April 12, 2021”) (22 April 2021)<shorturl.at/jA169>
264. —, „Судски совет на Република Северна Македонија – Претседател“ (“Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia - President”)<https://urlzs.com/Xh1aZ>
265. Судско-медиумски совет, интернет-страница“ (“Judicial-Media Council – Website) <https://sudskomedijski.mk/=“
266. Тамара Дичоска, „Апелација ја потврди пресудата за ‘Рекет’: 9 години затвор за Боки, 7 за Јанева“, (Tamara Dichoska, “Appeal upholds verdict for ‘Racket’: 9 years in prison for Boki, 7 for Janeva”) (24.mk, 21 July 2021 <https://24.mk/details/apelacija-ja-potvrdi-presudata-za-reket-9-godini-zatvor-za-boki-7-za-janeva>.
267. Телма, „Надлежните бараат начин за намалување на бројот на затвореници“ (5 декември 2020), Telma, (“The authorities are looking for a way to reduce the number of prisoners”) (5 December 2020) <https://telma.com.mk/2020/12/05/надлежните-бараат-начин-за-намалување-н/> accessed 22 April 2021.
268. —, „Најмалку тројца криминалци ги користеле лажните македонски пасоши и на скопскиот аеродром и Дево Баир“ (“At least three criminals used fake Macedonian passports at the Skopje airport and Deve Bair”) (13 April 2021) <https://telma.com.mk/2021/04/13/најмалку-тројца-криминалци-ги-корист/> accessed 23 April 2021.
269. —, „Намалена казната за екс судијата Владимир Панчевски на две и пол години затвор“ (“Reduced sentence for ex-judge Vladimir Pancevski to two and a half years in prison”) (28 September 2021) <https://telma.com.mk/2021/09/28/%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%B0%D0%B-%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%B5%D0%BA%D1%81-%D1%81%D1%83%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0-%D0%B2%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B4/>.
270. Adopted by GRECO at its 80th plenary session, “Fourth Round of Evaluation - Prevention of Corruption in relation to MPs, Judges and Prosecutors, Second Compliance Report, Republic of Macedonia” (2018)<https://rm.coe.int/-80-18-22-/16808cc861> .
271. Уставен суд на Република Северна Македонија, „Одлука У. бр. 115/2019“ (Constitutional Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, „Decision U. no. 115/2019“)<http://ustavensud.mk/?p=18839> accessed 29 March 2021.
272. Уставен суд на Република Северна Македонија, „Решение У. бр. 32/2020“ (7 октомври 2020) (Constitutional Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, “Decision U. no. 32/2020) (7 October 2020)<http://ustavensud.mk/?p=19911> accessed 20 April 2021
273. Фактор.мк, „Ленче Ристовска била многу млада за да работи како виш јавен обвинител“ (“Lence Ristovska is allegedly too young to work as a senior public prosecutor”) (April 2021) <https://faktor.mk/lenche-ristovska-bila-mnogu-mlada-za-da-raboti-kaj-ruskovska>.
274. —, „Платите на судиите ќе се зголемат за 15 отсто до 2022 година“ Платите на судиите ќе се зголемат за 15 отсто до 2022 година“ («Judges’ salaries will increase by 15% by 2022») (14 June 2021) <https://fokus.mk/platite-na-sudiite-ke-se-zgolemat-za-15-otsto-do-2022-godina/>.
275. —, „Васка Бајрамовска Мустафа уште осум години ќе биде заменик народен правобранител – Зибери ја достави листата со кандидати до Собранието“ (“Vaska Bajramovska Mustafa will be the Deputy Ombudsman for another eight years - Ziberi submitted the list of candidates to the Parliament”) <https://faktor.mk/vaska-bajramovska-mustafa-ush-te-osum-godini-kje-bide-zamenik-naroden-pravobranitel---ziberi-ja-dostavi-listata-so-kandidati-do-sobranieto> accessed 1 October 2021.
276. Фокус.мк, „Антикорупциска утврди дека Иџет Мемети предложил заменик кој не ги исполнувал условите од редовите на ‘рамковните’“ (Fokus.mk, “SCPC found that Ixhet Memeti proposed a deputy who did not meet the requirements”) ( 28 October 2020) <https://fokus.mk/antikoruptionska-utvr-di-deka-idhet-memeti-predlozhil-zamenik-koj-ne-gi-ispolnuval-uslovite-od-redovite-na-ramkovnite/> .

277. Ружица Фотиновска, „ДКСК отвори предмет за набавката на софтвер од Драги Рашковски“, Rušica Fotinovska, (“SCPC opened a case for the procurement of software by Dragi Rasskovski”) (24.mk, 10 March 2021) <<https://www.24.mk/details/dksk-otvori-predmet-za-nabavkata-na-softver-od-dragi-rashkovski-1>>.
278. Хаџи-Зафиров Ж и други, „Анализа на примената и спроведувањето на Стратегијата за реформа на правосудниот сектор (2017-2022) за 2020 година“ (2021), (Hadzi-Zafirov Z. et al., Analysis of the Application and Implementation of the Strategy for Reform of the Judicial Sector (2017-2022) for 2021) <<http://blueprint.org.mk/2021/04/21/%d0%b8%d0%b7%d0%b2%d0%b5%d1%88%d1%82%d0%b0%d1%98-%d0%b7%d0%b0-%d1%81%d0%bf%d1%80%d0%be%d0%b2%d0%b5%d0%b4%d1%83%d0%b2%d0%b0%d1%9a%d0%b5-%d0%bd%d0%b0-%d1%81%d1%82%d1%80%d0%b0%d1%82%d0%b5%d0%b3%d0%b8/>> accessed 3 July 2021.
279. Хелсиншки комитет за човекови права на Република Македонија, „Годишен извештај за мониторинг на говорот на омраза на локално ниво во градовите Тетово, Битола и Штип“ (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia, “Annual report on monitoring of hate speech at the local level in the cities of Tetovo, Bitola and Stip”) <<https://mhc.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/godishen-izveshtaj-za-monitoring-na-govor-na-omraza-na-lokalno-nivo-2020.pdf>> accessed 8 May 2021.
280. —, „Здравствената криза не смее да се претвори во меѓуетничка“ (“The health crisis must not turn into an interethnic one”) (July 8, 2020)<<https://mhc.org.mk/news/zdravstvenata-kriza-ne-smee-da-se-pretvori-vo-meguetnichka/>> accessed May 8, 2021.
281. —, „Месечен извештај за човековите права во Република Северна Македонија – јули 2020“ „Месечен извештај за човековите права во Република Северна Македонија – јули 2020“ (“Monthly Report on Human Rights in the Republic of North Macedonia - July 2020”) (7 August 2020) <<https://mhc.org.mk/reports/mesechen-izveshtaj-za-chovekovite-prava-vo-republika-severna-makedonija-juli-2020/>> accessed 6 May 2021.
282. —, „Хелсиншки и Аваја реагираат на нов случај на полициска бруталност кон Роми во Битола“ (“Helsinki Committee and Avaja reacted to a new case of police brutality against Roma in Bitola”) (21 October 2020) <<https://mhc.org.mk/media/helsinshki-i-avaja-reagiraat-na-nov-sluchaj-na-policziska-brutalnost-kon-romi-vo-bitola/>> accessed 22 April 2021.
283. —, „Кривични дела поврзани со тортура, нехумано и нечовечко постапување сторени од страна на лица со полициски овластувања и припадници на затворската полиција за период јануари 2019 – октомври 2020 година“ (“Criminal acts related to torture, inhuman and cruel treatment committed by persons with police powers and prison police officers for the period January 2019 - October 2020”) (2021).<<https://mhc.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/mk.pdf>> accessed 2 April 2021.
284. —, „Прв извештај за состојбата и условите во казнено-поправните и воспитно-поправните установи во Република Северна Македонија – 1 август – 1 октомври 2020“ (“First Report on the situation and conditions in the penitentiary and correctional institutions in the Republic of North Macedonia - August 1 - October 1, 2020”) <<https://mhc.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/izvestaj-helsinski-popravni-domovi-mk.pdf>> accessed 22 April 2021.
285. Хера, „Кривична пријава против здружението ‘Од нас за нас’: Ширењето лаги и поттикнувањето омраза и дискриминација е неприфатливо и мора да се санкционира“ (Hera: “Criminal lawsuit against the Association ‘From us to us’: Spreading lies and inciting hatred and discrimination is unacceptable and must be sanctioned”) (25 March 2021)<<https://hera.org.mk/krivichna-prijava-protiv-zdruzenieto-od-nas-za-nas/>> accessed 8 August 2021.
286. Центар за истражување и креирање политики (ЦИКП), „Справување со КОВИД-19: како трошењето на јавните пари влијае на родовата еднаквост“ Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM), (“Tackling KOVID-19: How Spending Public Money Affects Gender Equality”) (2021) <<https://gbwn.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Fiskalna-Analiza-final-2.pdf>> accessed 15 May 2021
287. Центар за правни истражувања и анализи, „Финансиската независност на судството“ (Center for Legal Research and Analysis, “Financial Independence of the Judiciary”).



288. Цоневска И и др., „Извештај во сенка за Поглавје 23 за периодот јуни 2018 – март 2019 година“ (2019), „Извештај во сенка за Поглавјето 23 за периодот јуни 2018 – март 2019 година“ (2019), (Iva Conevska et al., “Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the period June 2018 - March 2019”) (2019).
289. Цоневска И и Камбери И, „Процена на влијанието на регулативата на Законот за судови“ (Институт за европска политика – Скопје 2018) (Институт за европска политика – Скопје 2018), (Conevska I and Kamberi I, “Assessment of the impact of the regulation of the Law on courts” (European Policy Institute - Skopje 2018)
290. Чаловска Н и др., „Правосудството и темелните права во Република Македонија“ (Хелсиншки комитет за човекови права на Република Македонија, 2015), (Chalovska N et al., “Judiciary and Fundamental Rights in the Republic of Macedonia”) (Хелсиншки комитет за човекови права на Република Македонија, 2015) <[https://epi.org.mk/docs/Analiza\\_Mreza.pdf](https://epi.org.mk/docs/Analiza_Mreza.pdf)>. <[https://epi.org.mk/docs/Analiza\\_Mreza.pdf](https://epi.org.mk/docs/Analiza_Mreza.pdf)>
291. Чаловска Н, Стојановски В и Јовановски А, „Извештај во сенка за Поглавје 23 за периодот од јули 2015 до април 2016 година“ (Хелсиншки комитет за човекови права на Република Македонија, 2016) (Chalovska N, Stojanovski V and Jovanovski A, “Shadow Report for Chapter 23 for the period from July 2015 to April 2016” (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia, 2016) <[https://epi.org.mk/docs/Izvestaj\\_mk.pdf](https://epi.org.mk/docs/Izvestaj_mk.pdf)>.
292. Шикова Н (уред.), „Методологија за мониторинг и евалуација на јавните политики од Поглавјето 23 – правосудство и фундаментални права од законодавството на Европската унија“ (Центар за управување со промени) (Shikova N (ed.), «Methodology for monitoring and evaluation of public policies from Chapter 23 - Judiciary and fundamental rights from the legislation of the European Union» ) (Centre for Change Management) <[https://epi.org.mk/docs/Metodologija\\_mk.pdf](https://epi.org.mk/docs/Metodologija_mk.pdf)>.
293. „Службен весник на Република Македонија“, бр. 230/2020 од 24.09.2020; Јавен оглас за прием во почетна обука во академијата за судии и јавни обвинители „Павел Шатов“ Скопје, ( “Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia”, no. 230/2020 dated 24.09.2020; Public announcement for admission to initial training at the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors “Pavel Shatev” Skopje.)
294. Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 42/2020; Law on Public Prosecution.
295. Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 42/2020, Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of Macedonia.
296. Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 95/2019; The Law amending and supplementing the Law on Courts 2019.
297. Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 102/2019, Law on the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia 2019.
298. “Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia”, no. 150 dated 18.11.2010; Law on Criminal Procedure.
299. “Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia” and “Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia”; Law on Electronic Management and Electronic Services
300. “Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia”; Rules of Procedure of the Council of Public Prosecutors 2021 (No. 118/2021)
301. Law on Amendments to the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (“Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia”, No. 247/18 of 31.12.2018)
302. Law on Abortion (“Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia”, No. 101/19)).
303. Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination) (“Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia”, No. 258/20).
304. Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women (“Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia”, No. 24/2021)).
305. Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interests (“Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia”, No. 12, 19 January 2019).

306. Програма за поддршка за печатење и дистрибуција на печатените медиуми за 2020 година („Службен весник на РСМ“, бр. 287/2020 од 02.12.2020), (Program for support for printing and distribution of print media for 2020 (“Official Gazette of RNM”, No. 287/2020 from 02.12.2020)).
307. Information and communication technology strategy in the judiciary for 2019-2024 (revised strategy) 2019.
308. ‘Strategy for the Judicial Sector Reform 2017-2022 With Action Plan’ (n 18).
309. Уредба со законска сила за дополнување на Уредбата со законска сила за формирање фонд за помош и поддршка за справување со кризата предизвикана од коронавирусот COVID-19 („Службен весник на Република Северна Македонија“, бр. 139/2020). (Decree with legal force to supplement the Decree with legal force for establishing a fund for assistance and support for addressing the crisis caused by the coronavirus COVID-19 (“Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia”, no. 139/2020).
310. Уредба со законска сила за примената на Законот за извршување на санкциите за време на вонредна состојба 2020 („Службен весник на Република Северна Македонија“, бр. 95/20), ( Decree with legal force on the application of the Law on Execution of Sanctions during a State of Emergency (“Official Gazette”, No. 95/20).
311. Уредба со законска сила за субвенционирање на придонеси од задолжително социјално осигурување за вработени во медиумите („Службен весник на Република Северна Македонија“, бр. 156/2020). (Decree with legal force for subsidizing the contributions from the obligatory social insurance for employees in the media (“Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia”, no. 156/2020)).



