



## One Pager of Recommendations to DG NEAR, Facing the Uncertainty Concerning Constitutional Changes in North Macedonia as a Prerequisite for Continuation of the Accession, i.e., Negotiations Process

*An excerpt from a Policy Study, titled "For a Geopolitical Instead of Technocratic Approach to the EU Enlargement Process: Addressing the Aftermath of the Lifted Bulgarian Veto."*

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European geopolitics is a notion that extends beyond the conventional use of the term, beyond international relations and security policy. The planetary "competitive edge" von der Leyen so often invokes, obviously concerns technological advancement, yet the latter is presumed to be a category of geopolitical nature. If the scale is planetary, it puts forward the importance of territorial consolidation and control. Thus, the continent must become compact, not only at the borders but from within. Western Balkans is at the heart of the EU, surrounded by EU states, outside the technocratic yet inside the physical borders of the EU. Therefore:

- We recommend that a more political European Commission assumes a more hands-on approach and carry out a systematic review of how its funds are being spent, esp. through IPA III, when it comes to the strengthening of the civil society in North Macedonia, Serbia and Western Balkans more generally speaking.
- The rift of the CSO in North Macedonia and the EU has been growing throughout the second half of 2022 and the beginning of 2023, yielding a CS that favors Open Balkans and other alternatives to the EU accession, not shying away from calling the EU undemocratic (even "fascist")<sup>1</sup> and "something we may need to look for an alternative of";<sup>2</sup> the EU and in particular DG NEAR must carry out thorough

<sup>1</sup> Aleksandar Todevski, "Ursula, Has Europe Done Away With Its Fascism?" - A Banner With Which The Protesters Welcomed the President of the European Commission, [„Урсула, дали Европа расчисти со фашизмот“ - Со ваков транспарент демонстрантите ја пречекаа претседателката на Европската комисија], 24 Vesti (14.07.2022), available at <https://tinyurl.com/yc3yucekv>

<sup>2</sup> Katerina Kolozova and Tihomir Topuzovski, Restoring EU's Credibility and the European Consensus in the Civil Society in N. Macedonia (Skopje: Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities, 2023)

examination as to whether its funds are helping build a society that shares the same values.

- A more hands-on political approach must be undertaken, by supporting parts of the CSO that share the EU values, to encourage the country to recognize the Bulgarian, Jewish, Croat and Montenegrin minorities in North Macedonia, which is the condition for further pursuing the accession process. If this issue remains unaddressed the entire enlargement process will be negatively affected.
- The Commission must work on deepening the sectoral integration approach in order to achieve a fully integrated continent in terms of standards, policies, economic and scientific production and complete freedom of movement; in short, an effective full integration, even if some of the nation states may not have the status of full member states by 2030. (This is not a model to substitute the accession process but rather to accelerate and complement it).

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