

Intelligence and Security Sector Reform Programme in the Republic of North Macedonia (2021-2026)

NEWSLETTER N° 3

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After the official launch of the **Intelligence and Security Sector Reform Programme in the Republic of North Macedonia (2021-2026)** on 1 April 2021 DCAF proceeded with consistency implementation of its activities. With gradual relaxation of COVID measures, activities with physical presence of participants, as before the COVID period, has fortunately picked up.

The period from January to March 2022 was marked by a series of activities aimed at building a resilient, more effectively governed, and accountable intelligence and security sector.

During this period, the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors in Skopje hosted the **first meeting of the Judiciary Steering Group** (on **25 February 2022**) – a body established by a Cooperation Agreement between DCAF and the Academy, within the Programme. It gathered high-level representatives from the Ministry of Justice, Judicial Council, Public Prosecutorial Council, Association of Judges and Association of Prosecutors to regularly assess and guide Programme implementation, ensuring the Programme complements and amplifies local reforms.

DCAF & SSG/R

DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance is dedicated to improving the security of states and their people within a framework of democratic governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and gender equality. Since its founding in 2000, DCAF has contributed to making peace and development more sustainable by assisting partner states, and international actors supporting these states, to improve the governance of their security sector through inclusive and participatory reforms. It creates innovative knowledge products, promotes norms and good practices, provides legal and policy advice and supports capacity-building of both state and non-state security sector stakeholders. DCAF is one of the world's leading organizations in security sector governance (SSG) and security sector reform (SSR).

The highlights of DCAF achievements and contributions internationally are featured in the newest [video](#).

This regular exchange improves exchange of information and expertise contributing towards strengthening judicial competency and capacity in the area of authorization and review of requests for intrusive methods for information collection, thus strengthening judicial independence in the Republic of North Macedonia.



Judiciary Steering Group Meeting

Skopje, 25 February 2022



On-Site Expert Assessment in Mol
Skopje, 18-19 January 2022

Intelligence and Security Sector Reform Programme in the Republic of North Macedonia

April 2021 - March 2026

By building on recent achievements, the objective of this Programme is to continue a process of democratic reforms within the security sector in North Macedonia. The intervention strategy aims to ensure that intelligence and security services in North Macedonia function effectively under active democratic control and oversight and fight serious and organised crime and curb corruption in line with good practice of accountability and respect for human rights.

The Programme is structured to attain three outcomes:

Outcome I: Legal and institutional framework of the intelligence sector in North Macedonia amended in line with relevant Euro-Atlantic principles and good practice of accountability and respect for human rights.

Outcome II: External oversight and control bodies have improved knowledge and capacity to conduct effective and transparent oversight and control over intelligence sector activities.

Outcome III: The public is informed on functionality and results of the security and intelligence accountability system.

Development partners: The Netherlands (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Sweden (The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency - Sida), Switzerland (The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation - SDC) and the European Union.

Partners in the Republic of North Macedonia:

- The Assembly of North Macedonia
- Prime Minister's Office
- Ministry of Interior
- Ministry of Defense
- Security and Intelligence Services
- Operational Technical Agency (OTA)
- Agency for Personal Data Protection
- Directorate for Security of Classified Information
- Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors
- State Public Prosecutors Office for Organised Crime and Corruption
- Other courts and judicial institutions
- Ombudsperson
- State Auditor
- CSOs and Media

OUTCOME I

The Programme also supports the Ministry of Interior. In this regard, an **On-Site Expert Assessment of Automated DNA Data Processing and Exchange** was held between **18-19 January 2022** in Skopje. International experts from INTERPOL and the Slovenian Police, assessed normative, organizational, practical, and technical aspects related to automated biometric (DNA) data processing and exchange. They proposed a set of recommendations linked to Prüm and Police Cooperation Convention SEE agreements on Data Base Network readiness for international online DNA data exchange. The assessment included the evaluation of proposed amendments of current national legislation and international DNA data exchange procedures. It further assessed management of national DNA databases and envisaged software solutions for international exchange of DNA data. DCAF will support an Mol Working Group in the process of development of a strategy and action plan on how to resolve the identified gaps.



Workshop on Rules on Procedure (RoP) for Use of the Shielded Room and Protected Workspace
Skopje, 21 January 2022

OUTCOME II

DCAF supports the Assembly in the establishment of a Shielded Room and protected workspace for handling classified information. As of early April the Assembly is working on completing its third public tender for the construction part of the process. In parallel DCAF, with local experts, is facilitating a locally owned process of drafting Standard Operating Procedures for safe and effective use of the Shielded Room and protected workspace within the Assembly. For this purpose, **four workshops** were organised (**21 January, 18 February, 18 and 22 March 2022**). The entire process is guided by representatives from the Directorate for Security of Classified Information and MoI representatives in charge of the Security of the Assembly, supplemented by Assembly staff and facilitated by DCAF. The process is very interactive and locally owned. More workshops are planned for the next quarter to finalise the document.

Between **3-4 February 2022**, a practical workshop for MPs and staffers serving parliamentary security and intelligence oversight committees was organized. The event entitled **“Gap Analysis of the implementation and provisions of the Law on Interception of Communications (LIC) and the Law on Operational**

Technical Agency (OTA) and discussion on improving the legislation in the security sector” was held in Veles, North Macedonia. The workshop aimed to stimulate debate and reflections on approaches and possible solutions to the so-called implementation obstacles and weaknesses that make this legislation inefficient and ineffective in some areas. The workshop approach included expert input from both academics and security-intelligence practitioners. A general conclusion made during the workshop was that improvement of the legislation is necessary and the majority agreed that the best solution would be a special law on oversight of intelligence. Participating MPs indicated that as representatives of the highest democratic institution, they are the ones who should make efforts within their respective parliamentary groups to initiate changes and/or improvements to existing laws.

On **22 February 2022** in Skopje a **Workshop on the Protection of Whistle-blowers** was held. Participants from the Ministry of Interior of North Macedonia, specifically the Department for Internal Control, Criminal Investigations, and Professional Standards, discussed good practice, national legislation, policies, and initiatives related to whistle-blowing and the protection of whistle-blowers within law enforcement agencies. The discussions were facilitated by in-house



Workshop on Gap Analysis
Skopje, 3-4 February 2022

and external experts from international organizations (GRECO), regional initiatives (RAI), national institutions (Ministry of Justice, State Commission for Prevention of Corruption) and academia (Faculty of Security - Skopje). The workshop helped participants increase their understanding of the concept and the mechanisms of whistleblower protection and how best to increase capacities to enhance the protection of whistle-blowers.

During this period, DCAF continued with translation in Macedonian and Albanian language of Thematic Briefs designed to build capacities for the intelligence services and oversight actors, to help make them more accessible to the intelligence and security sector in North Macedonia. In addition to several translated publications such as the **"The Role of Parliaments in Overseeing Intelligence Tasking"** and **"Intelligence Procurement"**, DCAF translated and distributed two additional thematic briefs: **"Internal Control in Intelligence Services"** (which examines internal control in intelligence services with reference to the Euro-Atlantic area) and **"Rethinking Engagement Between Intelligence Services and Civil Society"** (intended for the intelligence services and civil society to become better acquainted with the concept of democratic/civilian oversight and modalities of co-operation). Although developed by other DCAF programs, this particular programme benefits greatly from DCAF's

Development Partner Steering Mechanism

For the Programme, a pooled funding mechanism was chosen and as of December 2021 four development partners have contributed. They are the Netherlands (CHF 780'000), Sweden (approx. CHF 960'000), Switzerland (CHF 1'000'000), and the European Union (approx. CHF 320'000). Together with DCAF's own core budget contribution and in-kind support from national beneficiary partners through the provision of office space, venues, technical equipment, local transport, and experts the combined total budget for the period 2021-2026 amounts to CHF 4'939'219.

The Programme is governed through a set of Steering Committees with national beneficiary partners and by a Development Partner Steering Group (DPSG). The DPSG is composed of Ambassadors and senior programme staff representing donors. They engage actively into the Programme by providing political and strategic support and guidance, increasing risk mitigation and implementation effectiveness. DPSG meetings are held twice per year and are hosted at Development Partner missions on a rotating basis.

in-house knowledge management emphasis, ensuring effective knowledge transfer.

When it comes to strengthening the judiciary, DCAF proceeded in carrying out **Training of Trainers (ToT) workshops** on *outreach and dissemination* for judicial and legal practitioners, entitled **"Theory to Practice: Advancing Judicial Practice on Supervision of Special Investigative Measures (SIMs) using Learning and Retention Methods"**.



Workshop on the Protection of Whistle-blowers

Skopje, 22 February 2022

These workshops are based on the earlier published [Benchbook](#) and are directed at strengthening capacities of judicial practitioners to facilitate training sessions, in accordance with transformative and active adult learning principles. The third ToT workshop was held between **2-4 March 2022** in Mavrovo. Delivery of half-day outreach and dissemination workshops following each ToT workshop enables participants to “put into practice” learning from the workshops with a live audience of legal practitioners. The trainers benefit from each ToT workshop strengthening their skills of facilitation, involving interactive exercises and engagement of a target audience. Through the development of these skills, trainers made significant progress in terms of reproducing and transferring knowledge within an adult learning environment, as well as engaging the audience in a practical and interactive manner.

DCAF also works on strengthening and enhancing gender mainstreaming in security sector institutions in North Macedonia. In this regard, DCAF is in close dialogue on implementing a **Gender Self-Assessment (GSA) process within the Ministry of Defense (MoD)** with relevant representatives from MoD’s Division of Equal Opportunities. It is envisioned as a locally driven process with a series of activities (employing both quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches) designed to assess gender responsiveness

of the Ministry (including the Army), more specifically whether its structure, processes and institutional culture meet the distinct needs of men, women and gender minorities. Once implemented, the end-products (GSA report and evidence-based gender action plan) are expected to be integrated as a complementary part of future gender activities of the institution and will give clear indicators and guidelines for better implementation of gender strategies and plans.

OUTCOME III

With an aim of improving public trust, DCAF continues to actively cooperate with local CSOs and media partners in North Macedonia, to help strengthen public debate and trust in security sector actors. In this vein, DCAF officially started cooperation with two CSOs, [EUROTHINK](#) and [C3Initiative](#).

EUROTHINK will focus on a comparative analysis and transparency matrix to identify best practices of intelligence services of the UK and Slovenia and to raise awareness in North Macedonia. The intervention entitled “**Improving public communication strategies of intelligence and security sector actors in North Macedonia**” will be rounded off with 3 Eurotalks (structured in accordance with Chatham House Rules). The intervention will seek to explain commonalities and differences of the three countries and to produce





Screenshot from mini-documentary on civilian oversight,
January 2022

360

Our interlocutors say that informal oversight
is a feature of advanced democracies.

an analytical framework and recommendations for improvement for North Macedonia.

The C3Initiative's intervention entitled "**Enhancing the Intelligence and Security Sector reforms through Active System Analysis and Multi-Stakeholder Reflections**" aims to fill the gaps and provide an added value contribution by implementing a unique structured method of multi-stakeholder and active system analysis (by the means of qualitative analysis and nominal-group techniques), and to provide tangible recommendations, and a roadmap with indicators, for enhancing transparency and accountability of intelligence and security sector actors. It will further seek to enhance trust among relevant stakeholders and confront issues through constructive problem solving and collaborative brainstorming discussions.

DCAF will continue to play an active role in implementing individual interventions through mentoring, suggestions,

convening capacity and encouraging cooperation between CSO partners and the intelligence and security sector. For this, a **Joint Session between CSO partners and relevant representatives from intelligence and security services** was organized in Skopje on **17 March 2022**. The goal of the meeting was to ensure transparency and local ownership by explaining and involving relevant security services of upcoming CSO interventions co-funded by DCAF. It also helped facilitate networking and trust-building between CSOs and intelligence and security sector actors.

In terms of building trust and enhancing visibility of progress and reforms in the intelligence and security sector, DCAF in collaboration with 360 Degrees Media, produced two additional **audio-visual mini-documentary stories** (combination of story-telling and informational content for raising awareness) that were aired on the national ALSAT TV station. The mini-documentary story on "**Civilian and Democratic Oversight over the**



Screenshot from mini documentary on **Classified Info**
March, 2022

But I absolutely justify and support the need for special regulation of their position in the system

“Intelligence and Security Sector” (aired in **January 2022**) highlighted the importance of independent actors (CSOs, think tanks, academic community, and media) and their engagement in the informal oversight activities contributing towards a better functioning of the security sector. These independent actors, in addition to complementing the work of the institutions in charge of official oversight of the security and intelligence sector, are also a link between official security institutions, policies and processes, and local needs and realities. The aim is to ensure inclusion of interests and perspectives of the wider public, but also greater support of institutions in reforming and democratizing the security and intelligence sector, to improve the quality of security practices and provision.

The second mini-documentary story **“Security of Classified Information”** aired in **March 2022** concerned the role, status, and necessity of reform of the Directorate for Security of Classified Information (DSCI), particularly in hindering the outflow of human resources and introducing adequate retention policies.

A **needs assessment survey** was prepared and shared in order to identify, map and indicate interest and needs of local CSOs and Media organizations in capacity building activities within the intelligence and security sector. The survey was initiated to determine interest in and capacity to engage more effectively in activities to better inform the public of the status and progress

in the area of security and intelligence governance and accountability in North Macedonia. The survey will provide the DCAF team with a better informed basis on how to optimise cooperation and training henceforth.

UP-COMING ACTIVITIES

APRIL 2022

- Workshop and roundtable on Gap Analysis of the Implementation and Provisions of the Law on National Security Agency (NSA) and the Law on Coordination of the Security and Intelligence Community in Skopje
- Consultations with law enforcement agencies and judiciary on challenges and gaps in the use of Special Investigative Measures (SIM)
- Assisting MoI Forensics Department in preparation of an Action Plan for Implementing Activities for Strengthening Automated DNA Data Processing and Exchange
- Workshop on Rules on Procedure (RoP) for use of the Shielded Room

MAY 2022

- Production and broadcast of TV debate on Alsat TV on “Digitalization and Intelligence & Security Sector Reform” in cooperation with 360 Degrees
- Benchbook ToT Workshop #4 for judicial and legal experts: Theory to Practice - Advancing Judicial Practice on the Supervision of Special Investigative Measures (SIMs) using Learning and Retention Methods, in Berovo
- Signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding with the Government and Cooperation Agreements with the Ministry of Defense and the Directorate for Security of Classified Information (tbc)
- Training sessions to strengthen integrity of MoI employees
- Mini-documentary on Law on Interception of Communication implementation
- Assisting MoI Forensics Department in developing Procedures for Criminal and Technical Registration and Identification of Persons and Unknown Corpses
- Nominal-group discussions through customized scenario-based exercise in cooperation with the CSO C3Initiative

JUNE 2022

- Roundtable on the Role of the Parliament in Intelligence Governance, Geneva, Switzerland (dates tbc)
- Training on Civilian Oversight and Good Security Sector Governance for CSOs and Media, Ohrid, North Macedonia (tbc)
- Training on International DNA Matching for Forensics Department DNA experts
- Developing and publishing Service Catalogue/Brochure on MoI's forensics services
- 1st Eurotalk (under Chatham House rules) meeting in cooperation with CSO EUROTHINK