

The Republic of Macedonia, alike the other countries from Southeastern Europe, is confronted with a range of problems that occurred due to the change of its system and the dissolution of Yugoslavia, or as a result of the misguided development during the Yugoslav one partisanship system. After its independence, Macedonia has been continuously engaged in an institutional, social and economic process of transition towards a democratic and market-economy oriented state.

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The consequences of the military conflicts and fragmentation of former Yugoslavia also left traces in Macedonia. Even though there was no bloodshed on the road to its independence, as compared with other Yugoslav republics, nonetheless the state was not spared from other negative consequences. The unequally distributed infrastructure and trade routes in Yugoslavia were disconnected in the early '90-ies, while the embargoes and the flow of refugees additionally affected the development process in the Region.

During the war in Kosovo Macedonia gave shelter to a great number of refugees from Kosovo and thus contributed in alleviating the humanitarian disaster. In 2001 all of a sudden there was an internal conflict between Albanian groups and Macedonian security forces. Assisted by the international mediation, the conflict came to an end with the Ohrid Framework Agreement, which extended the rights for the Albanian minority inside the state, and whose goal was the Albanians to have factual, and not only declarative equality. Moreover, this Agreement also included decentralization of the state that is to lead towards reducing the distance between citizens and the state structures.

After the implementation of the peace agreement, the future NATO membership and the rapprochement of Macedonia towards the European Union are the central reform projects of the state. Macedonia is expecting a NATO membership and was given the EU candidate country status in December 2005. EU-Membership is supported by around 90% of the population.

Goals and Objectives

The Friedrich Ebers Stiftung in Macedonia supports the transformation process of the state in the following areas:

- Civil society engagement and activism
- Social Dialog
- Macedonia's EU Integration process
- Regional cooperation in the Western Balkan

The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, in its work is guided by the basic values of social democracy: freedom, justice, solidarity and international cooperation. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung is also performing this task in the Republic of Macedonia where it has an office since 1996.

