

# POLITICAL THOUGHT

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YEAR 23, NUMBER 70, MAY, SKOPJE 2025

# 70

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YEARS

KONRAD ADENAUER FOUNDATION



# POLITICAL THOUGHT

YEAR 23, No 70, MAY, SKOPJE 2025



KONRAD  
ADENAUER  
STIFTUNG



70

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25 YEARS

KONRAD ADENAUER FOUNDATION

INTRODUCTION

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Daniel Braun  
Sandra Koljackova

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# PLATFORM FOR DEMOCRATIC DIALOGUE AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

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POLITICAL THOUGHT

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Dear Readers,

You are holding the 70th issue of Political Thought, that covers political and social topics. A valuable jubilee for a periodical in the Macedonian space, whose content has been visible worldwide via the internet for 23 years. The idea for Political Thought was born in the city restaurant „Pelister“ back in 2003, in a typically Macedonian fashion of making agreements, as the esteemed professor and later President of the Republic of Macedonia, Dr. Gjorge Ivanov, likes to say. The goal was to make a serious attempt to systematize knowledge about the development of political thought in Macedonian society.

Although the idea was born in a restaurant in true Macedonian style, the execution and detailed preparation of each issue have been carried out with German precision and efficiency by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, in close cooperation with the Institute for Democracy “Societas Civilis”-Skopje and the publishing house NIK List, later known as Love is the Fifth Element. Since its founding, Political Thought has continually adapted to the evolving demands of the time, responding to contemporary challenges while maintaining its intellectual rigor. From being primarily a print publication with no color accompanied by a digital version, it has transitioned into a digital colorful magazine that also maintains a printed edition. From a journal with specific sections such as portraits, reviews, and interviews, available only to the Macedonian readers, it has grown into an academic journal with an international editorial board, published in both Macedonian and English, open to the region and the world.

Content has evolved in parallel with format. Numerous authors who first contributed to Political Thought as students now publish as academics and professors, growing alongside the journal while continuing to create space for emerging voices. This intergenerational dynamic represents one of the journal's core strengths: it remains open to new contributors while simultaneously serving as a respected platform for established scholars in Macedonian political thought. Over the years statesmen, professors, experts, and artists from various socio-political spheres have always gladly accepted our invitation to publish their work in Political Thought.

However, the interest of authors would be in vain if it weren't for the loyal readership, which has been the main reason for the magazine's survival over the past 23 years.

In this commemorative issue, you'll find a range of compelling content. President Dr. Gjorge Ivanov offers an insightful reflection on the period and the state of Macedonian society at the time when the idea for Political Thought was born. His narrative is

complemented by the perspective of Andreas Klein, both a German and a Macedonian by connection, offering a unique dual viewpoint.

Professors Naumovski and Spasenovski—alumni of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation’s scholarship network and long-standing collaborators—reflect on the role of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, often referred to as the “silent partner of democracy,” in preserving Adenauer’s legacy in the Balkans. Marko Troshanovski, through his depiction of the longstanding and fruitful cooperation between IDSCS and KAS, presents a comprehensive overview of the Foundation’s activities both within the country and the broader region. Minister Andonovski, writing from an academic standpoint, addresses the constitutional and legal aspects of the Dayton Agreement and the Foundation’s role in shaping and supporting the democratic political development of Balkan societies.

We sincerely hope that Political Thought will continue to serve as a platform that accommodates diverse perspectives, following Adenauer’s maxim: “If two people always have the same opinion, they are of no use.” For democracy is, at its core, a confrontation of differing viewpoints—and it is only in politics, as a dialogue among free individuals, that the self-discovery of each and every person is made possible.

Yours,

Daniel Braun

official representative of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation  
in the Republic of North Macedonia and

Sandra Koljackova,

program manager at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation

## SHORT BIOGRAPHY



### **Prof. d-r Gjorge Ivanov**

President of the Republic of Macedonia (2009–2019). Until 2009, he was a professor of Political Theories and Political Philosophy in the Department of Political Science at the Faculty of Law – “Iustinianus Primus” at the “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” University in Skopje.

Полемика

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Gjorge Ivanov

# HOW THE JOURNAL "POLITICAL THOUGHT" WAS CREATED

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POLITICAL THOUGHT

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In 1999, marking the 10th anniversary of the “fall of the Berlin Wall,” a group of intellectuals and students, including myself, established the Institute for Democracy, Solidarity and Civil Society – IDSCS, which was later rebranded as the Institute for Democracy “Societas Civilis” Skopje – IDSCS. The Institute aimed to fill a gap that had emerged during Macedonia’s transition to democracy. Its mission was to research, analyze, and document the democratic transition. It also sought to create a space for public dialogue and practical training for the top students from the Political Studies program at the “Justinian I” Law Faculty. In a short time, the Institute became a partner to many international organizations and foundations that were present in Macedonia at the time.

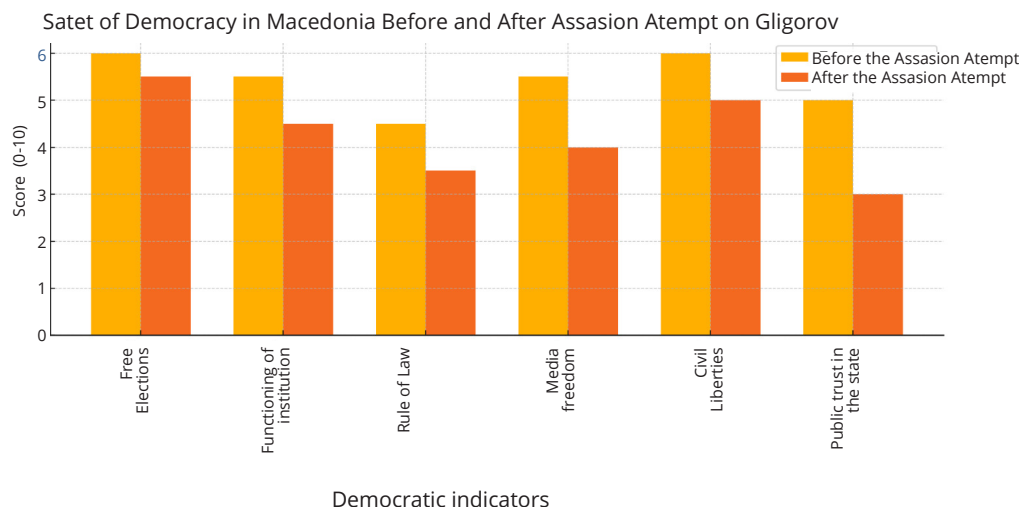
According to the research and analyses conducted by the Institute at the time, during the first decade—when three electoral cycles had taken place—democracy in Macedonia existed formally, but in practice it was overshadowed by corruption. Democracy lacked strong institutional capacity, there were ethnic conflicts in neighboring countries that posed a threat to Macedonia, and the entire region was experiencing a period of economic insecurity. Public opinion research carried out by the Institute indicated that citizens’ trust in state institutions in Macedonia was generally low, which is typical for transitional societies. The reasons cited for this included economic insecurity, high unemployment, corruption, and the weak efficiency of institutions.

The comparative analyses conducted by the Institute on similar transitions to democracy indicated both certain similarities and specific features unique to Macedonia. As Adam Michnik observed, in post-totalitarian societies, when the new system inherits the infrastructure of the old regime without a thorough transformation, this does not lead to restoration but to a “gangrene” of the new system. This diagnosis was particularly fitting for Macedonia during its first transitional decade. Instead of an institutional break from the practices of one-party rule, the new elites inherited and continued the logic of party control over the public apparatus. Democratic institutions were formally established, but they were populated and managed with the same bureaucratic habits—which resulted in chronic distrust, dysfunctionality, and an imitation of pluralism without real competition or accountability.

Research on political culture indicated that the democratic transition in Macedonia was embraced with astonishing speed, but also with superficiality—a characteristic that could be described as the “Kundera complex.” The institutional and cultural patterns inherited from the one-party system were not dismantled, but rather recycled in a new form, which allowed the unbearable lightness of governing through clientelism, party patronage, and bureaucratic servility to remain the dominant practice.

Although the analyses showed that internal political and institutional weaknesses were decisive in eroding trust in democratic institutions, the role of external factors, which further complicated the process of democratic consolidation in Macedonia, cannot be overlooked. Regional instability—particularly the wars in the former Yugoslavia—created a continuous atmosphere of fear and political uncertainty, shifting the focus away from democratic development toward security concerns. Furthermore, international isolation caused by the name dispute with Greece, as well as the economic blockade of 1994–1995, diminished the state’s capacity to deliver results and maintain stability, further undermining the legitimacy of the new system. At the same time, the absence of a clear and imminent perspective for EU and NATO membership deprived the process of a crucial external incentive for reform and of the public’s hope in the democratic path.

A key moment highlighted in almost all analyses and interviews was the year 1995. At that time, in addition to all the mentioned circumstances and events, there was an assassination attempt on the President of the country. The assassination attempt on President Gligorov did not destroy the democracy—but it traumatized it. Macedonia retained the form of a democratic system, but trust was undermined. The investigative and security institutions remained weak. The political culture entered a defensive mode. That was the beginning of a process in which the form remained, but the substance of democracy was often lost. A textbook example of a pseudomorphosis.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Pseudomorphosis (from Greek: *ψευδής* – false and *μορφή* – form) is a mineralogical phenomenon in which one mineral retains the external shape of another mineral, but its chemical composition and internal crystalline structure are altered. The term has been adapted into the social and political sciences by the German historian Oswald Spengler, particularly in his work “*Der Untergang des Abendlandes*” (*The Decline of the West*). Spengler uses it to describe the formal adoption of Western institutions in non-Western societies, which in reality continue to function according to their own traditional logics and cultural matrices.

The period between the assassination attempt on President Kiro Gligorov in 1995 and the onset of the armed conflict in 2001 marked a critical phase in the development of the Macedonian democracy. Although the constitutional order was formally preserved, a quiet yet profound erosion of institutional culture and democratic standards was unfolding in the background. A central role in this process was played by the creation of the so-called “gray zone,”<sup>2</sup> supported by societal pathologies<sup>3</sup>, which together contributed to a deep mistrust in democracy and state institutions.

The judiciary, instead of serving as the last line of defense for justice and equality, became a symbol of selective justice. Court rulings were subject to political influence or economic interests, and corrupt judges lost their independence. For citizens, this meant one thing: the law does not apply equally to everyone—deeply undermining the very foundation of democracy: the rule of law.

The Parliament, although formally functional, witnessed party domination and the systematic marginalization of the opposition (from 1994 to 1998, it operated almost without an opposition). Laws were passed without substantive debate, often under pressure from the executive branch. This led to the weakening of the legislative branch's oversight function, effectively turning the Parliament into a rubber stamp for pre-made decisions.

The government became a field of clientelist networks, where the economic interests of affiliated businessmen and political parties took precedence. Informal centers of power, often hidden behind legal positions, controlled access to the budget, tenders, and concessions. The executive branch ceased to function as a service to the citizens and instead became a privatized instrument of the elites.

Instead of protecting the public interest, a large portion of the media became involved in market manipulation and editorial dictates by political-business networks. The space for criticism narrowed, and independent journalism was marginalized. As a result, the public was not receiving objective information but rather spin and political spectacle.

The police and security services were often misused for surveillance of political opponents instead of for protecting public order. Parallel networks of surveillance

2 The term “gray zone” is used to describe the space between the formal legal system and informal, parallel structures—including illegal economies (smuggling, money laundering), secret services and inherited structures from UDBA (The Yugoslavian Directorate for State Security) and KOS (Yugoslavian Counterintelligence service), para-political and paramilitary networks, clientelism, and politically controlled public resources, as well as selective justice.

3 This concept encompasses cultural and psychological deviations that become normalized: cynicism toward institutions, apathy among citizens, the belief that “nothing depends on me,” the normalization of corruption, bribery, party-based employment, and the stigmatization of activism and criticism.

and influence emerged, beyond institutional control. Citizens began to perceive these bodies not as protectors, but as potential threats.

In the public administration, employment was dominated by party connections, which led to a loss of professionalism and trust. Institutions became inert, inefficient, and failed to fulfil their functions. The average citizen became a hostage of administrative apparatuses controlled by parties, instead of a subject with rights and access to services.

All this created a society in which the form of democracy existed, but its essence was lost. Citizens increasingly saw democracy as a game for the powerful, rather than a system that protects them. Distrust became systemic, and the legitimacy of the state fragile.

This weakness was one of the key preconditions for the 2001 conflict: when institutions fail to offer legal solutions and protection, alternative centers of power emerge—including armed groups.

The grey zone did not destroy Macedonia through violence—but through the subtle internal decay of institutions. Democracy, stripped of its core values, remained in form but not in substance. Only through deconstructing these pathologies and rebuilding institutional culture could a stable and legitimate system be developed after 2001.

In the second decade of transition (2001–2011), Macedonia faced challenges in stabilizing and developing democracy after the 2001 armed conflict. International organizations and observers provided numerous recommendations for strengthening democratic institutions and the rule of law. IDSCS was actively involved in many of these activities—through public forums, training for new MPs from nearly all parties, public opinion research, and the School for Democracy...

According to the UNDP National Human Development Report from 2001, which included a survey conducted in December 2000 on a representative sample of 1,199 respondents, trust in institutions was as follows: the highest trust was in the Army and the Church, perceived as stable and above daily political influences. The lowest trust was in political parties, the judiciary, and the police, which were perceived as corrupt and inefficient.

These results were identical to the public opinion research conducted by IDSCS during that period.

Macedonia faced enormous challenges in stabilizing and developing democracy after the 2001 armed conflict. The Ohrid Framework Agreement, signed in August 2001, was crucial for ending the conflict and laying the foundation for a multiethnic democracy. The international community, including the EU, USA, and OSCE, insisted on the full implementation of the agreement. Organizations such as Freedom House and Amnesty International pointed to the need for judicial reform, increased transparency, and the fight against corruption. Although progress was made, issues such as political influence over the judiciary and impunity remained. International observers expressed concern about media freedom, particularly due to political pressure and constraints on journalists. Freedom House rated the media environment as “partly free,” emphasizing the need for greater independence and professionalism in the media sector.

The EU played a key role in the post-conflict period, providing financial and technical assistance for implementing the Ohrid Agreement and public administration reforms. It also actively monitored elections and supported the European integration process. The USA, through USAID and other programs, provided significant support for reforms in the judiciary, education, and economic development. The USA was also active in supporting the security sector and fighting organized crime. NATO conducted operations such as “Amber Fox” and “Allied Harmony” to stabilize the security situation and support the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement. These missions were essential in maintaining peace and preventing new conflict.

Major political parties, such as VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM, played a significant role in the political process. Although there were periods of cooperation, political tensions and distrust often dominated, affecting institutional stability. NGOs and civil initiatives were active in promoting human rights, transparency, and citizen participation in democratic processes. However, they often faced limitations and insufficient institutional support. President Boris Trajkovski played a key role in the post-conflict period, promoting dialogue and reconciliation among ethnic communities. His commitment to implementing the Ohrid Agreement and to Euro-Atlantic integration was recognized by the international community.

Macedonia took significant steps toward stabilization and democratic development, but challenges remained in terms of rule of law, media freedom, and political culture. The international community continued to play an important role in supporting reforms and the country's integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.

After the 2001 armed conflict, Macedonia entered a new phase of democratic transition. The international community, as mentioned, played a crucial role in stabilizing the political system, and among the most influential actors were the German

political foundations. The Friedrich Ebert Foundation (since 1996) and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (since 2000) through their offices in Skopje, carried out a series of activities that contributed to the development of democratic culture, institutional stability, and bringing Macedonia closer to the European Union.

IDSCS was actively involved in the activities of FES, particularly in projects aimed at building democratic political culture through seminars, training, and youth leadership education, trainings for political management. Through the regional office in Sofia, which covered Bulgaria and Macedonia, it collaborated with the Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung in promoting liberal democracy, rule of law, media freedom, and innovation through education, political dialogue, and public policy support.

In 2002, IDSCS and the Department of Political Science organized a public forum at the "Justinian I" Law Faculty in Skopje. For the first time, all German political foundations active in Macedonia attended the event together. They discussed past experiences, joint projects, and future cooperation prospects. After the event, Sandra introduced me to Andreas, the director of KAS, and they requested a joint meeting. As is customary in the Balkans, we met on the terrace of the city restaurant Pelister. Andreas introduced me to KAS's previous work and expressed a desire for cooperation with IDSCS, similar to what IDSCS already had with the other German political foundations. The meeting ended with an agreement to establish a KAS political academy that would promote Christian Democratic ideas and projects, as well as create a journal that would academically cover topics promoted by KAS. We scheduled a second meeting at the KAS office to design and develop the idea for the journal. At that meeting, we agreed on the name, design, format, content, and concept of the journal. We reached a consensus on a list of topics that would be the main theme of future issues. The introduction to the main theme would alternate—one time written by me, the next by Andreas.

We sent invitations for collaboration to respected authors from the country and abroad and began publishing the journal in March 2003. Everything else is now history, documented and archived in 70 issues of the journal *Political Thought*.

## SHORT BIOGRAPHY



### **Andreas Klein**

studied Political Science, Modern History, and Ibero-Romance Philology at the University of Bonn, as well as Intercultural Communication at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland. Since 2000, Andreas Klein has been working for the Konrad Adenauer Foundation both in Germany and abroad; among other roles, he headed the KAS country offices in Skopje, Macedonia, and Riga, Latvia, as well as the educational forums in Düsseldorf and Hamburg. From 2016 to 2022, he led the country office in Chile. Since June 2022, Klein has been responsible for the Regional Programme Political Dialogue Asia, based in Singapore.

Полемика

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Andreas Klein

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# BEGINNINGS OF THE KONRAD-ADENAUER- STIFTUNG IN MACEDONIA

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POLITICAL THOUGHT

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When I first traveled to Macedonia in the late summer of 1999, there were still two competing Macedonian airlines, smoking was still allowed in the back section of the aircraft, the president was Kiro Gligorov, and the country was officially named the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). The dissolution of Yugoslavia, which culminated in the wars on that territory from 1991 to 1995, had only occurred a few years earlier. The most recent war over Kosovo within fragmented Yugoslavia, between March 1998 and June 1999, cast a dark shadow over the region.

In the summer of 1999, I was assisting CDU mayoral candidate Helmut Stahl during his municipal election campaign in Bonn when I received a call from a CDU member friend. They were looking for a political scientist for a short-term assignment in the (former Yugoslav) Republic of Macedonia from September to November to draft a study on the social forces shaping the small Balkan republic. The background of the assignment was the ongoing presidential election campaign, where—following the departure of the founding father of the independent Republic of Macedonia, Kiro Gligorov—a generational and political shift was on the horizon. The client was the office for the coordination of German aid in Macedonia, referred to simply as the “Office Kolbow” after Walter Kolbow, the special envoy at the Federal Ministry of Defense.

One day after the municipal election in North Rhine-Westphalia on September 13, 1999, I boarded an Avioimpex flight from Düsseldorf to Skopje. I spent my first nights at Hotel Continental, located right next to the Skopje Fair. At that time, like much of the city, the hotel was still imbued with the socialist charm of the disintegrated Yugoslavia. I was relieved when I later moved into an apartment on ulica Mile Popjordanov, from where I began my work.

Every day, with the assistance of Marija, the translator provided by the Office Kolbow, I visited various civil society organizations, including think tanks, women’s organizations, church institutions, and political parties. During one of these encounters, I met the presidential candidate of the national-conservative party VMRO-DPMNE, Boris Trajkovski, along with some of his young party members. In the following weeks, I frequently visited the party headquarters and was invited to accompany the candidate and campaign management to various events across the country. Over the next few weeks, I received a crash course in Macedonian history, politics, and culture. I gathered plenty of material for my research, which I submitted to the Office Kolbow promptly at the end of my stay. On top, I got to know the country and its people in a wonderfully intense way and made lifelong friends.

After two months, my first assignment in Macedonia came to an end in mid-November. With many great memories and the firm intention that this would not be my last visit to the Balkans, I returned to Bonn. This wish came true much sooner than I had expected.

Two fateful encounters during my brief stay in Macedonia proved decisive for my later professional and personal path. One was the intensive time spent with presidential candidate Boris Trajkovski, who at the time of his candidacy was the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of his country. The other was my meeting with Josef Gruber, then director of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation's country office for Bulgaria and Macedonia, based in Sofia.

Josef Gruber traveled to Macedonia several times a year from Sofia to maintain contacts with project partners and better assess the local political developments. During one of these visits, I was introduced to him as a short-term expert from the Office Kolbow. Mr. Gruber explained that the German political foundations were planning to expand their project work in the countries of the former Yugoslavia as part of the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe, initiated by German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer. Up until that time, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation only had a regional office in Sarajevo since 1997, with further offices in Zagreb, Podgorica, and Skopje in the planning stages.

My two months of field studies in Macedonia, proved helpful when I applied for the newly advertised position as a country representative of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation based in Skopje. My application was certainly boosted by the fact that I was a scholarship holder of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation during my political science studies at University of Bonn. I was offered the job starting February 1, 2000.

After a three-month preparation period at the foundation's headquarters—then located in Sankt Augustin near Bonn—I departed for Southeast Europe on May 2. My luggage contained only slightly more than during my first trip eight months earlier, with the significant difference that this time, I did not carry a return ticket.

My assignment initially began with two weeks of orientation under my colleague Josef Gruber in Sofia. The short but intense training with this experienced KAS country director was pivotal for me as a young professional and has continued to influence me to this day. By mid-May, I arrived in Skopje and initially rented a room in a small family-run hotel at the foot of Mount Vodno. Later, I set up my "home base" in ulica Juri Gagarin.

## ESTABLISHING THE KAS OFFICE AND STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS IN MACEDONIA

I quickly reconnected with the contacts from my first stay, namely my translator Marija and driver, friend, and advisor Enver. Within a few weeks, I found three dedicated colleagues—Sandra, Ljupka, and Muna—later joined by Davor. Like me, they were young and eager, full of determination, willing to take risks, allowing themselves mistakes, while building a solid infrastructure with passion and dedication. Together, we initiated projects that, to this day, remain integral to the Konrad Adenauer Foundation's activities in Macedonia. This included strengthening ties with Boris Trajkovski, who was elected President of the Republic of Macedonia on November 14, 1999, as well as enhancing cooperation with VMRO-DPMNE, the EPP partner party.

Shortly after my arrival in Skopje in May/June 2000, having taken my first steps as a KAS country representative, I requested a meeting with President Boris Trajkovski, which was soon granted. I invited him to the official opening of the KAS office in Skopje on September 21, 2000, requesting that he deliver the keynote speech—which he gladly accepted. The opening ceremony at Hotel Aleksandar Palace was a resounding success. Dr. Peter Weilemann, head of International Cooperation at KAS, traveled from Sankt Augustin to Skopje for the event. From that moment, Macedonia was officially part of KAS's global network and KAS became an integral player in Macedonian public life—a true win-win situation.

Right from the start, our project work was based on four pillars:

1. Promoting young political leaders,
2. Strengthening local self-governance,
3. Aligning Macedonia with EU structures,
4. Enhancing social cohesion.

Although the objectives of our commitment have been fine-tuned in line with the changing framework conditions, the basic direction has not changed fundamentally.

Since 2000, Macedonia has undergone remarkable political and social developments. However, the armed conflict between insurgent groups and Macedonian security forces in 2001 marked a low point—an event I experienced firsthand. Through cooperation with the office of the late President Boris Trajkovski, KAS supported numerous initiatives aimed at bridging societal divides. Together with Prof. Gjorge Ivanov, who later became President of the Republic of Macedonia, we developed the concept of an

academy to promote and train young political talents. A great project that continues to identify outstanding young people and introduce them to politics to this day. This year, I was able to build a bridge between my current location in Singapore, from where I manage the Konrad Adenauer School for Young Politicians (KASYP) as the KAS Regional Representative for Asia, and Macedonia, when I welcomed two participants from the Political Academy in the 16th batch of the KASYP program in Kuala Lumpur. Although Macedonia must naturally look towards Europe due to its geography and limited resources alone, it is also worth broadening its horizons towards Asia, where it can learn a lot from the Asian tiger states, especially Singapore. Personally, I would like to expand this connection further.

The second long-lasting project that I have grown very fond of is the political magazine *Politicka Misl*, with which the KAS and the Institute for Democracy together with its authors have tried and continue to try to contribute to the political debate in Macedonia. Here, too, the central interest is to provide food for thought, to listen to each other and stimulate public debates. The fact that this medium is now celebrating its 23th birthday, too, fills me with pride.

## THE EUROPEAN PATH FOR NORTH MACEDONIA

Then as now, I firmly believe that North Macedonia's European path is the only way to ensure lasting stability for the country and the region while leading it into a prosperous future. Back then, KAS supported projects that fostered sustainable European integration in collaboration with e.g. Radmila Šekerinska, who was Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration at the time and is now Deputy Secretary General of NATO, or later with her successor in office, Dr. Vasko Naumovski, who has closely accompanied KAS since its beginnings in Macedonia. Other important partners included the Center for European Integration Studies (ZEI) at the University of Bonn, where several future Macedonian political decision-makers received part of their European education with KAS scholarships. Another key partner was the Institute for International Education CIVIC in Düsseldorf, which over the past 25 years has introduced multiple generations of Macedonian students to the fundamentals of European values. Additionally, exchange programs between Macedonian and Greek students in the Ohrid region and Thessaloniki helped foster cross-cultural understanding, historical reflection, and mutual appreciation between the two neighboring nations. Moreover, among the most memorable projects were our partnership with the South East European University (SEEU) in Tetovo, and our close cooperation with the European Movement.

One of the most significant and challenging political decisions in the nation's history was resolving the name dispute with Greece in 2019, when the country officially became the Republic of North Macedonia. This paved the way for NATO membership in 2020, strengthening geopolitical security and fostering economic and strategic collaboration with Western states. At the same time, North Macedonia remains committed to joining the European Union, having carried out numerous reforms since its EU candidacy in 2005 to advance its accession process. Aligning with European economic structures and adapting legal and administrative standards continue to be core government priorities. Economically, the country has made progress. Privatization of state enterprises, foreign investment promotion, and infrastructure development have driven growth. Still, many challenges remain. The exodus of young people - then as now - is just one of them. However, North Macedonia continues to demonstrate remarkable adaptability and a clear commitment to progress.

Through all of this, I believe the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung has played an valuable role. On a personal level, my experiences during my four-year stay in Skopje shaped my life profoundly. From day one, the people of Macedonia welcomed me and KAS with open arms and hearts. I sincerely hope that I was able to give back a small part of that openness through honest work.

I am filled with gratitude. It was an honor.



## SHORT BIOGRAPHY



### **Dr. Vasko Naumovski**

is a Professor of International Relations and Diplomacy at the Faculty of Law, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University - Skopje. He is teaching courses related to the areas of International Relations, European Integration and Diplomacy, and is Head of the Doctoral Studies Program of International Relations. He did his BA, MA and PhD at the same University, and has an MA from the University of Bonn, Germany. Naumovski has served as Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Macedonia for European Integration (2009-2011), National IPA Coordinator (2009-2011), and Ambassador of the Republic of Macedonia to the United States of America (2014-2018).

Полемика

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Vasko Naumovski

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# PRESERVING ADENAUER'S LEGACY IN THE BALKANS

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POLITICAL THOUGHT

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The socio-political development of the Macedonian state since its independence in 1991 encompasses numerous processes that have shaped it within the context of democratization, economic stabilization, modernization, and reforms required for its Europeanization. The bilateral support that the country receives and has received on this path from European Union member states has been a significant segment of its growth, with the support from the Federal Republic of Germany standing out across various levels and areas. The transformations that marked the 1990s aimed to prepare the state for a new phase in its historical development, particularly in regard to institutional reforms, the emergence of political parties based on new ideologies, the modernization of the education system, the creation of the civil sector, media independence, and several other areas.

Among the many entities that aimed to support these processes, there is no doubt that the Konrad Adenauer Foundation managed to establish itself as a unique actor in Macedonian society, affirming its contribution over the past quarter-century. As the foreign foundation office with the longest continuous presence in the country, its contribution is reflected in many spheres. The promotion of Christian-democratic values in the political arena, support for political entities belonging to the center-right family, building and maintaining bridges with German political parties as well as European political associations, and especially political education, stand out as exceptionally successful projects of the Foundation.

There is virtually no successful right-wing political figure who has not participated in a training organized by the Foundation. This essentially means that the results of the work of multiple generations of MPs, ministers, mayors, ambassadors, directors, and party officials are, among other things, the result of the knowledge and experience gained through the Political Academy, seminars, or specialized trainings offered by the Foundation.

The collaboration with multiple government compositions, especially those led by the right, also enabled the Foundation to directly contribute to government policies and projects—mostly focused on the process of European integration and regional cooperation. By leveraging its networks in governmental institutions, the academic community, civil society, and the media, it successfully opens public debates on issues related to the reforms necessary for EU membership, as well as the overall development of the state. My personal experiences collaborating with the Foundation, as Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs, were evident in the support we received for institutional strengthening, legislative reform, bilateral cooperation, and collaboration with European institutions.

Among many successful projects, the scholarship program for university students in the country and abroad stands out, through which a group of individuals has emerged who are exceptionally successful in their professions and contribute significantly to society. Having had the honor of being the Foundation's first scholarship recipient for my undergraduate studies in Skopje, and later for postgraduate studies in Bonn, Germany, I can confidently state that the opportunity provided by the Foundation to specialize in the field of European integration played an irreplaceable role in my academic and political career.

Belonging to the Foundation's community of scholarship holders remains, to this day, an opportunity to network with individuals who take part in decision-making processes in the country and the region. This

underscores the Foundation's role in shaping new generations of national and regional leaders, prepared to bear the responsibility of Europeanizing the Western Balkans.

The Foundation's long-standing activity also allows it to track the development of individuals it identified as potential future leaders during their student years. This means that former scholarship students and seminar participants now often serve as lecturers at later seminars and trainings. I am pleased that, within the framework of the Foundation's cooperation with numerous domestic and international entities, I have the opportunity to share my experiences with younger generations of scholarship holders, students, and civil society activists—complementing the educational role of the Foundation not only among political actors but also within society at large.

The support that professors and students receive through the Foundation's programs is also evident in its extremely productive publishing activity, which includes the release of numerous university textbooks, professional publications, and academic journals—enriching academic literature within the scholarly community. As a unique contribution, the university textbooks published by the Foundation are free for all students, which is likely a singular example—in both scope and continuity—of such support for future academics.

As the Foundation marks 25 years since opening its office in Skopje, its credibility is clearly recognized by state institutions, political parties, universities, NGOs, media outlets, the diplomatic corps, and the business community. The standards set by the Foundation's work over the past years are rarely matched by similar entities—thanks in part to the consistency of its ideology, sound judgment in channeling support, a sincere approach, and the professionalism of its Skopje office team.

The ideas of the great German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer shaped post-war Germany, laid the foundations for European integration, and—through preserving his legacy—the Foundation bearing his name contributes to the realization of the project of a united continent, political cooperation, stability, and economic development. By building our state and region and bringing them closer to European standards, we are essentially fulfilling Adenauer's vision of a fully united Europe. Despite all challenges, the Foundation's unwavering commitment to his vision serves as encouragement for new generations of Balkan citizens who aspire to Europeanize their countries.

In analyzing the current political and security challenges facing Europe, let us recall some of Adenauer's words, spoken nearly 70 years ago: "If we do not react, development that we Europeans cannot influence simply passes us by. In my opinion, we Europeans feel far too secure. The political and economic dominance of Europe, which at the beginning of this century was still undisputed, has long since disappeared. Will European culture retain its leading position? I don't believe so, unless we defend it and adapt it to new circumstances, because—as history shows—cultures, too, are at risk."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Speech by Konrad Adenauer at the Grandes Conférences Catholiques, Brussels, September 26, 1956, cited in: Adenauer, K. *Europe Must Unite*, Bonn: Press and Information Office of the Federal Government, 1956.

## SHORT BIOGRAPHY



### **Marko Troshanovski**

is President of the Institute for Democracy, Macedonian think tank based in Skopje. He holds BA in political science and MA in Political communication from the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje, North Macedonia. He is Fulbright alumni at the University of Kansas, USA and PhD exchange visiting research fellow at the University of Groningen, Netherlands. He is also an Alumni of the ACYPL program of the State department and former member of the Strategic council of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia. His main field of expertise is political communication and public opinion research. In recent years his work is managing program activities that deal with Good governance, Berlin Process and EU enlargement challenges in Western Balkan. Husband and father of three, passionate about nature, agriculture and music.

Полемика

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Marko Troshanovski

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# DEMOCRATIC PARTNERSHIP: THE LONGSTANDING AND FRUITFUL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY AND THE KONRAD ADENAUER FOUNDATION

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POLITICAL THOUGHT

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In the development of Macedonia's democratic environment, the partnership between the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" – Skopje (IDSCS) and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) stands as an example of consistent commitment to democratic development, European integration, and civic engagement. Since the beginning of our cooperation in 2003, IDSCS and KAS have developed numerous initiatives and projects aimed at strengthening democratic institutions, promoting European integration, emancipating the Macedonian political debate, fostering interreligious tolerance, and many more. In determining the themes for cooperation, we have always been guided by the strategic interests of Macedonia, as well as the specificities and needs of the local political context, along with broader foreign policy developments. We have respected and recognized each other through the goodwill, purposefulness, professionalism, and expertise of our work. Konrad Adenauer is one of the most active and influential political foundations in the country, and it is a great honor for us to count it among our strategic partners. The cooperation is marked by a wide range of formats — from survey research, training sessions, joint political analyses and publications, to conferences and projects, including advocacy activities both domestically and internationally. And in 23 years, there have certainly been quite a lot of them.

## **POLITICAL THOUGHT**

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Perhaps the most prominent and enduring hallmark of our cooperation is Political Thought—the only publication in the country that addresses both the expert and general political public, and which has persisted over the past 23 years. This year, we had the honor of publishing the 70th issue of the magazine, which we are particularly passionate about, given its contribution to enriching political debate through an intellectual, contemporary, and scientific expression—refined by an international editorial board and offered by our esteemed authors. It was founded in 2003 by the then directors of IDSCS (Prof. Dr. Gjorgje Ivanov) and KAS (Andreas Klein), and we are proud to state that it still endures in 2025, defying all the challenges in Macedonian society.

## **ELECTORAL TRANSPARENCY AND DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION**

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One of the pillars of the IDSCS-KAS partnership is our joint commitment to promoting transparent and informative electoral processes. Since 2013, we have published comprehensive guides for every election cycle—presidential, parliamentary, and local elections—along with supporting electoral documentation. This unique resource,

available at [izbornaarhiva.mk](http://izbornaarhiva.mk), contains detailed analyses of the electoral system, candidate profiles, campaign dynamics, and post-election assessments, structured and accessible in a way unlike any other. The publications serve as useful tools for voters, analysts, international observers, media, and political scientists.

## THE LARGEST PUBLIC OPINION TRENDS DATABASE ON EUROPEAN INTEGRATION IN THE COUNTRY

Since 2014, we have continuously conducted annual comprehensive public opinion research on a nationally representative sample to analyze citizens' views on key issues related to North Macedonia's integration into the European Union (EU). The research includes recurring questions that allow tracking the development of public perception and identifying trends within the context of current political events and challenges. Special attention is given to the credibility of the EU, evaluation of undertaken obligations and reform processes necessary for continuing the negotiation process, citizens' identification with the EU, and more. The research also covers issues related to the country's economic priorities and citizens' perceptions of major global geopolitical actors and their influence in the region. The collected data allows for in-depth and comparative analysis of changes in public opinion over the years, as well as valuable insights into current public attitudes on the most relevant societal and political issues. To gain a more robust and nuanced picture, the analysis of each question is further examined through parameters such as political orientation and ethnic affiliation. This analytical approach not only explains dominant narratives in public discourse but also enables more precise definitions of citizens' priorities and expectations regarding the country's European future. Thus, the research results serve as a useful tool for policymakers, civil society organizations, and the international community involved in the processes of reform, democratization, and North Macedonia's integration into the European family.

Together with the KAS office in Athens and the Greek think tank ELIAMEP, we also conducted research in both countries on public perceptions (Macedonian and Greek) of the benefits of the Prespa Agreement, three years after its signing.

## POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL DIALOGUE

In addition to research and electoral initiatives, IDSCS and KAS engage in policy development and fostering regional dialogue. On several occasions, we have co-organized

the Macedonian-German Forum, covering topics related to the European perspective, economic challenges for Macedonia in Europe resulting from digital transition and the green agenda—especially in the area of decarbonization, a process affecting both German investors in the country and our entire economic sector, which still relies on costly and harmful energy sources. The forum brings together politicians, business leaders, and experts to discuss strategies for economic resilience and cooperation.

The partnership also supports projects such as „Strengthening Civil and Business Ownership in the Berlin Process and the National Reform Agenda of North Macedonia“ and „Aligning a Dialogue Platform for Better Implementation of Bilateral Agreements with Greece and Bulgaria.“ These initiatives enable constructive dialogue, transparency, and regional stability, which are essential for the country's European outlook.

We jointly monitor and aim to contribute to ongoing European debates on (re)creating enlargement policies, and annually publish several works on the topic. For example, in 2024, together with KAS and the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies in Brussels, we organized a debate on new ideas and tools for deepening the integration of Western Balkan countries into the EU—even before formal membership—addressing various aspects of the “phasing-in” concept, its possible applications within the EU's institutional framework, and proposals for its practical implementation—particularly through economic integration, rule of law advancement, and inclusion in the work of European agencies. Through this publishing activity, we aim to present concrete policy development recommendations to policymakers and decision-makers. Together, we strive to increase the participation of Western Balkan countries in EU institutions and offer ideas for easing the transition to membership through enhanced cooperation and alignment with European standards. In 2021, we organized a conference in Ljubljana, during Slovenia's EU Presidency, together with the local KAS office, promoting the new European financial framework 2021–2027 and the opportunities it offers for Macedonia. In these joint efforts—especially toward encouraging the country's European commitment—we organized events with the presence of influential German politicians, such as the then German Minister of Defense and now President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen; CDU MP Doris Pack; Marion Walsmann, Member of the European Parliament and Vice-Chair of the EU–North Macedonia Joint Parliamentary Committee Delegation; and many other long-time supporters of the Western Balkans' European integration.

## POLITICAL DIALOGUE

Inter-party political dialogue should not be viewed solely as a tool for resolving political crises but as an essential component of a healthy democratic process. It should go beyond the scope of political parties and include civil society actors, creating broader social spaces for engagement and cooperation. Although political dialogue is often activated in response to conflict, its true value lies in its ability to build trust and reduce tensions. Continuous efforts must be made to cultivate spaces for dialogue—in the media, institutions such as the Parliament, and through informal civil society initiatives—to foster long-term collaboration and better governance.

In North Macedonia, political dialogue is mainly conducted at the highest level through leaders' meetings, but healthy communication channels and a culture of dialogue between politicians and the broader societal spectrum remain underdeveloped. Political communication is often hostile, inflammatory, and toxic. It polarizes society and pits citizens against each other, undermining social cohesion and the sense of public good and shared interest. Therefore, together with KAS, we prepared a book simply titled "Political Dialogue" as our contribution to changing the political communication culture—one that should embrace dialogue and cooperation as equally important as political competition. Ultimately, the quality of political dialogue depends on human capital and the willingness of interlocutors to engage constructively—not just to reach agreements but also to ensure their consistent implementation and create lasting change.

## CAPACITY BUILDING OF SOCIAL STAKEHOLDERS

We have organized countless workshops and trainings with political parties and their youth wings on a wide range of topics and skills aimed at building a quality political offer, a necessary precondition for a functioning democracy. Although the level of intra-party democracy and integrity in many political parties leaves much room for improvement.

In 2011, we contributed to promoting religious dialogue in Macedonia through a joint project for capacity building among media and religious representatives. The project "Tolerance, Dialogue, and Cooperation" was supported by the European Commission and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, and jointly implemented by the KAS office in Skopje and the Institute. We worked to raise awareness and advance religious tolerance, mutual acceptance, and understanding of different religious beliefs in North Macedonia. By promoting freedom of expression, interfaith dialogue, and religious

pluralism, the project made a concrete contribution to strengthening democratic values and social cohesion in the country. Trainings and joint workshops were held for journalists and spokespersons from religious communities to improve the quality of media coverage of religious issues and strengthen the public communication capacities of religious institutions. The project also included field research across the country on religious attitudes and a media campaign promoting positive examples of interfaith cooperation.

The above is just a small illustration of the fruitful collaboration between IDSCS and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. Thus, I can confidently summarize that this partnership stands as a successful model of cooperation dedicated to advancing democracy, transparency, and the European integration of North Macedonia. Our joint efforts in electoral education, research, policy development, and capacity building have significantly contributed to the democratic consolidation of the country, and I am certain that our continued collaboration will play a vital role in shaping an informed, engaged, and democratically mature society.



## SHORT BIOGRAPHY



### **Aleksandar Spasenovski, PhD**

is a full professor at the Department of Constitutional Law and Political System at the Faculty of Law “Justinian I,” part of the “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” University. His primary areas of interest include political parties, interest groups, and contemporary political systems. Spasenovski earned his doctoral degree with a dissertation focused on the constitutional and legal status of religions and freedom of religion.

Полемика

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Aleksandar Spasenovski

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# THE QUIET PARTNERS OF DEMOCRACY: THE ROLE OF KAS IN THE PROCESS OF POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION

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POLITICAL THOUGHT

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## INTRODUCTION

In countries where institutions are still in the process of consolidation and civil society faces constant challenges, the presence of political foundations holds significance that goes beyond individual projects, trainings, or strategic documents. They represent an investment in people, in values, and in the culture of democratic action.

In the German context, political foundations are a unique form of institutional engagement. Founded by parliamentary parties, yet organizationally and financially independent, they combine political education, support for democracy, international cooperation, and capacity building.

In countries like North Macedonia, these foundations have been present for more than three decades. Each has its own profile, but their common denominator is their commitment to building stable institutions, promoting democratic practices, and supporting European values.

This text focuses on the role of one of them, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS), and through that example, it explores the broader function political foundations play in the processes of political transformation and the cultivation of democratic culture.

## 1. THE PLACE OF FOUNDATIONS IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM OF THE STATE

In democratic systems — especially those still maturing institutionally — political foundations represent a distinct type of actor: they are not political parties, nor are they institutions of state power, but they are almost always present where values are built, capacities are developed, and public spaces for dialogue are opened. In countries like ours, where political transition unfolds in parallel with state-building, such foundations have the potential to be influential agents of democratic stabilization.

In the German model, political foundations are created by parliamentary parties but operate institutionally and financially autonomously. Their core mission includes political education, support for democracy, international cooperation, and development. Through their offices, they operate worldwide, including in countries with fragile democracies, helping to build institutions, political culture, and the rule of law.

The legal basis for the existence of political foundations is the Law on Associations and Foundations. Article 38 of this act explicitly allows the operation of foreign foundations

through the registration of offices or branches. The law provides that their activities must be non-profit, transparent, and independent of party and electoral activities. Simultaneously, Article 14 permits their active participation in public life through initiatives, promotion of viewpoints, and engagement in public debates—making them legitimate actors in the process of policy creation and public opinion formation. Additionally, the law foresees the possibility for these entities to obtain the status of organizations of public interest, provided they meet certain criteria, such as long-term activity in areas like democracy development, education, human rights, support for marginalized groups, and more. Although not formally binding for action, this status strengthens the legitimacy and accountability of foundations in relation to state institutions and the public.

In that legal and political context, the work of foundations like KAS gains special significance, as it represents a long-term engagement focused on raising democratic culture, building institutional relationships, encouraging younger generations, and promoting public dialogue in societies where that has not always been the norm.

## 2. THE QUIET PARTNERS OF DEMOCRACY: THE ROLE OF KAS IN THE PROCESS OF POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION

At the turn of the 20th to the 21st century, the Balkans loudly reminded the world that the “end” of history had not yet arrived. This territory, where nations, ideologies, and interests are tightly interwoven, entered one of the most turbulent and distressing periods of its modern existence. The disintegration of Yugoslavia—once portrayed as a symbol of brotherhood and unity among the South Slavic peoples—laid bare deep divisions, unspoken frustrations, and accumulated conflicts. The bloodshed in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina left deep scars, while Kosovo became a field of prolonged instability and uncertainty.

In that unpredictable and often dark context, Macedonia sought its path: quietly but resolutely, building institutions and pursuing its own stability. Independence, though achieved without armed conflict, was soon pressured by crises, interethnic tensions, and emerging challenges.

It was precisely in those moments—when democracy was still an ideal to be learned and Europe seemed both distant and unreachable—that the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) began its mission in Macedonia. KAS brought with it a specific value system centered on fostering political moderation, strengthening ideas of European

and Euro-Atlantic integration, and nurturing a sense of historical responsibility. In a society still awakening from post-communist authoritarian amnesia, these values were not merely theoretical declarations—they were practical tools meant to accelerate and shape the social transformation underway.

The early years of KAS's presence were marked by intensive activities targeting young generations, facilitating the opening of paths toward European and Euro-Atlantic perspectives, and creating platforms to strengthen a culture of public debate in a society where this was not yet established practice. One of the foundation's first initiatives in Macedonia was a scholarship program for young students. This program was not just financial support, it was an introduction to a new culture of valuing personal potential, responsibility, and intellectual curiosity. The author of this paper was part of the first generation of KAS scholarship recipients, an experience that, along with peers from that time, left a lasting imprint on personal, professional, and civic development. Further, expert meetings, courses, seminars, and study visits were not just standard activities but acts of collective encouragement. In a society where distrust in institutions was the norm, KAS aimed to create greater spaces of trust, dialogue, and cooperation beyond daily politics.

At the beginning of the new millennium, when Macedonia faced one of its deepest internal crises—the armed conflict of 2001—and the historic need to reassess and deepen its concept of a civic state, KAS played a quiet but essential role in promoting dialogue and mutual understanding. Through ongoing encouragement of cooperation among political actors, civil society organizations, and media, the Foundation promoted values and mechanisms for peacefully resolving differences and building sustainable coexistence. Many of these processes, though not always visible to the public, had a more lasting impact than some of the era's most prominent political moves.

With the European Union's 2005 decision to grant Macedonia candidate status, a new chapter in the state's international relations began. This was not just symbolic recognition but also confirmation that reforms—despite obstacles—were moving in the right direction. Politically, candidate status meant encouragement but also a commitment to deep institutional transformation. The 2008 visa liberalization gave the process a concrete, tangible dimension. However, the real path to the EU—institutional, administrative, and cultural—remained and still remains significantly more complex. During these years, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation played a crucial role in supporting these processes. Through consistent investment in the development of the capacities of the legislative and executive branches, organizing study visits, training, and experience exchanges, KAS contributed to the creation of a more efficient

and transparent parliamentary culture. By supporting the building of relationships with German and European politicians, the Foundation served as a living bridge between the Macedonian political scene and European decision-making centers. Particularly significant was the Foundation's contribution in transferring values and practices from the German federal system—a model based on the division of responsibilities, dialogue, and respect for institutional balance.

At the same time, the Foundation quietly but dedicatedly rooted itself in the academic sphere. Through support for university publications, textbooks, scientific conferences, and academic programs, KAS stimulated what was often missing in countries undergoing democratic consolidation: the development of a stable, informed, and critical intellectual environment. In this sense, students did not merely receive materials, but perspectives. Of particular importance was the publication of the journal *Political Thought*, founded by KAS in 2003. From its first issue, this journal introduced a new level of political thought in Macedonia: a forum for ideas, reasoned debate, and patient explanation of the complexities of democracy. Covering themes from political theory and the rule of law to human rights, foreign policy, economy, and interethnic relations, the journal has become a stable reference point in public debate, with clear potential to celebrate many more anniversaries.

Another noteworthy area of KAS's work is its engagement with religious freedom and the relationship between the state and religious communities. By creating platforms for open dialogue among religious representatives, intellectuals, legal experts, and institutions, KAS contributed to building a culture of mutual respect and understanding in a society where religion is not merely a private belief, but a significant identity symbol.

Equally important is KAS's support for projects that, while not always at the center of public attention, are vital to the quality of democracy and citizens' lives. Through initiatives for environmental protection, youth activities, cross-border regional cooperation, and the strengthening of local self-government, the Foundation has remained true to its original mission: to reinforce the democratic fabric of society.

Today, as Europe faces new tests—with wars on its borders, energy crises, eroding democracies, and rising authoritarian narratives, the values championed by KAS are more important than ever. The future, though uncertain, will undoubtedly be shaped by unfolding events. In that future, the role of foundations like KAS is critical. For many of us who matured alongside democratic processes in Macedonia and with KAS, this foundation is not just a partner—it is a part of our personal and professional development. We believe that, as long as we remain healthy and active, both

individually and as a community, we will continue to withstand the challenges of the times. We believe that both the state and Europe will renew their capacity for growth and recovery, and that the winds of optimism from the early years of independence—when the foundations of KAS in Macedonia were laid—will once again sweep through our country, through Germany, and through Europe, bringing new energy, deeper patience, and a stronger awareness of what truly matters.

## CONCLUSION

The contribution of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation to today's North Macedonia cannot be measured by a simple enumeration of events, documents, or projects. It is measured in ideas that continue to live, in relationships that endure, and in a society's capacity to defend its democratic path even in the most difficult moments.

The work of KAS is not only a part of our institutional history—it is a part of our democratic maturity. And if we agree that the future truly belongs to those who are willing to shape it with patience and vision, then the role of the Foundation is not just important—it is essential. Because democratic values are quiet by nature but enduring when there is someone capable of carrying them forward with success.



## SHORT BIOGRAPHY



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is currently a Minister of Digital Transformation in the Macedonian government. He holds a Master of Arts in International Relations and International Economics from the Johns Hopkins University (SAIS). Currently a doctoral candidate in law, Stefan has written opinion editorials and articles for domestic and international outlets, focusing on the area of international mediation and negotiations, as well as reforms in post-conflict political systems. Prior to being appointed as Minister of Digital Transformation, he was Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Information Society and Administration. His primary focus is providing efficient, accessible, and corruption-free government services to citizens and companies.

Изворна научна статија

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Stefan Andonovski

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# CONSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS OF THE DAYTON PEACE AGREEMENT AND THE ROLE OF THE KONRAD ADENAUER STIFTUNG IN THE REGION

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POLITICAL THOUGHT

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## INTRODUCTION

The anniversary of the proactive functioning of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Macedonian and Balkan societies coincides with the year of the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement. The Agreement, as well as the role of the KAS, are a strong example of the intertwining of international law, peace law and constitutional law.

The years-long bloody war on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the lack of engagement by international forces in addressing the violence, ethnic cleansing, and genocide—and the subsequent “freezing” of the conflict—prompted hundreds of scholars and practitioners to analyse all aspects of the conflict, its management, the achievement of peace, and the consequences of the peace agreement that was eventually concluded. Numerous authors analyse the goals that were set in resolving the conflict. Widner, in this regard, identifies three sets of ambitions. The first set implies the durability of the agreement, followed by a reduction in violence and increased civic participation, which allows the institutionalization of the conflict. The third ambition emphasizes the importance of the self-enforcement of the agreement in the future.<sup>1</sup> In the analysis of the constitutional-legal aspects of peace agreements, the Dayton Peace Agreement is perhaps the most powerful example of the intertwining of international, peace, and constitutional law. The agreement’s text and its annexes serve as a source of constitutional law in Bosnia and Herzegovina today.

This paper analyses the turbulent historical developments following the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina that led to the Dayton Peace Agreement, its key constitutional elements, and their effects. The argument of this paper is that the Dayton Peace Agreement has not fully met the standards for implementing its constitutional provisions—neither formally nor substantively—nor in terms of conflict transformation. The existence of a fundamental ambivalence between the separatist and integrative elements of the agreement makes the Dayton Peace Agreement a form of provisional military agreement rather than a final and comprehensive peace accord.

Although it succeeded in its primary goal as a peace agreement—to end the violence—the authors of the Dayton Agreement, lacking full awareness of the socio-political context of the country, did not foresee a unified political outcome for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Accordingly, the political system created by Dayton rendered the government institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including numerous ministries

<sup>1</sup> J Widner, “Constitution Writing in Post-conflict Settings: An Overview”, *49 Wm. & Mary L. Rev.* 1513, 2008.

and various public bodies, inefficient and unsustainable. The dominance of the ethno-nationalist perspective envisioned by Dayton lacked inclusivity of minorities. Simply put, the imposed standards for democratization only ensured Bosnia and Herzegovina's dependence on its international actors on the ground.

On February 29, 1992, Bosnia and Herzegovina declared its independence. However, the Bosnian Serbs (supported by Yugoslav President Slobodan Milošević), who made up about 30% of the population, demanded a separate independent Serb state, which was later named Republika Srpska. On the other hand, the Bosnian Croats, supported by the Croatian authorities, had territorial claims in the west of Bosnia and Herzegovina, forming a small quasi-state called Herzeg-Bosnia. The state of Bosnia and Herzegovina had its own government, predominantly composed of Bosniaks (at the time most often referred to as "Muslims"), led by Alija Izetbegović. The escalation of violence in the Bosnian war and the growing pressure for a strong international intervention reached its peak with "the largest genocide in Europe since World War II"—the Srebrenica massacre.<sup>2</sup> The gravity, intensity, and brutality of the conflict made it clear to the international community what escalation would mean if the international response remained weak and inconsistent. "The crimes that occurred influenced the public's sense of morality and triggered the urge to do something to stop these unprecedented atrocities."<sup>3</sup>

Several international efforts between 1992 and 1995 included: the first peace initiative known as the Cutileiro Peace Plan, introducing the idea of dividing Bosnia and Herzegovina into cantons; the Vance-Owen Plan (1993), proposing the division of Bosnia into ten provinces and granting Sarajevo a special status covering 5.54% of state territory; the Owen-Stoltenberg Plan (1993), which was based on the concept of three ethnic (constituent) republics and special statuses for Sarajevo and Mostar as divided cities; the Washington Agreement (1994), which created a Federation of Croats and Bosniaks divided into ten cantons; the Contact Group Plan (1994), which proposed the territorial division of Bosnia into the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina on one side and Republika Srpska with a majority Serb population on the other. However, apart from the agreement brokered by the United States that created the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1994 between Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) and Bosnian Croats, the war was largely seen as an issue for the European Union to resolve.

<sup>2</sup> S Leydesdorff, & Richardson, K. *Surviving the Bosnian Genocide*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. 2011: xii

<sup>3</sup> S Touval, "Coercive Mediation on the Road to Dayton" in *International Negotiation*. Hague, The Netherlands: Kluwer Law International. 1996: 554

Nonetheless, the war—which in just three years claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and left two million people displaced—was finally resolved during peace negotiations in Dayton, Ohio, under the auspices of the United States. These negotiations were complicated by numerous interconnected and dependent issues, including disputed territories, domestic and international political relations, the dilemma of peace versus justice, and the role of the international community in future action.

The agenda of the Dayton peace negotiations thus included: reaching a lasting comprehensive peace solution; mutual recognition of the three parties; lifting of sanctions; resolution of territorial issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the matter of Eastern Slavonia in Croatia; issues related to elections, constitutional provisions for future state governance, the presidency; prosecution of war criminals; and refugee issues. These clusters of issues clearly show that the search for a peace response to the war was never treated solely as a military matter. On the other hand, the idea behind clustering these issues was to simplify the structural complexity of the war, which was intended to help both the negotiating team and the warring parties gain a clear perspective on the issues at the table.

Richard Holbrooke, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs and the lead negotiator of the peace process, was aware that the issues of Kosovo and Brčko would have to be excluded from the agreement to avoid jeopardizing the negotiations. Although partnered with Carl Bildt (former Swedish Prime Minister and High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina), Holbrooke is rightly considered the “architect of Dayton.”<sup>4</sup> Bass analyzes Holbrooke’s approach as a “triage way of thinking,” prioritizing what is politically and diplomatically feasible—even if that means leaving core issues unresolved.<sup>5</sup> Long before the peace talks began, Holbrooke understood that the short, vague (and ultimately ignored) agreements mediated by his predecessors needed to be replaced with a comprehensive peace framework.<sup>6</sup> Still, this does not explain why the goals of the Dayton Agreement extended beyond halting bloodshed and military operations to include the constitutional arrangement of Bosnia and Herzegovina, democratization, human rights, and economic development. The dichotomy created between the high-level objectives and the formal text of the agreement—with limited engagement from all stakeholders in the negotiations and implementation—planted the seeds of Dayton’s failure to serve as a comprehensive solution to the Bosnian problem.

4 Radio Free Europe. “Richard Holbrooke, U.S. Diplomat And Architect Of Dayton Peace Accords, Dies At 69”, [http://www.rferl.org/content/richard\\_holbrooke\\_dies/2247460.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/richard_holbrooke_dies/2247460.html) accessed on January 6, 2025.

5 W Bass, “The triage of Dayton”, *Foreign Affairs*, 77(5), 1998: 95

6 R Holbrooke, *To End a War*. New York: Random House. 1998: 223

The paper also analyses the role of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS), as one of the most prominent international organizations that played a role in shaping, developing, and supporting the progress of democratization processes both in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the broader Balkan region. Thus, the Foundation's role can be considered a key factor in shaping and supporting the democratic political development of Balkan societies.

## THE STRUCTURE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE DAYTON PEACE AGREEMENT

The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also known as the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA), the Dayton Agreement, the Paris Protocol, or the Dayton–Paris Agreement, is a peace agreement reached at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio, United States, in November 1995, and officially signed two weeks later, in Paris, on December 14, 1995. It was signed by the Presidents of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegović; the Republic of Croatia, Franjo Tuđman; and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milošević. The agreement was also witnessed by the Special Negotiator of the European Union, as well as representatives of the French Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.

The Dayton Peace Agreement is widely considered a significant success of U.S. coercive diplomacy. In this context, among scholars and practitioners, there is a firm consensus that the Dayton Peace Agreement ended the bloodshed and secured the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina as an internationally recognized state.<sup>7</sup> Critics of the agreement, including those who today question certain aspects of it, nevertheless acknowledge the historical fact that the Agreement was the first such act in the three-year war that immediately stopped the fighting between the warring parties and effectively froze the military conflict upon its signing.

The core text of the Dayton Peace Agreement is what is referred to as the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This short text of eight articles confirms Bosnia and Herzegovina as a single sovereign state within its internationally recognized borders.

<sup>7</sup> Among others, "Coercive Mediation on the Road to Dayton" in *International Negotiation*. Hague, Clinton B, "Ending the Bosnian War: The Personal Story of the President of the United States" in *The Role of Intelligence and Political Leadership in Ending the Bosnian War*. 2013, D Curran, J Sebenius, K James, M Watkins, "Two Paths to Peace: Contrasting George Mitchell in Northern Ireland with Richard Holbrooke in Bosnia–Herzegovina". *Negotiation Journal*, 2004.

"In particular, the Parties shall fully respect the sovereign equality of one another, shall settle disputes by peaceful means, and shall refrain from any action, by threat or use of force or otherwise, against the territorial integrity or political independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina or any other State."<sup>8</sup>

Article 10 further establishes mutual recognition between the two states that had been at war:

"The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina recognize each other as sovereign independent States within their international borders."<sup>9</sup>

Some additional elements regulated directly by the core text include the formalization of a ceasefire between the warring parties, the withdrawal of military forces to agreed boundaries, and the demilitarization of certain zones. The Agreement also contains provisions enabling displaced persons and refugees to return to their homes and reclaim their property. Finally, the core text establishes international mechanisms for monitoring and implementing the Agreement, such as the Office of the High Representative, which is tasked with overseeing the civilian implementation of the Agreement, and implementation forces led by NATO (IFOR), responsible for enforcing its military aspects. In this regard, special bodies were also formed to ensure the implementation of the provisions agreed upon in Dayton.

"The Parties welcome and endorse the arrangements that have been made concerning the establishment of an arbitration tribunal, a Commission on Human Rights, a Commission on Refugees and Displaced Persons, a Commission to Preserve National Monuments, and Bosnia and Herzegovina Public Corporations."<sup>10</sup>

More significantly, throughout the entire core text, the Agreement refers to the annexes that follow it, which outline the essence of the peace agreement. Through these annexes, the Agreement includes commitments to adopt a constitution that guarantees fundamental human rights, defines the relationship between the central state and the two entities, and establishes principles of power-sharing to ensure representation of Bosnia and Herzegovina's three constituent peoples (Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs).

In this context, a particularly substantive aspect of the Agreement for the purposes of this analysis lies in the annexes, which form an integral part of the Agreement. These

<sup>8</sup> Article 1, Dayton Peace Agreement, <https://www.osce.org/bih/126173>, accessed on January 8, 2025

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Article 6, Ibid

annexes more significantly determine both the military and civilian aspects of the peace agreement, as well as other unique aspects specific to this case.

Therefore, it is important to note the annexes: Annex 1-A: Agreement on Military Aspects of the Peace Settlement; Annex 1-B: Agreement on Regional Stabilization; Annex 2: Agreement on Inter-Entity Boundary Line and Related Issues; Annex 3: Agreement on Elections; Annex 4: Constitution; Annex 5: Agreement on Arbitration; Annex 6: Agreement on Human Rights; Annex 7: Agreement on Refugees and Displaced Persons; Annex 8: Agreement on the Commission to Preserve National Monuments; Annex 9: Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina Public Corporations; Annex 10: Agreement on Civilian Implementation and Annex 11: Agreement on International Police Task Force

## THE ANNEXES OF THE DAYTON PEACE AGREEMENT AND ANNEX 4

A key aspect of the analysis in this paper is the fact that the negotiations in Dayton resulted in Annex 4 of the Peace Agreement, which serves as the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Never before in the history of peace studies and *Jus Post Bellum* has a peace agreement included a full constitution of an independent, sovereign state. Upon signing the Agreement, the Constitution became binding as an integral part of the internationally recognized peace agreement. It was neither debated nor voted on in the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina but was merely confirmed by the entities. This approach bypassed widely accepted democratic procedures for adopting a constitution, reflecting the extraordinary circumstances of the post-war environment and the need for immediate implementation. The very fact that the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina is part of a peace agreement among three warring parties—signed by two heads of other states and with the consent of the permanent members of the UN Security Council and a representative of the European Union—makes its provisions resistant to change, while the societal reality it creates is resistant to reform.

Annex 4 of the Agreement established legally binding mechanisms defining the structure of the state. Particularly significant for discussion are the elements in Annex 4 that relate to mechanisms for the division of power, the role of central government versus the rights and governance of the entities, and the inclusion of ethnic safeguard mechanisms.

One aspect that is highly significant for the state's future functioning is the mechanism for power-sharing and distribution of political authority among the warring parties.

The state is divided into two entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, itself subdivided into cantons (with Bosniak and/or Croat majorities), and Republika Srpska as a centralized entity (with an ethnic Serb majority). Each of these two entities has significant autonomy, including control over education, police, and economic policy.

Article 3 of the Annex regulates in detail the competencies of the central government versus those reserved for the entities. "The following matters are the responsibility of the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina: a. Foreign policy; b. Foreign trade policy; c. Customs policy; d. Monetary policy; e. Finances of the institutions and for the international obligations of Bosnia and Herzegovina; f. Immigration, refugee, and asylum policy and regulation; g. International and inter-Entity criminal law enforcement, including relations with Interpol; h. Establishment and operation of common and international communications facilities; i. Regulation of inter-Entity transportation; j. Air traffic control."<sup>11</sup> Additionally, the entities retain broad rights, particularly the right to establish special parallel relationships with neighbouring states, in accordance with the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Each entity also has its own administrative units, as well as legislative, executive, and judicial bodies (parliaments, governments, courts), its own financial sources, and its own economic and academic centres. Furthermore, the Agreement allowed for the operation of entity-level civil law enforcement agencies, agreements with states and international organizations with the consent of the Parliamentary Assembly and included a broad provision stating that "All governmental functions and powers not expressly assigned in this Constitution to the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall be those of the Entities."<sup>12</sup> As a result, Bosnia and Herzegovina has 14 governments and 14 parliaments, along with a massive public administration, leadership bodies, and overall public authority for just 3.7 million citizens.

Annex 4 also defines the tripartite presidency of the state. The three-member Presidency includes one representative from each constituent people (Bosniaks, Croats, Serbs). "The Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall consist of three Members: one Bosniak and one Croat, each directly elected from the territory of the Federation, and one Serb directly elected from the territory of the Republika Srpska."<sup>13</sup> This purely ethnic approach, as will be seen later, represents a clear example of ethnically based governance, in conflict with democratic principles in post-war Europe.

<sup>11</sup> Annex 4, Article 3, Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> Article 5, Ibid

Article 4 of the Annex also defines the existence of a bicameral Parliament, consisting of the House of Peoples and the House of Representatives. The House of Peoples consists of 15 delegates: two-thirds from the Federation (including five Croats and five Bosniaks) and one-third from Republika Srpska (five Serbs). The Constitution provides that the Croat and Bosniak delegates from the Federation shall be elected by the respective ethnic caucuses in the House of Peoples of the Federation. The delegates from Republika Srpska are elected by the National Assembly of Republika Srpska. The House of Representatives, as the second chamber of Parliament, consists of 42 members, of whom two-thirds are elected from the territory of the Federation and one-third from the territory of Republika Srpska, through direct elections.

Article 10 regulates potential amendments to the Constitution (Annex). Specifically, "This Constitution may be amended by a decision of the Parliamentary Assembly, including a two-thirds majority of those present and voting in the House of Representatives." However, "No amendment to this Constitution may eliminate or diminish any of the rights and freedoms referred to in Article II of this Constitution or alter the present paragraph."<sup>14</sup> Given the rigidity of the amendment provisions in the prevailing political context, it becomes clear why Bosnia and Herzegovina's Constitution has not undergone significant changes in the 30 years since its adoption.

In recent years, there have been many attempts at constitutional and political system reforms. The first attempt at constitutional amendments was prepared in late 2005 (promoted as the "April Package"), as the first initiative concerning constitutional changes led by local authorities under the supervision of the Office of the High Representative. Other similar attempts at constitutional reform, such as the Prud Process and the Butmir Package, were largely aimed at territorial reorganization of the country rather than at creating a functional European state. In more recent years, there have been a few minor amendments to the agreement, such as a new provision requiring state institutions to take on certain international obligations as part of EU accession, and provisions related to the legal status of Brčko.

It is also important to mention that the Dayton Peace Agreement includes extensive safeguard measures that allow ethnic groups to veto laws they consider harmful to their interests, often paralyzing the decision-making process.

In the context of the analysis of this paper, it is also important to mention Annexes 6 and 7 of the Dayton Peace Agreement. Annex 6 guarantees the protection of human rights, relying on international conventions, and specifically accepting the direct

<sup>14</sup> Article 10, Ibid

application of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) as a superior act to domestic law. One of the key elements of the Agreement itself is precisely this protection of human rights. The Annex states that the institutions shall ensure the highest level of internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms to all persons within their jurisdiction, as outlined in the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its protocols, as well as other international treaties listed in the Annex and the Agreement. Rightly, authors who early analyzed this aspect of the agreement concluded: "That the protection of human rights is a central focus of the Peace Agreement becomes evident upon reading the document: the term 'human rights' appears no fewer than seventy times."<sup>15</sup>

For its part, Annex 7 provides provisions and obligations for the return of refugees and displaced persons to their pre-war homes and the restitution of property.

## THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE DAYTON PEACE AGREEMENT

Some authors argue that the agreement itself demonstrates how legal frameworks are shaped by political compromise and diplomatic maneuvering.<sup>16</sup> However, the implications of the Dayton Peace Agreement are reflected in the fact that it set goals for democratization and state-building in a country devastated by a bloody war. This dichotomy between the "military" and "civilian" aspects of the agreement, although aimed at providing a comprehensive solution to a complex, violent conflict, has more often become an obstacle to the long-term stabilization and progress of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Or in the words of its "architect" – "On paper, Dayton was a good agreement; it ended the war and established a single, multi-ethnic country. But countless peace agreements have survived only in history books as case studies in failed expectations."<sup>17</sup>

If we analyze the Agreement, its achievements are primarily visible in its first aspect – ending the bloodshed and the war. This is what Daalder and Froman define as "halting active hostilities and establishing a framework for peace."<sup>18</sup> It is a fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina has been in a state of frozen peace since 1995. The fear of further loss of life among the warring sides, which was very strong even among international

<sup>15</sup> J Sloan, "The Dayton Peace Agreement: Human rights guarantees and their implementation", *European Journal of International Law*, 7(2), 1996: 208.

<sup>16</sup> D Chollet and B Freeman. *The Secret History of Dayton: U.S. Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process 1995*. National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 171, November 21, 2005.

<sup>17</sup> R Holbrooke, *To End a War*

<sup>18</sup> I.H. Daalder, and Froman, M.B. "Dayton's incomplete peace", *Foreign Affairs*, 78(6), 1999: 106

mediators, proved unfounded. Critical challenges such as the reunification of Sarajevo, demobilization and removal of military checkpoints, and securing the international border were successfully organized without military casualties.<sup>19</sup> Despite a small number of disputed areas, the boundary line between the entities was easily crossed within the first months after signing the agreement. People were encouraged to return, but there were signs of systematic intimidation and manipulation by nationalist parties, which hindered the process. A total of about 540,000 people, especially Bosniaks, received permanent residency in other countries during the war and never returned.

Thus, when the analysis moves into assessing the standards for implementation of the agreement in further state-building, it is clear that the Dayton architects lacked a societal vision or interest in the particularities of the Bosnian context and understanding of the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the interest of its citizens. The core issue lies in the fact that the Dayton Peace Agreement did not aim solely to be a treaty to end the war. Carl Bildt (the first High Representative of the UN in BiH) was clear that Dayton is “arguably the most ambitious peace agreement in modern history. It aims not only to end hostilities but also to reconstruct and democratize Bosnian society.”<sup>20</sup> In that goal, the DPA has continuously and fundamentally failed.

In terms of formal durability, the DPA did not foresee a single political outcome for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The existence of fundamental ambivalence between the separatist and integrative elements of the agreement makes the Dayton Peace Agreement a form of temporary military arrangement rather than a final and comprehensive peace agreement. Bosnia and Herzegovina was constituted as a multi-ethnic state divided into two separate entities: the Croat-Muslim “Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina” (51% of the territory) and the Serb entity “Republika Srpska” (49%). Accordingly, the DPA regulated the competences of the central authorities and entities, leaving many aspects of the entities unregulated. Some authors, like Sharpe, describe this approach as one with “two opposing goals: to divide Bosnia into two political entities with separate armies while invoking a single integrated state with central institutions.”<sup>21</sup>

Ker-Lindsay, in that context, emphasizes the importance of balancing short-term stability with long-term functionality in peace agreements. According to him, Dayton’s focus on ending the war overshadowed the need for a sustainable legal framework. The agreement, according to these authors, created a legal structure that brought

<sup>19</sup> E. M Cousins & C.K. Cater, *Toward peace in Bosnia : implementing the Dayton accords*. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001

<sup>20</sup> Bildt in D Chandler, *Bosnia: faking democracy after Dayton*. London: Pluto Press.1999: 43

<sup>21</sup> Sharp, “Dayton Report Card”, *International Security*

peace but institutionalized the divisions that caused the conflict. "It became a legal straitjacket that prevents Bosnia from evolving into a cohesive and functional state."<sup>22</sup>

Annex 4 of the Dayton Agreement, as the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, established a highly decentralized state, which paralyzes state governance, mostly due to the veto right and ethnic quotas that often hinder decision-making. The highly decentralized governance structure, intended to deal with ethnic divisions, actually made Bosnia and Herzegovina a fragmented state with limited central authority. Sharp analyses that the agreement failed to resolve deeper ethnic divisions and left a highly decentralized state structure that hampers political and economic integration. Essentially, "The political system shaped by Dayton entrenched ethnic divisions, making long-term governance and reconciliation challenging."<sup>23</sup> Daalder shares this view, stating that "The constitutional structure contained in the Dayton Agreement entrenched ethnic divisions, limiting the capacity of the central government to govern effectively."<sup>24</sup> By legitimizing those ethnic divisions, the Dayton Peace Agreement institutionalized distrust and rivalry between ethnicities, rather than fostering national unity. Essentially, ethnic identity became the only path to individual success in the political sphere.

What makes the Dayton Peace Agreement unsustainable in this aspect is the fact that the central government, the Federation, and Republika Srpska each have their own president, government, parliament, police, army, and other public institutions. Hundreds of ministers and public officials perform similar tasks, blocking and obstructing one another. An additional issue arises from naming the Serbian entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina as Republika Srpska. The meaning of this term in Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian is "republic," a term used only by independent countries such as Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Slovenia, Kosovo, etc. The use of the term "Republic" in the Dayton Peace Agreement, and the allowance for entities to have their own armies, separate relations with neighboring states, and separate international representatives and offices, strongly undermines the formal unity and sovereignty of the state.

In terms of longevity, the Dayton Peace Agreement also creates problems through the dominance of ethno-nationalist politics that exclude minorities, as reflected in the *Sejdić and Finci* case. Annex 4 of the Dayton Peace Agreement guarantees the highest level of internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, mainly through

<sup>22</sup> J Ker-Lindsay, "Twenty Years After Dayton: Bosnia-Herzegovina (Still) Stable and Explosive" in *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 44, No. 6, 2016

<sup>23</sup> Sharp, "Dayton Report Card"

<sup>24</sup> I.H. Daalder, and Froman, M.B. "Dayton's incomplete peace": 109

direct application and supremacy of the European Convention on Human Rights over any domestic legislation. However, these provisions directly conflict with the provision that guarantees a seat in the Presidency of BiH only for each of the three ethnic groups – Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks. Other minority groups were not allowed to run for the position. This created a dilemma that arose in a case before the European Court of Human Rights, named after the two applicants Dervo Sejdić and Jakob Finci, who, as a Roma and a Jew, were not allowed to run for Presidency.<sup>25</sup> In fact, no citizen belonging to any ethnic group other than the three constituent groups can become a member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The discrimination of smaller ethnic minorities and the limited active and passive voting rights are additional weak points stemming from the ethnic-based approach. Although the ECtHR ruled in favor of the applicants back in 2009, constitutional changes remain impossible due to obstruction by the three “privileged” constituent peoples.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, the lack of public security in Bosnia and Herzegovina is frequently highlighted due to the presence of jihadist networks, widespread and systemic corruption, and elite political and business conglomerates. The Dayton Peace Agreement required the complete withdrawal of foreign fighters from the entire territory of BiH within thirty days after NATO's Implementation Force (IFOR) was on the ground. However, “a large portion of those people remained, despite promises from the Bosnian side.”<sup>27</sup> Many authors rightly emphasize that the war in BiH was a major entry point for Wahhabi tendencies in the Balkans – both militant and theological.<sup>28</sup> In this way, the wave of Islamist radicalism had a dual effect: on one hand, Bosnia became an incubator for international terrorism and jihad in Europe. On the other, there is fear that remnants of militants are capable of damaging the fragile state system in BiH.<sup>29</sup> These small groups of Islamic radicals have a *modus operandi* that made them notorious in bloody terrorist attacks and ethnic wars in the country, Europe, and beyond.<sup>30</sup>

25 The full text of the judgment can be read at

26 A detailed analysis of the effects of the judgment can be found in S. Bardutzky, ‘The Strasbourg Court on the Dayton Constitution: Judgment in the case of Sejdić and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina, 22 December 2009,’ *European Constitutional Law Review*, Vol. 6, 2010: 309–333.

27 R Holbrooke, *To End a War*: 321

28 J. C. Antúñez, “Wahhabism in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Its Links with International Terrorism,” *EuropeNews*. <http://europenews.dk/en/node/14165>, 2014, пристапено на 14 декември 2024, F. A. Gerges, *Journey of the Jihadist: Inside Muslim Militancy*. Orlando, Fla.: Harcourt, 2006.

29 C Deliso, *The coming Balkan caliphate: the threat of radical Islam to Europe and the West*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International, 2007: 4, W. Phares, *The confrontation : winning the war against future jihad*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008: 174

30 Some of the individuals who carried out the attack on key governmental and economic entities in the United States on September 11, 2001, traveled with passports from Bosnia and Herzegovina, although it is believed that they had never been on the territory of the country. Additionally, numerous foreign fighters in the so-called Islamic State originated from the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina were considered responsible for terrorist attacks in France, Italy, Germany, and other locations.

In terms of implementation standards for transforming relationships, the implementation of political reforms and the issue of conditionality in the functioning of Bosnian politics hinder efforts for meaningful reconciliation. While military transformation and engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina were detailed and organized, the civilian aspects were too generic, lacking strict enforcement clauses. In December 1995, international forces began to move into Bosnia, under the provisions of Annex 1-A of the DPA, which gave NATO full control over military activity in the state. While IFOR had a “smooth entry,” implementing any non-military part of the DPA proved hostile.<sup>31</sup>

On its part, power-sharing and multiethnic administration form the essence of the principles of democratization in Bosnia and Herzegovina after Dayton. The core of this concept was “the decentralization of political power and ensuring the safety of all ethnic groups to protect their vital interests.”<sup>32</sup>

The civilian component constituted the most complex and intricate element of the agreement, including economic reconstruction, establishment of political institutions, enforcement of human rights, and conducting elections. Annex 10 established the role of the High Representative of the United Nations to coordinate the activities of international institutions and facilitate the efforts of the agreement’s signatories. The High Representative is nominated by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council, and the appointment is confirmed by the UN Security Council. The Council for the Implementation of the Agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of 55 countries and organizations. The members of the Steering Board include France, Italy, Japan, Canada, Germany, Russia, the USA, UK, the EU Presidency, the European Commission, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The High Representative holds a wide array of responsibilities, including monitoring and implementing the agreement, promoting compliance by Bosnian representatives with its civilian aspects, participating in donor meetings, and facilitating disputes in the judicial sphere, among others.<sup>33</sup>

The Dayton Agreement authorized the Office of the High Representative to monitor compliance with the agreement and impose decisions when local actors fail to act. However, this only occurred two years after the signing of the Dayton Agreement, with the decisions of the Steering Board in Bonn.<sup>34</sup> This raised questions about the balance

<sup>31</sup> R Holbrooke, *To End a War*: 324

<sup>32</sup> D Chandler, *Bosnia: faking democracy after Dayton*:66

<sup>33</sup> D Chandler, *Bosnia: faking democracy after Dayton*:50

<sup>34</sup> See Office of the High Representative, Conclusions of the Peace Implementation Council in Bonn, December 10, 1997, Section XI

between state sovereignty and international legal oversight, which remains in constant conflict. Hence, there is a persistent critique that “The extraordinary powers granted to the High Representative reflect the international community’s distrust in Bosnia’s ability to independently implement the provisions of Dayton.”<sup>35</sup>

In that sense, Bosnia and Herzegovina is considered the “global capital of interventionism.”<sup>36</sup> Still, despite the work of numerous international organizations, government institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including various ministries and public bodies, are not efficient or self-sustaining. The imposed standards for democratization only prolong Bosnia and Herzegovina’s essential dependence on its international partners, who are constantly called upon to intervene.

In terms of implementation, there were numerous logistical problems for the civilian authorities at the beginning. According to Holbrooke, they had almost no resources or means to supply their offices with phones, staff, or infrastructure.<sup>37</sup> As a result, there was a significant delay in implementation, which harmed addressing the root causes of the conflict. Due to the delays in implementation, the mandate of the international transitional administration was extended indefinitely from the initially agreed one year, and the gap between the resolution of the military conflict and the prolongation of civil peacekeeping issues only increased.

In terms of social dynamics, some authors also focus on the economic and social issues that the Dayton Peace Agreement set as its goal. Daalder and Froman argue that the agreement neglected the importance of creating a unified economic framework, which is crucial for the rebuilding of state institutions and fostering peace. ‘Dayton failed to address the economic integration necessary for a cohesive state, which further complicated the legal and political fragmentation of Bosnia.’<sup>38</sup>

## THE ROLE OF THE KONRAD ADENAUER FOUNDATION IN THE BALKANS

The significance of the work of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation is primarily reflected in the period during which its offices have been present in Skopje and the Balkans in general. In this year, 2025, the Macedonian office of KAS is celebrating its 25th

<sup>35</sup> An extensive analysis of constitutional legal issues and the conflict between the decisions of the High Representative, the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and human rights issues is provided in the Opinion of the Venice Commission, CDL-AD (2005) 004 of March 11, 2005

<sup>36</sup> Jenkins in D Chandler, *Bosnia : faking democracy after Dayton.*: 2

<sup>37</sup> R Holbrooke, *To End a War.*: 324

<sup>38</sup> I Daalder and Froman, “Dayton’s incomplete peace”: 110

anniversary, while the offices across the Balkans are marking up to 30 years of presence. According to its publicly declared mission, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation “is committed to peace, freedom, and justice at the national and international level through political education.” In this regard, the office promotes a liberal economy and European values. Through its international cooperation efforts, KAS advocates for a free and dignified life based on individual convictions.

With over 200 projects implemented in more than 120 countries around the world, the Foundation has made a strong contribution to the development of democracy, the rule of law, and the social market economy. In order to strengthen peace and freedom, the Foundation’s activities also support dialogue in the fields of foreign and security policy, as well as dialogue between different cultures and religions. These aspects of the Foundation’s work have been especially significant in the post-war period and in relation to the effects and outcomes of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation office in Bosnia and Herzegovina was opened in February 1997 as one of the first offices in the Balkans. Until the end of 2000, this office also coordinated activities in Croatia, Serbia, and Montenegro, while since 2001, the KAS office in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been exclusively responsible for project activities within BiH. In partnership with numerous national and international partner organizations in the region, it shapes and coordinates its programs in accordance with the needs and demands of the Bosnian public.

Regarding key issues related to the rule of law, high-ranking KAS representatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina have for years analysed aspects of the lack of progress in the rule of law, stagnation in EU integration, and the limited space for overall democratic societal progress. In this context, Sven Petke comments that “Unlike neighbouring countries, which are undoubtedly progressing on the path to the EU, Bosnia and Herzegovina has achieved little. The biggest problem is the absence of the rule of law or the need to build a well-functioning and trustworthy legal system.”<sup>39</sup> Petke further analyses that the country still enjoys strong support from the international community. Other KAS analyses also address aspects of the Dayton Peace Agreement. In this regard, Petke notes that “The Dayton Peace Agreement remains the foundation of the political system, although it is not a permanent solution. Its shortcomings include the failure to implement the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in the *Sejdić-Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina* case from December 2009.”<sup>40</sup>

39 „Return of democracy?“, Sven Petke, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., Länderbericht, June 2020

40 „Bosnia and Herzegovina – a special country“, Sven Petke, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., Länderbericht, January 2020

A recent comment by Stephan Georg Raabe, the new director of KAS in Bosnia and Herzegovina, analysed the latest developments in the country – specifically, the February 26, 2025 verdict by the Court of BiH sentencing the President of Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, to one year in prison (or a monetary fine) and imposing a six-year ban on political activity due to his non-compliance with the decisions of the High Representative of the international community, Christian Schmidt. Dodik's reaction to the verdict has led Bosnia and Herzegovina into a state crisis. The author notes that the first-instance verdict by the Court of BiH represents “a legal clarification in an institutional dispute and is therefore fundamentally important for BiH,” particularly in terms of recognizing the authority of the High Representative and the Constitutional Court of BiH. The importance—and thus the danger—of this case, as analyzed in the commentary, also lies in Dodik's statements that the verdict represents “a death sentence for Bosnia and Herzegovina,”<sup>41</sup> which was followed by threats of radical measures, including withdrawal from the Dayton Agreement.

The importance of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation's engagement in the region is also reflected in the fact that Christian Schmidt (High Representative and former German Minister of Agriculture) spoke at the “Adenauer Europe Forum” of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Sarajevo, where he discussed various issues with participants from politics and society in BiH and the international community. As analysed, Schmidt “emphasized the fundamental importance of accepting a rules-based order both nationally and internationally. Commonly agreed rules, the constitution, institutions, and laws must be accepted by all and must not be unilaterally questioned or violated.”<sup>42</sup> The analysis concludes that BiH is “facing a turbulent period in which the EU accession process may be further delayed or even obstructed, to the detriment especially of the younger generation, whose future is at risk.”<sup>43</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The analysis and assessments of the success of the Dayton Peace Agreement, both within and outside Bosnia and Herzegovina, differ dramatically. For the Croatian people and politicians living in BiH, it is viewed as insufficiently inclusive, assimilationist, and rigid. Some Croatian authors even call it “an agreement that looks backward.”<sup>44</sup> For representatives of the Serbian people in Republika Srpska, it is an agreement that,

<sup>41</sup> State Crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, Stephan Georg Raabe Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., Country report Bosnia and Herzegovina, March 03, 2025

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> D. Pehar, *Peace as war: Bosnia-Herzegovina post-Dayton*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2022: 43.

despite its flaws, gave life to the “Republic.” Meanwhile, for the Bosniaks, it is insufficiently integrative, decentralizing the unitary nature of the state. Therefore, conclusions about the future differ depending on ethnic affiliation—but not drastically. A commonly shared view is that post-Dayton politics in BiH has largely become a continuation of the war by other means. Pehar argues that it is “much more likely that Bosnia will continue to politically vegetate in a state of post-Dayton war, in a fluid and uncertain context, which largely reflects both the character of pre-modern communities and the immoral realpolitik of the great powers.”<sup>45</sup>

For those more objective observers familiar with the Bosnian case, one phrase perhaps best explains the situation: “Dayton brought peace, but Dayton also brought chaos.”<sup>46</sup> It was already clear by the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement that it had exceeded its functional value. Primarily, this is because it created a political system in which the entities possess greater and stronger powers than the central government. According to Dümmel, this is the fundamental reason behind everything that is wrong with the country’s national and international politics: a weak state and strong entities that either refuse or fail to fully implement decisions made at the state level. These entities have now been enacting their own laws, pursuing at times diametrically opposed policies, and maintaining their own separate administrative apparatuses for over twenty years—without central coordination.

If no common solution is found and the constitution remains unreformed, according to numerous authors, the country will be at risk of increased ethnic tensions, economic decline, and a continuously fragmented government. Today, ten years after such analyses were first published, Bosnia and Herzegovina is unfortunately clearly trapped in a fragmented political deadlock. Although the path to EU membership negotiations has opened through the decisions made in 2024, the Dayton Peace Agreement (and thus the Constitution) must undergo change. Otherwise, there remains a constant risk that BiH could revert at any moment to complete political fragmentation, socio-economic stagnation, and the loss of the fundamental attributes of a self-sustaining, sovereign, independent, and unified state.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid. 41

<sup>46</sup> K Dümmel, “Positives and Negatives: Dayton Peace Agreement 20 Years On”, KAS International Reports 8, 2015: 40

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