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MASTER'S DEGREE THESIS

EDUCATION POLICY IN FYROM AND ITS ROLE IN ADVANCING THE  
EU ACCESSION PROCESS

Supervisor:  
DR. SUSANNAH VERNEY

Student:  
SONA AVAGYAN

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	4
INTRODUCTION	5
BACKGROUND	7
CHAPTER 1. LITERATURE REVIEW	9
1.1 DEMOCRACY	9
1.2 HUMAN RIGHTS	16
CHAPTER 2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY	23
CHAPTER 3. RESULTS	28
3.1 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH	28
PRESCHOOL EDUCATION	32
PRIMARY EDUCATION	33
SECONDARY GENERAL EDUCATION	34
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING	34
HIGHER EDUCATION	35
3.2 CRITERIA-BASED ASSESSMENT	37
LEARNING ABOUT DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS	37
Curriculum	37
LEARNING THROUGH DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS	39
Practice rights	39
Classroom climate	40
Teachers/staff education	40
Inclusion and integration	40
LEARNING FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS	41
Whole school approach	41
Community service	41
Parents education	41
CONCLUSIONS	42
BIBLIOGRAPHY	44

## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this study is to identify the role of education in advancing the EU accession process for FYROM. Two components of political criteria, namely “democracy” and “human rights & respect for and protection of minorities” have been addressed through the lens of education.

According to the EU community, systematic efforts are necessary to maintain and strengthen the European values. A great role is attributed to education as a promoter of democracy and human rights. The importance of evolving and embedding European values is particularly high for the countries involved in the EU integration process – presently the Southeastern Europe, including FYROM.

FYROM, in its official position admits the significance of education in disseminating the European values of democracy and human rights in the country. However, the potential of education is not yet fully employed in this sense.

## INTRODUCTION

Education policy receives extensive attention throughout the world as it has tremendous input in building the future and shaping the societal values. Thus, the topic selected for this thesis is the education policy in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and its role in advancing the European Union (EU) accession process. In this regard, the study focuses on two research questions, which are formulated as follows:

1. What Macedonia has done in the field of education related to democracy and human rights?
2. To what extent do the developments in FYROM education system related to democracy and human rights comply with the commonly accepted theory and practices?

EU community admits that continuous effort is needed to maintain and strengthen the values and principles which have been cornerstones of European societies for decades, especially in terms of economic, financial, political and migrant crises. European institutions have increased focus on education as central element to promote these values.

The importance of evolving and embedding European values is particularly high for the countries, involved in the process of EU integration – presently the Southeastern Europe. These states have just started to embrace the European values and need to display undeviating commitment to comply with the requirements of political component of Copenhagen criteria, where these values are prescribed.

Thus, for the case of FYROM, the European values of democracy and human rights, which also includes protection of minorities, are discussed through the lens of education. Another integral part of political criteria, the rule of law, however, was left out, as it demands specific and more comprehensive approach, thus becoming too extensive for the limits of this work.

Consequently, the study is trying to prove the following hypothesis: ***Education is considered as one of the major tools to disseminate European values for FYROM, however, its potential has not yet been fully employed.***

For that purpose, a research logic has been developed. In the methodology, the reference point for the further analysis is the conducted literature review, where commonly accepted theoretic approaches and best practices of democracy and human rights promotion by means

of education are identified. On these grounds, the relevant criteria were selected to assess the developments in education sector within the framework of European values' dissemination.

Moreover, to this end, a comprehensive study of existing official documentation was done in order to fully reveal the topical aspects of education system that fall within the scope of the present study.

The main sources include the national strategy papers and policy documents, laws, officially adopted curricula, reports on implemented projects, EC progress reports, etc. A substantial number of sources are represented by academic literature, Council of Europe (CoE) manuals, EU strategy papers and research materials, as well as information available online (e.g. statistics).

The master thesis is structured in the following manner. First of all, in the Background the challenges FYROM faces over political criteria, are discussed. In the Chapter 1 the review of most prominent literature was done. The Subchapter 1.1 is devoted to democracy and establishes its link with the education. Moreover, the most valuable and commonly acknowledged theory and practices are described and justified. The Subchapter 1.2 presents similar work regarding the human rights.

The Chapter 2 is dedicated to detailed presentation of research questions and methodology. Finally, in the Chapter 3, the results of the analysis addressing the research questions are introduced. Subchapter 3.1 discloses the democracy and human rights related developments of education system in FYROM relying on selected body of literature. In its turn, Subchapter 3.2 discusses the results of criteria-based assessment of these developments.

In the Conclusions, the main findings of the study are summarised and the central idea is highlighted.

## BACKGROUND

When the former Socialist Republic of Macedonia gained independence in 1991, it was undergoing major transition, which was threefold: border redrawing, regime change and market transformation. The necessity for establishing the national state, shaping the national-identity and ethnicity, as well as struggle for international recognition distracted FYROM from the priorities of democracy-building (Pridham 2000: p.12).

Many sociologists agreed that Macedonian model of newly acquired democracy was rather fragile. This was reasoned, first of all, by the fact that the country had limited prior democracy experience and learning (Pridham 2000: p. 40). The situation was further complicated by the underdeveloped state of economy in FYROM. Moreover, insecurity of democracy was also a consequence of yet immature civil society (Mavrikos-Adamou, 2010: pp. 514-533).

The armed conflict of 2001, which broke out between ethnic Albanian National Liberation Army (NLA) militant group and FYROM's security forces (Ilievski 2007: p. 18), further hindered the democracy establishment process. Pridham (2000: p. 13) argues that war situations tend to shift the developments towards the reinforcement of authoritarian practices and violation of human rights.

However, with the pressure and support from international community, the conflict found peaceful solution with signing of Ohrid Agreement on the 13th August 2001.<sup>1</sup> This revealed a new path for FYROM, leading to acquisition of candidate status for EU accession in 2005.<sup>2</sup> To become Union's member state, the special Copenhagen criteria (*political, economic, acquis obligations*)<sup>3</sup> should be fulfilled.

For FYROM, adopting democratic principles and complying with political criteria has been a complicated task. For example the parliamentary elections of 2008 recorded instances of undemocratic practices, cases of violence, intimidation, ethnic discrimination, etc. Limitations for freedom of expression and signs of authoritarian rule have been disturbing issues for the country. Furthermore, the 2015 corruption scandal on the governmental level launched a huge political crisis, which turned into inter-ethnic quarrels and ended only two years later with major negative implications.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ucd.ie/ibis/filestore/Ohrid%20Framework%20Agreement.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Analytical Report (2005), EC

<sup>3</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/glossary/terms/accession-criteria\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/glossary/terms/accession-criteria_en)

Thus, based on the developments in the country after gained independence and to the date, it may be inferred that democracy and human rights are truly vulnerable. The difficulties of transition, ethnic conflicts, lack of prior democracy learning, absence of mature civil society have virtually been hindering the democracy-building in FYROM.

Therefore, it is vital to educate citizens from early age to embed the values of democracy and human rights into their consciousness, way of thinking and behaviour, as well as to equip them with pertinent skills and competences for democratic participation.

# CHAPTER 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

## 1.1 DEMOCRACY

The Democracy is unanimously accepted to be integrative part of EU's value system as asserted in Laeken Declaration of 15 December 2001 (p. 3) on the future of the European Union<sup>4</sup> as well as the Treaty on European Union<sup>5</sup> itself. Countries aspiring to become EU member states are expected to adhere to the principles defined in the aforementioned documents. Enlargement policy has the aim to contribute to peace, security and democracy. However, democracy does not rise from nowhere and moreover, it should not be taken for granted.

Baldwin was arguing that democracy, along with freedom and justice, is not a regular concept, prevalent or habitual, oppositely, it is uncommon. People do not have innate knowledge about this notion.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Annan stated that “no one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy”.<sup>7</sup> Majhanovich & Malet (2015: p. 12) affirm that “democratic principles do not come naturally; they need to be taught.”

This leads us to the vision of Dewey (1916: pp. 93-95) where central role in creation and structuring of democratic society is attributed to education. Majhanovic & Malet (2015) also acknowledge the great power of education in building democracy, while Villegas-Reimers (2002: p. 36), based on the experience of Latin America countries, says that though education do not directly revolutionize economic, political and social structures of a state, it has the ability to contribute to democracy.

Dewey (1939: pp. 113-117) mentioned, that democracy prescribes its adherents to get engaged in economic, political and social processes and influence related development. Giroux & Giroux (2004: p. 4) add that “... *democratic politics requires full participation of the informed population*”. However, it is important to recall, that democracy is not only about participating; democracy is freedom written into the rule of law. Thus, the way participation occurs should also be closely considered. While freedom and liberty of choice lay in the beginnings of democracy, citizens at the same time, need to be equipped with right knowledge, values, approaches to be able to make choice for the democratic principles.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/laeken\\_declaration\\_on\\_the\\_future\\_of\\_the\\_european\\_union\\_15\\_december\\_2001-en-a76801d5-4bf0-4483-9000-e6df94b07a55.html](https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/laeken_declaration_on_the_future_of_the_european_union_15_december_2001-en-a76801d5-4bf0-4483-9000-e6df94b07a55.html)

<sup>5</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC_1&format=PDF)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.civiced.org/resources/papers-and-speeches>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.un.org/press/en/1998/19980810.sgsm6670.html>

Democracy is virtually outlined and promulgated by people. Its ultimate incarnation is inevitably conditioned by the complex of values that dominate within the society. Thereby, to attain the desired shape of democracy, the character and values of its bearers should be adapted to that goal.

In reference to Dewey (1939), Behairy (2017: p 302) writes that “Democracy does not automatically maintain itself by prescribed constitutions and procedural codes.” Biesta (2006) infers that the citizens of democratic country should be given means to maintain and reinforce the democracy. Westbrook (1996) and Barber (1997) believe that such role can and should be assumed by educational institutions.<sup>8</sup>

In Education Council Report (14 February 2001) education is described as a structural mean for democratic development. Furthermore, Council of Europe in recent years has amplified attention to the education as “a central element in the Council of Europe’s work to promote and protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law.”<sup>9</sup>

With latest economic, social, political crises, European Union is ever more concerned upon fragility of democracy and upon the fact, that the challenges its citizens are facing today may lead them astray. That is why in conclusions of the conference for “Securing Democracy Through Education”<sup>10</sup> it was stated that democracy should be taught not just as an ensemble of simple procedures but as a “*matter of values*” and that the culture of democracy should be established. Hereby in the Reference Framework for Competencies for Democratic Culture (p. 7), Council of Europe evolves the thought that “*Although our institutions may be solid they will only function in a truly democratic manner if our citizens are fully aware not only of their voting rights, but also of the values our institutions embody.*” Olssen et al. (2004) bring forward the words of Pettit (1997: p. 194) concerning this point, who states that for laws to be effective they must be embedded in civil norms which result into good citizenship. And education is a central institution in production of such norms.

West-Burnham (2009: p. 16) believes that democratic principles and processes have to be well-grounded in minds and social behaviours, should become habitual practice and the only way for any political action to take place. He claims that “*schools have fundamental role to play in developing democratic capacity – the willingness to engage in and strengthen the democratic infrastructure.*”

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<sup>8</sup> Reference found in Behairy (2017: p. 254)

<sup>9</sup> Reference Framework of Competencies for Democratic Culture (2018: p. 13)

<sup>10</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/16807029cb>

Council of Europe in its Reference Framework for Competencies for Democratic Culture recognizes that democratic education should begin from schools, and being a lifelong process, all educational institutions, including higher education, have the duty to participate in this mission.

Myers (2002: p. 216) also sees democratic societies as a “work in progress”. She claims that in order to preserve the democratic nature, and to firmly anchor the ideas of “liberty and justice for all”, education on democracy should be an eternal commitment.

For Dewey (1916: pp. 108-120) the main goal of education was to make the individuals fully involved in every phase and dimension of democratic life. Soder (1996: pp. 197-210) was suggesting that the fundamental role of the school should be teaching the students how to live and act in democratic society.

To embrace democratic ideals, to adopt democratic practices and behaviour, the citizens should be equipped with right knowledge and skills, values and attitudes. Villegas-Reimers (2002: p. 38) thinks that teaching should be organized so that from young age learners thoroughly understand democracy.

Considering the multitude of legitimate viewpoints it is necessary to give a more legible shape for democracy education by aggregating them and applying a structural approach. The most common method is to divide democracy education into 3 directions: *learning about democracy, learning through democracy and learning for democracy*. Such approach can be found in research project by Hera & Szeger (2013: p. 50) on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Social Inclusion, where they base this division on the principles of the CoE for EDC. Earlier the same model was utilised in Springate’s (2003: p.6) comparative analysis of Democracy in Primary Schools. First of all students need to *learn about democracy*. To achieve this, separate subject can be introduced into curriculum or enrich relevant subjects with content on democracy. Through observations in different countries Springate (2003: p.6) claims that making children understand what democracy represents in all levels is obligatory.

Villegas-Reimers (2002: p. 37) uses the expression of Leibowitz and name the learning about democracy as civic literacy. She presents in details what students are expected to know:

*“... they must learn about what democracy is, how societies and governments are organized, how governments function, and about the history of their society. They must also have basic knowledge of economic, political, legal and social structures and systems, of how they work and function. They must know about the constitutions of their countries, and about universal*

*human rights. In this time of international and global awareness, citizens must also know and understand international relations. They must learn how democracy and democratic processes and structures are created; how democracy works and how it is sustainable. Also, they must understand why societies choose democratic principles and organizations. Finally, they must learn and understand that in democracy, everyone's voice must be listened to, that decisions are made by majority vote, and that the rights of the minority are to be respected and protected.”*

Further Villegas-Reimers (2002: p. 37) pays attention to the fact that in the curriculum all the concepts and definitions should be put into the relevant context, have practical designation. In this regard, it is also useful to discuss the biggest initiative of CoE devoted to promotion of democracy through education, i.e. elaboration of “The Framework of Competencies for Democratic Culture” (2018). The developers mention that this framework can be used on all levels, but important to start from the primary education as democratic behaviour needs to be taught from early age. In case of CDC it is expected to adopt competence-based curriculum approach, albeit the Framework also suggests ways for knowledge-based system. In the document some examples of good practices are described. In Romania, among others, the updated curriculum for lower secondary education focuses on Participatory citizenship as the essential competence. Students have opportunity to take part in decision-making processes based on the knowledge and understanding of the CDC relevant notions (pp. 18-20).

Furthermore, to make learning about democracy more efficient, the Framework stresses the necessity of including all stakeholders in the decision-making and the writing of a curriculum (p. 23).

The second method of democracy education is the *learning through democracy*. In this phase students are given means to take part in decisions concerning different aspects of educational process. For Hera & Szeger (2013: p.51), learning through democracy was the main element of their programme, during which participants got to know their rights and executed them on a practical base. Springate (2003 p.7) writes that the whole learning process should become a democratic experience, and the school has to be managed in an atmosphere of equality, respect, compassion and inclusion – concepts to be well embedded in the teaching and learning processes. Villegas-Reimers (2002: p.38) too, highlights the need for “*the school organization to be reflective of democratic structures*”, and affirms that “*students’ voice should be listened to and taken into account*”.

Germany organized a project “Learning and Living democracy” in about 200 schools where they tried to make classroom and schools more democratic place for studying, thus giving a feel for youth what democracy in practice is (Schreiner 2013: pp. 30-31). EDC ambassador in Germany, Kurt Edler (2011: b) asserts: *“In order for a child to identify with democracy he must experience a simple feeling in school: the joy of having a say in negotiating and organizing things. And he must feel the confidence that adults take his viewpoint seriously.”*

To secure the democratic experience the educational setting should reflect relevant values. In this context, the ambiance teachers create in the class, as well as the method of communication they assume, are the most important aspects in transmission of the democratic values. Ehman (1980: pp. 107-109) bases his review on empirical studies and affirms that in terms of democratic participation the pivotal element is not the subject taught or by whom it is taught but the way this subject is taught.

In CDC Framework teachers are suggested not to take decisions in authoritative manner but to make students responsible participants and to find a way for every individual to express and contribute. Against authoritarian type of teaching expresses herself also Villegas-Reimers (2002: p. 38), who advocates for dialogues, conversations, debates and involvement of learners in majority of decisions. She regrets that civic education courses or programmes devoted to teaching about human rights and democratic governance tend to have contrary effect, because taught in traditional authoritarian style. To avoid such trap, students should be introduced how to participate in their societies and realize that the role of the citizens is not just to obey, but to be fully involved in political, social, legislative developments of their country.

Those who are going to be the main link in democracy education process should also be well prepared and ready for the task. CDC Framework mentions the importance of teaching the teachers and teacher educators and devotes whole chapter to the teacher retraining. Villegas-Reimers (2002: p. 38) also claims that teachers should not just be treated as *“agents of change”* but should be given skills and adequate materials. In search of such a teacher preparation CoE’s project “Living Democracy” has elaborated teaching and learning materials for primary and secondary educational institutions for democracy and human rights education. Moreover, organization of teacher training programmes is expected<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.living-democracy.com>

The last *learning for democracy* method is suggests giving learners rights in decision making on the level of their community and also introduces responsibilities as an integral part of democracy (Springate 2003: p.8). In CoE Framework it is recommended to take CDC out of schools and propose to learners wider experience. In Portugal was implemented project “We suggest”, where students gather knowledge about the existing problems of their school and whole neighbourhood. In the subsequent steps participants were expected to make suggestions and find solutions in groups (p. 22).

Framework additionally sees perspective in whole-school approach, where all stakeholders such as school management, teachers, learners, their parents and local community members should be engaged and cooperate with each other. For transmitting the values and norms of democratic society to next generations and helping educational institutions in that task, some countries seriously invest into parents’ education. It is worthy note the initiative by Connecticut Commission on Children who created the Parent Leadership Training Institute. 20 weeks of teaching about democracy included:

*“simple democratic procedures, subject about how work federal, state, local governments, including how to work with and embrace diversity; how federal, state and local government works; what public policy is; understanding budgets and fiscal allocations; the role of different constituencies in effecting change; how to reach and engage local, and state elected leaders; why voting matters; how to use the media as a vehicle in public dialogue; seeing neighbourhood and groups as assets; cultivating the skills to listen, lead and cull ideas in group discussions; ways to strengthen and motivate community; and how to measure outcomes. Democracy practicums offer parents the opportunity to practice civics during the training period.”(Myers 2002: p.66)*

Zimmerman (2002: p. 67), talking about the above mentioned initiative, stated that the knowledge and skills parents acquired during the programme were of great use for progress of democracy.

Finally, community service is another leverage supported by CDC and largely implemented in US public schools and higher education institutions. 66% of American public schools have community service integrated in the curriculum. Such activities involve students, teachers, parents, other community members in projects where students are being put into practical learning situation and can be engaged in different aspects of democratic life (Scales & Roehlkepartain 2004: p. 7). Hunter & Brisbin Jr. (2000: p. 623) write that community service creates sense of civic responsibility and help them to better understand the democratic values.

Mendel-Reyes (1998: pp. 35-37) adds, that community service is a great contribution for democracy education as it teaches how to act democratically and shows the human face of the concepts and principles. Basically, community service gives a chance for students to realize how every individual effort matters and can influence life of a community.

Community service was successfully implemented in an NGO initiative in Poland back in 1988. The group of teachers and parents as well as other volunteers created educational base for building engaged citizens of democratic Poland. The independent school had the aim to build skills that can help students to adopt democratic principles and democratic behaviour. Making suggestions, expressing their opinions, even taking part in writing school constitution along with teachers were the methods implemented in those schools. To graduate, the students were asked to publicly voice the issues important for them and get engaged in community service. The effectiveness of the initiative was awarded with support by the government and opening of significant number of similar schools (Myers 2002: p. 67).

After thoroughly discussing the 3 aspects of democracy education, one more, final approach needs to be covered. Dewey's democracy education related strategy was to develop superior thinking process in an individual that relies on intelligence, not training. To be trained to produce correct answers sets mental boundaries, to educate on how to come to these answers is the rational way. Human's intelligence should be deliberated through education (1916: pp. 304-306).

Same idea is supported by Olssen et al. (2004: p. 269) who believe that in educational institutions students must learn to think critically and independently, which is the key competence for performing civic role and fully engage in democratic life. Giroux & Giroux (2004: pp. 7-6, 264) write, that in this regard especially important the role of higher education, which should enable the citizens with critical thinking skills, so that they are not only able to participate in democratic processes but also assess those processes, question the ruling norms, discuss controversial issues and have enough competencies to participate in shaping and governing the democratic society.

Thus, we can conclude that democracy education is a foundation for the success of installation of democracy in society. This process is further reinforced by the human rights education, which would be discussed below.

## 1.2 HUMAN RIGHTS

Similar to democracy the respect of human rights is mentioned in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, as a core value common to all Member States. Furthermore, the document explicitly claims the “rights of persons belonging to minorities”, as well as emphasises the importance of certain key features of society. Particularly the non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men are among them.

Although largely acknowledged, it is essential to systematically impart these values to every population group. In this context, education embodies a powerful tool for transmission of these values to individuals. This concept is backed by UN in the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”.<sup>12</sup> It asserts that the rights and freedoms mentioned in the declaration should be promoted by teaching and education.

This approach got a more formal outline in the resolution of the United Nations (49/184 of 23 December 1994) under the term of Human Rights Education. January the 1st, 1995 was announced as the onset of 10-year period entitled as United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education. This initiative was accompanied by the Plan of Action and the Guidelines for national plans of action for human rights education. The latter defines the Human Rights Education as follows:

*“...human rights education may be defined as training, dissemination and information efforts aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge and skills and the moulding of attitudes...”*

Likewise, Frenekes (2014),<sup>13</sup> with the reference to the existing research (e.g. P. Freire, J. Dewey, etc.), infers that Human Rights Education contributes to the understanding of the human rights themselves as well as equips individuals with tools that allow them to adhere to these values.

Moreover, this viewpoint was underpinned by various scholars. *Inter alia*, Jokcimović & Maksić (2006 pp. 415-429) advocate the great role of school education as the mediator in transfer of socially adopted values to the individual. They noticed that although during the value formation process the foundation is usually set by family and influenced by peers and mass media, school education becomes a bridge, virtually linking society and young people through teaching.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.albavolunteer.org/2014/03/human-rights-column-human-rights-education-in-the-usa-prospects-and-possibilities/>

Villegas-Reimers (2002 p. 37) suggests that values related to human rights, among others, should be introduced and taught in group settings such as educational facilities. The rationale behind this is to give a notion that the choice of values has direct public and social consequences.

According to Todres,<sup>14</sup> human rights education has a substantial potential to provide children and adolescents with important social qualities. Particularly the better perception of own personality's value, elimination of bullying and other harmful actions from the behaviour, and increased empathy towards others might be achieved. This can result in a healthier classroom, which is, in fact, a microcosm of the society. Todres concludes that people should be properly taught to be aware of their own rights and rights of others, thus being capable to defend them effectively.

Hereby, the international community agrees that education has a crucial importance in promotion of human rights values in the society such as equality, non-discrimination, respect of minorities, etc. (Teaching Respect For All, UNESCO, 2014).

Taking into account the subject of this study, the human rights principles related to the minorities should be underlined. Due to historical developments in Balkan region, the respect and protection of minorities appeared to be a very sensitive issue. The role of education is equally and arguably even more significant in the process of inclusion and integration of minorities as well as of other vulnerable social groups.

In 1992, General Assembly adopted the resolution 47/135 – the Declaration on the rights of national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities.<sup>15</sup> Hereby, the states are suggested to take actions in the field of education to ensure access to the knowledge and promote the history, language and culture of minorities living on their territories. Education's role might be immense in the context of respect for minorities, where the reciprocal understanding and acceptance of each other's values are priorities.

The idea that education is an effective mean for “promoting tolerance and mutual understanding” was also claimed by the representatives of OSCE states during the meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> of November, 2012.<sup>16</sup> Educational activities that can stimulate respect for diversity are an accepted necessity.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://law.gsu.edu/2016/04/08/todres-the-importance-of-human-rights-education/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/47/a47r135.htm>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.osce.org/odihr/96891>

In its turn, British Council asserts that the “Respect for diversity refers to educating majority groups to value difference, thus changing behaviours and attitudes that people often have because of stereotypes and prejudices.”<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, in the Council Recommendation (EC, 2018), a special significance is granted to the inclusive, high quality education and training at all levels.<sup>18</sup> It is believed to be pivotal in advancement of social mobility and inclusion. Besides, by these means the citizens have a chance to obtain knowledge, skills and competences enabling them to understand common values better, develop critical thinking and succeed in the labour market.

The reflection of certain scholars on this matter is worthy to note. With reference to Du Bois and Woodson, Majhanovich & Malet (2015: p. 12) exposed the value of education against racial discrimination. In the same vein, Kallen (1924 p. 138) stressed the role of the school in teaching respect towards minority groups, their culture and rights to children.

Among contemporaries, Banks (2006, p. 195) argues that “to foster a just and inclusive pluralistic national society” designing adequate education is of the essence and represent a major challenge. She supports the idea of fully legitimate social structure, sustained by students and other groups. To this end, school curriculum should be redressed so to transfer the knowledge, attitudes and skills critical for establishment of such a community where all groups will be involved.

The inclusive, multicultural education is discussed in the work of Ghosh & Galczynski (2014: pp. 67-68). Here, it is praised as a unique approach, which allows greatly disclosing the child’s potential and endowing with ability of critical thinking regardless of their cultural background and descent.

On a national level, there are multiple examples where the theory discussed above was actually realised. In Canada, for instance, whose population is represented by a range of different ethnic groups that bear their own culture and values, multiculturalism of society is legally supported. The “Charter of Rights and Freedoms” and the Multiculturalism Act (1988) are promoters of this concept, thereby integrating it into school education. Likewise, Poland<sup>19</sup> and Bulgaria<sup>20</sup> in their respective documents attribute the key role in any Roma integration and inclusion strategy to education.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.britishcouncil.ro/en/programmes/society/respect-diversity>

<sup>18</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/initiatives/european-education-area/proposal-council-recommendation-common-values\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/initiatives/european-education-area/proposal-council-recommendation-common-values_en)

<sup>19</sup> Programme for the Roma Community in Poland, 2003

<sup>20</sup> Amalipe, 2006

To describe the entire picture, it is essential to have a closer look on practical application of the introduced ideas. In the following part, a more comprehensive discussion of the applied practices is presented.

### *Best Practices & International Experience.*

According to the one of most comprehensive guidance series devoted to the education for democratic citizenship and human rights education (EDC/HRE Volumes I-VI), the dignity, respect and responsibility must be the central values on which the school education rests. Therefore, not only the education should teach the human rights, but rather it must adhere to the human rights based approach (HRBA) and teach the individual about their own rights and the setting they live. Moreover, to provide tools and skills to apply these values in real life situation and be part of the school setting, where these values are used by others (students, teachers, etc.). This should develop a complete perception of the human rights values empowering the individual to use it outside of common setting with confidence and in responsible manner. This approach ideally must be combined with the democracy education described in the first part of this chapter.

With reference to the UNICEF (2009)<sup>21</sup>, the school following HRBA is expected to – a) accept and respect the individual's rights; b) be child-centered; c) ensure inclusion and equality of all individuals regardless the gender, ethnicity, religion, etc.; d) provide a quality-learning complying with real life requirements; e) secure the human rights based environment by training of teachers and working with families (Chapter 1, pp. 4, 20).

The abovementioned falls within narrow scopes of important characteristics necessary for the successful implementation of human rights education. Nevertheless, since the dissemination of Human Rights values through education is not limited to certain methods and approaches, a great number of sundry initiatives based on this concept were implemented.

These endeavours have been applied on different levels, with involvement of various stakeholders and often with consideration of the local specificities or acute issues. The variety of approaches of teaching human rights is largely related to the acknowledgement of wide diversity among those who involved in the education process. Hereby, the notion of inclusion and non-discrimination should be emphasised once again. Furthermore, the alteration of the approach may take place along the change of the age group.

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<sup>21</sup> [https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Child\\_Friendly\\_Schools\\_Manual\\_EN\\_040809.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Child_Friendly_Schools_Manual_EN_040809.pdf)

It is generally possible to differentiate several major blocks where the concept of human right education could be incorporated:

- National legislation/policy;
- Personnel retraining;
- Curriculum;
- Extracurricular activities and school environment;
- School governance;

Throughout the cases discussed below, there are several strategies of integration of human rights values into the education system. On the one hand, number of projects are focused on establishment of teaching environment that comply with those values. Specifically the great attention is drawn on training of the education facilities' personnel. In this context, teachers are the main target group for, they directly and systematically interact with students.

It is commonly accepted that the way individual is treated, the same attitude he or she shows to the peers. Thus, as in case of democracy education, the teachers, first of all, should establish the positive settings in order to obtain the expected outcome. This concept largely overlaps with teaching through human rights idea.

On the other hand, content changes are observed in curricula, along with integration of extracurricular activities. At this level though, the means of integration of human right values varies from case to case. The introduction of new modules directly devoted to the human rights into curricula is equally common as the indirect approach. The former links specific human rights related topics to the already existing modules, thereby securing the consistency of value teaching throughout the curricula. Subjects such as history, civic education, social studies, humanities, geography, literature, arts and alike most commonly embrace the human rights topics.

To summarise the international experience, a body of literature related to the applied cases of human right education was analysed. Through systematic review of existing international experience, the most efficient, commonly exercised practices were identified and introduced via prominent cases.

#### *Case of Northern Ireland*

In Northern Ireland, the requirements of "Education for Local and Global Citizenship" were set for the school curriculum of the age group between 11 and 14 years old. This was a

consequence of the countries Statutory Key Stage 3 curriculum revision. The focal group, thereby, was expected to be imparted with a set of human rights related concepts, namely: diversity, equality, inclusion, social responsibility and justice. In addition, more general notions on Human Rights, Democracy and Active citizenship were projected to be taught.

#### *Case of Czech Republic*

With an aim to promote multiculturalism, social cohesion and tolerance, the faculty of humanities in Charles University of Prague had initiated the development of 66 lessons covering the most topical questions. The project has set the improvement of multicultural education and human rights education in the primary and secondary schools as major challenge. Therefore, the topics they address encompass a vast range of human rights related concepts, including culture and cultural differences, discriminating, communication and prejudices, myths and stereotypes about Roma people, nationality, the rights of national minorities and the teaching of foreign languages, racism, etc. These lessons are vastly adopted by Czech Schools, and the initiative was prized by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.<sup>22</sup>

#### *Case of Romania*

As shown by Duncan (2002, pp. 72-75) the minority rights were among explicit weaknesses of Romania in the framework of EU accession process. Specifically, the rights of Roma people and their participation in the education were in notorious situation. To tackle this issue, certain actions were taken, namely increase of number of classes taught in Romani and application of quota system for Roma at the secondary and tertiary levels (i.e. reservation of places in higher education facilities).

In order to eliminate the discrimination and prejudice towards Roma people, as well as improve the inter-ethnic and inter-communal relations, the “Methodology and Resources for Integrating Roma Culture in Education (EURROM)” project targeting mainly primary and secondary schools, was undertaken. The mixed classes with Roma children were the project’s central focus. Here curricular changes oriented to integration of Roma culture into teaching process were introduced. Besides, teachers were advised to impart children with intercultural

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<sup>22</sup> Good Practice Report: Participatory Citizenship in the EU. Report 3, Europe for Citizens Programme, EC 2012. p. 48

competences (appreciation of diversity, knowledge and understanding of Roma traditions, etc.).<sup>23</sup>

A great deal of initiatives is supported by the international organisations, as well as involves NGOs as bearers of different roles (observers, project leaders, etc.)

The “Teaching Respect for All” project was realized in 2012 under the umbrella of UNESCO and within the framework of cooperation between United States of America and Brazil. The major aim was to counteract and eradicate the manifestation of discrimination through education as well as in education process itself. Although fundamental human rights’ values are the backbone of the initiative, the peculiarities of each country concerning the methods used against discrimination as well as the unique features of local culture and history were respected.

The purpose of the project is to enhance the level of respect among individuals, by teaching tolerance towards others regardless national identity, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, etc. To impart the relevant values effectively, the children of age group from eight to sixteen years old have been considered as a target group of the project. Both formal and informal classroom settings were utilised to ensure the higher involvement of participants.

So, considering the two parts of the chapter studied above, the present paper has managed to fully describe the links between education and each of selected concepts. Moreover, the most common theoretic approaches and practices regarding democracy and human rights promotion by means of education have been identified.

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<sup>23</sup> Human Rights Education in the School Systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America: A Compendium of Good Practice. Council of Europe, OSCE/ODIHR, UNESCO, OHCHR 2009; p. 62

## **CHAPTER 2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY**

Since the member states have a vast autonomy concerning the decision-making in the education sector, they bear the full responsibility for the way the education system functions. This encompasses the topical question on the European values incorporation in this system, as well as the promotion of democracy and human rights through education.

In this context, it is essential to understand the current state of education sector in FYROM and the relevant recent developments.

Hereby the study has an aim to answer two research questions, which are formulated as follows:

1. What Macedonia has done in the field of education related to democracy and human rights?
2. To what extent do the developments in FYROM education system related to democracy and human rights comply with the commonly accepted theory and practices?

In order to address the first research question, empirical research has been carried out and a body of official documents were analysed. It includes the national Constitution, laws on education & ethnic communities, several main national strategy documents and program papers directly or indirectly related to education, various action plans, national and international analytical and descriptive reports on projects implemented in FYROM, EC country specific progress reports, EC enlargement strategy papers, EU strategic frameworks and CoE manuals.

The two national strategies represent the major pillars of the education sector in the country, and thus deserve greater attention. The first one is the “National Programme for the Development of Education in the Republic of Macedonia 2005-2015” (NPDE). The document was developed by the Ministry of Education and Science. After being adopted in 2004, it became the main policy document of the education sector for the mentioned period of time. It is important to mention, however, that no official governmental or ministerial reports on the implementation of NPDE have ever been published.

The second one – the “Education Strategy 2018-2025”, is a draft paper and yet to be adopted after final improvements are applied. The strategy was developed with inclusion of

consultation results that involved different stakeholders and with consideration of countries commitments regarding the EU accession.

It is expected that the elaborate research of the above mentioned materials would describe the state-of-the-art and recent developments in education system of FYROM, related to democracy and human rights.

The findings would be additionally observed in the frames of four fields of action (see Table 1). The proposed division represents the vertical structure of possible intervention domains.

**Table 1. The main Domains of Intervention**

<b>Domains of Intervention</b>	<b>Domain Description</b>
<b>Legislative</b>	Refers to legal decisions
<b>Strategic</b>	Refers to strategy documents and programme papers
<b>Structural</b>	Refers to managerial and academic staff, educational facilities and equipment as well as financial provisions.
<b>Curricular</b>	Refers to officially adopted curriculum and educational materials.

By this method, the gathered information will have an explicit outline. The aim is to analyse to what extent the education, from perspective of democracy and human rights, has been addressed in possible domains of action.

In line with the proposed research questions, the following part of the methodology presents the approach for answering the second one.

Throughout the first chapter, an extensive literature review covering the fundamental theory and best practices of democracy and human rights promotion by means of education was carried out. The rationale behind that was to outline the commonly acknowledged approaches and prepare a ground for analysis of FYROM education sector in the framework of the European values' dissemination.

Based on the literature review outcomes, the assessment criteria were developed and are discussed later in the methodology. Furthermore, the formulated criteria were clustered in accordance to learning “about”, learning “through” and learning “for” logic, which is consistent with the CoE method and has already been applied in number of studies (see Chapter 1.1).

According to the Volume 1 of CoE “Education for democratic citizenship and human rights education” manuals, the democracy and human rights being strongly intertwined and complementing each other, should be taught in tandem. Moreover, the aforementioned three main strata, namely the learning “about”, learning “through” and learning “for”, which frame the democracy education, are applicable to human rights education as well. Thus, the separation between these two concepts is not applied in the criteria. The division was also avoided due to strong diffusion of their boundaries.

Table 2 presents the overview of the criteria aggregated under three strata, which are individually visited thereafter.

**Table 2. Overview of Criteria**

<b>Stratum</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	
<b>Learn About</b>	<b>Curriculum</b>	Availability
		Level of Education
		Content
		Competence Based Approach
		Stakeholder participation
		Problem Solving & Critical Thinking Skills
		Materials
<b>Learn Through</b>	<b>Practice Rights</b>	Activities
		Decision Making
	<b>Classroom Climate</b>	
	<b>Management &amp; Academic Staff Education</b>	
	<b>Inclusion &amp; Integration</b>	
<b>Learn For</b>	<b>Whole School Approach</b>	
	<b>Community Service</b>	
	<b>Parents Education</b>	

For “**Learn about**”, the criteria related to Curricula are commonly suggested. Nevertheless, a differentiation of curricular subcriteria is possible. First of all, the “**Availability**” of subjects teaching democracy and human rights should be checked. The two concepts can be taught either under the separate subject or integrated into other modules.

The next step is to reveal on which “**Level of education**” these subjects are available. The “**Content**” represents the third sub criterion and concerns the scopes of the knowledge taught under the given subjects. This may include basic notions, definitions, opposing and complimentary conceptual features, relevant skills and competencies, as well as additional components such as international, ecological and environmental aspects. The following sub criterion defines the need of “**Competence based approach**” in regard with the curricula development. The “**Stakeholder participation**” infers the involvement of all relevant actors in process of curricula shaping and writing.

The remaining two criteria relate to the “**Materials**” and teaching of “**Problem solving & critical thinking skills**”. The former focuses on the availability and adequacy of teaching material from the perspective of democracy and human rights. The latter questions applied teaching approaches, opposing the memorizing method to analysing and solution finding.

The “**Learning through**” stratum encompasses three criteria. The “**Practice rights**” among them, also includes two subcriteria. “**Activities**”, which is the first one, refers to the implementation of practical actions for experiencing democracy and human rights in real life situations. This can be organized both as a curricular and as an extracurricular activity. The “**Decision making**” sub criterion underlines the importance of engaging the learners into the decision making process which concerns every aspect of their studies, thus creating sense of democratic participation and responsibility taking. Decision making by pupils or students can be applied at any level.

The next criterion of the “**Learning through**” stratum is the “**Classroom climate**”. Here, the issues are related to the availability of teaching environment that is democratic and respects diversity, freedom of expression, difference of thoughts, beliefs and other values defined under human rights. This concerns both the inter-student relations, and the attitude shown by teachers.

This goes in hand with “**Management and academic staff education**”. This criterion is another critical element for effective democracy and human rights education, since the

teachers and other relevant professionals should become the holders of these values and be well equipped with necessary skills.

Finally, the **“Inclusion and integration”** criterion addresses the inclusion of all pupils (or students) regardless their age, sex, religious or ethnic affiliation, health condition and financial circumstances. Integration is understood as a situation where all the learners are taught together and are not separated by buildings, classrooms, shifts, etc. The “Inclusion and integration” echoes in almost all other criteria that reflect the mentioned aspects.

The last “Learning for” stratum combines the remaining three criteria selected for the assessment. Among them, the **“Whole school approach”** concentrates on the cooperation of various stakeholders, namely pupils and students, teachers, members of administrative apparatus, parents, etc. Additionally, the availability of collaboration patterns among municipalities, schools and other education facilities is considered to be a substantial part of this criterion.

**“Community service”** criterion should be understood as pupils’ engagement in various activities that are beneficial for the community, and have curricular or extracurricular character. This requirement is connected to the previous one, as the teachers and the whole community should be ready to provide assistance and be open for cooperation.

**“Parents education”** is the final criterion of this stratum. Here the necessity to deliver the democracy and human rights education to parents, mostly in the type of short trainings or continuous learning is assumed. This practice is vital for shaping the individual’s environment outside of education facility.

These criteria largely cover the main attributes required for effective and continuous democracy and human rights education. Although some variability in exercised approaches might be observed for different countries due to certain national peculiarities, the chosen method, overall, remains consistent.

The assessment of educational developments in FYROM related to democracy and human rights for answering the second research question will rest on the proposed toolset. The results presented in each section of Chapter three are respectively acquired by means of the two parts of methodology. Moreover, the methodology follows the nested logic of the study, which means that the findings of the first research question are prerequisite for answering the second one.

## CHAPTER 3. RESULTS

### 3.1 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The findings that attempt to answer the first research question are presented in this section.

In EU, education policy is the responsibility of member states. To hold control but also to coordinate their policies, the open method of coordination is applied. EU fosters the cooperation between member states and complements and supports their actions.<sup>24</sup>

So, each member state develops own education system enriched with EU recommended elements to different extent. Moreover, the countries can make use of broad platform for the exchange of best practices and collective problem solving provided by EU.

The latest policy paper in regard of education, the “EU Cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020)”, states among its priorities *promotion of civic competences (e.g. mutual understanding and democratic values), non-discrimination, inclusive education (including the increasing diversity of learners), equality and endowment of problem-solving and critical thinking skills.*

The “Europe 2020 Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth” sets 5 interconnected targets, among which, one is related to education with following benchmarks: a) to reduce the dropout (early school leavers) rate to 10% from the current 15%; b) to increase the share of the population aged 30-34 having completed tertiary education from 31% to at least 40% in 2020 (p. 11).

Regional strategy document, the “Southeast Europe 2020”, echoing Europe 2020 targets, identifies key actions in the field of education, which include *increase of equitable access to education, increase of mobility in SEE, prevention of early school leaving, aiming to contribute to inclusiveness and democratic participation.*

In political criteria sector of the annually published EC Enlargement Strategy papers it is prescribed to back inclusive education with access for all. Country-specific EC progress reports state that FYROM should address the issue of ethnic separation and make education system more integrated. Roma inclusion and increase of the enrolment rates for Roma learners must be prioritised. Education should contribute to democracy-building and strengthening, as well as provide competencies for living in democratic multicultural society.

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<sup>24</sup> The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFUE)

For this goal, the CoE claims *Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education* as important tools. These are oriented to give people the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to become active participants in democratic processes and to respect and strengthen human rights. Moreover, the CoE has developed the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, to equip the concerned countries with structural guidelines for more effective democracy and human rights education.<sup>25</sup> To further impart the European values and create European identity, the importance of mobility in the frames of education was stated by the EU Commissioner on Education, Culture, Youth and Sports at the European Education Summit (Brussels, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018).<sup>26</sup>

Hereby, the core priorities and targets regarding education in connection with democracy and human rights have been highlighted as a result of elaborate analysis of aforementioned documents.

In regard of FYROM education policy, new phase has commenced after the Ohrid Agreement in 2001. To this point, FYROM education system has the following structure:

- pre-school education – kindergartens (up to age of 6);
- compulsory primary education (ages 6-15, 9 grades);
- compulsory secondary education (ages 15-17/18);
  - general secondary (gymnasium),
  - secondary vocational,
  - art schools,
  - education for pupils with special needs.
- higher education.

The article 44 of the Constitution stipulates that everyone has the right to education and that education is accessible for everyone under equal conditions.

The Article 48 of the amended Constitution (November 2001) ensures the right of the members of minorities to have the instruction in primary and secondary education in their own language. In schools where education is carried out in the language of a minority, the Macedonian language is also studied.

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/competences-for-democratic-culture>

<sup>26</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-summit\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-summit_en)

Law to promote and protect rights of the communities (2008) states, that any community constituting 20% or more of the population of a municipality has the right to education in their mother tongue or first language on all levels.

Thus, education system in FYROM offers 4 languages of instruction (Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish and Serbian) in primary education and 3 languages with Serbian being left out in secondary education. At the Universities the education provision is carried out in Macedonian and Albanian. Out of 6 public universities 2 have Albanian as teaching language.<sup>27</sup>

The article 9 of Constitution is devoted to the right of non-discrimination and equality, which transfers to the following laws related to education: the Law on Primary Education, the Law on Secondary Education and the Law on Higher Education.<sup>28</sup>

Article 3 of the Law on Primary Education asserts that the goals of education include fostering mutual tolerance, cooperation, respect of diversities, basic human rights and freedoms, provision of citizenship values and problem solving skills.

The Law on Textbooks for Primary and Secondary Education (2008) obliges to publish textbooks in all languages of instruction and alphabets.<sup>29</sup>

The “National Report for Development of Education” for the period of 2001-2004 stated that building democracy in education is among its main goals, hereby providing equal access and participation of learners in education with freedom of expression and choice, participation in decision-making and acceptance of duties (p. 5).

The “National Programme for the Development of Education in the Republic of Macedonia 2005-2015” (NPDE), adopted in 2004, is the first comprehensive policy document on education. Though the Strategy does not have clearly formulated goals and objectives, the main idea can be retrieved: education is supposed to influence the progress of democracy and promotion of civic society. Furthermore, in the 5<sup>th</sup> section dedicated to values and principles, it is stated that education, among others, should be based on values of democracy, tolerance, humanity and principle of civic responsibility.

The NPDE in the first key area of intervention has the objective to make education *available to everybody who lives in FYROM, regardless their age, sex, religious or ethnic affiliation,*

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<sup>27</sup> Education System Macedonia, NUFFIC

<sup>28</sup> National Equality and Non-discrimination Strategy

<sup>29</sup> None of the laws is available in English, <http://www.mon.gov.mk/index.php/2014-07-24-06-34-40/zakoni>

*health condition and financial circumstances* (p. 8). The second area of intervention identifies objectives to increase the enrolment rate and minimize the dropouts in primary and secondary education. The third one targets social participation which implies opportunities for citizens to participate and have influence on different aspects of society, acquisition of civic values, respect for the human and multiculturalism. Finally, 5<sup>th</sup> key area of intervention had the objective to increase international cooperation in the field of education, as a mean of transmitting democratic values.

It is worth noting, however, that in the NPDE for the 11-year period no benchmarks are mentioned and there are mostly general formulations. Moreover, for reaching the defined objectives no measures have been formulated and the Programme did not have action plan. In addition, no official reports on the implementation of the NPDE have been published.

The next “Education Strategy 2018-2025”, which is still in process of adoption, provides definite and more detailed descriptions of goals, aims and objectives. Among its targets the Strategy states the need for acceptance of multiculturalism, interethnic integration, respect for diversity and democratic values (p. 19), development of adequate competencies to actively participate in social life, provision of means for inclusion of all learners.

“Employment and Social Reform Programme” (ESRP) 2020 recognizes that it is of an exceptional importance to ensure equal access to education for all children, regardless of their origin and differences. The inclusive education system increases accessibility of education for every child and creates conditions for quality education that suits the needs and abilities of each student (pp. 46-47). The education should supply future generations with knowledge, skills and competences that would be adequate to the needs of a democratic multicultural society (p. 85).

“Steps Towards Integrated Education in the Education System of the Republic of Macedonia”, adopted in 2010, relies on the series of international documents on minority education and minority protection, outlining the implementation of more integrated approach in education and improvement of interethnic relations as the overall aim. The raising of the level of education for Roma is largely addressed in “Strategy for the Roma in the Republic of Macedonia 2014-2020”.

In addition to the stated goals and commitments, education measures FYROM has undertaken regarding democracy and human rights should also be studied.

## PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

For the preschool education the NPDE objective was to significantly increase the inclusion of all children, with particular attention to children from culturally and socially disadvantaged environments, as well as children with special needs.

To impart the respect for diversity and multiculturalism to 5-6 years old children, a special programme was launched, which included preparation of educators from 10 kindergartens working with the children of relevant age. In case of educators representing the non-involved kindergartens the events on matter understanding improvement was organized. In addition, a manual, teaching materials and children books were prepared (Strategy 2018-2025: p.29).

In 2015 the staff from 10 kindergartens received training on inclusion based on appropriate modules for professional development. A manual for inclusive preschool education was also prepared.<sup>30</sup> In 2015, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MoLSP) adopted a programme on early learning and intellectual growth for children with developmental delays, which had aim to provide equal chances for all children. As for building partnership with parents, in the period between 2010 and 2012, trainings were organized to equip educators with relevant skills and enhance the level of their preparedness (Strategy 2018-2025: p. 30).

“Inclusion of Roma children in public kindergartens” project, as a result of collaboration between MoLSP and 17 Roma NGOs, was realized. The initiative had the aim to augment the Roma children enrolment numbers by changing the parents’ attitude towards education on the one hand and, on the other hand, by ameliorating the educators’ skills in working with Roma children and in fighting the prejudgements against the ethnic group. Ministry of Finance supported the project by providing financial assistance for preparing 17 Roma associated educators (Strategy 2018-2025: p. 30). Another relevant measure has been the provision of transportation for Roma children from and to pre-school facilities (Shkrijelj 2018: p- 14).

Though thanks to implemented measures the gross enrolment rate for entire nation augmented from 21.7% in 2008 to 36% in 2015,<sup>31</sup> the situation remains concerning in comparison with EU average of 90% recorded in 2015 and targeted benchmark of 95% for 2020.<sup>32</sup> The enrolment is especially low for children from marginalized communities and for children with special needs.

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<sup>30</sup> <https://borgenproject.org/education-in-macedonia/>

<sup>31</sup> <http://uis.unesco.org/country/MK>

<sup>32</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Children\\_aged\\_between\\_4\\_years\\_and\\_the\\_starting\\_age\\_of\\_compulsory\\_education\\_who\\_participated\\_in\\_early\\_education,\\_2015\\_\(%25\\_share\)\\_BYIE18.png](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Children_aged_between_4_years_and_the_starting_age_of_compulsory_education_who_participated_in_early_education,_2015_(%25_share)_BYIE18.png)

## PRIMARY EDUCATION

Primary Education objectives include the development of modern curricula, provision of access to vulnerable groups as well as inclusion and participation of pupils with special educational needs (NPDE).

In 2007, the primary curriculum has been updated and “civic education” has been introduced as a compulsory subject along with optional ones related to minorities’ language, culture and religion. In addition, a programme for life skills education was designed, however, not yet implemented (Official Curriculum).

To secure better access to education, the textbooks and transportation (for pupils living further than 2 km away) are provided for free (Strategy 2018-2025: p. 33). Number of early school leavers was decreased from 22.2% in 2006 to 11.4% in 2015.<sup>33</sup> This is the result of introduction of the compulsory secondary education. Noteworthy, that EU target for 2020 is set on 10% level (Europe 2020).

Regular schools, along with special schools, have been equipped with new facilities to accept children with special educational needs. To work with these children teachers have been involved in the “Inclusive Education Training-for-Trainers” two-year programme (2012-2014), launched with support of UNICEF. The government has made teachers’ qualifications one of the five thematic strands of the strategy towards an integrated education system (Deenen 2014: p. 14).

In the framework of the USAID “Interethnic Integration in Education Project”<sup>34</sup>, trainings and activities including students and teachers with different languages of instruction have been organized in primary and secondary schools to create supportive climate.

For Roma pupils, official tutorial assistance is ensured from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grades. Moreover, in some pedagogical faculties the same service is offered by the students to create less formal learning environment. Besides, mediators from Roma community have been introduced (Shkrijelj et al. 2018: p. 14).

Nansen Dialogue Centre (NDC) Skopje started a project in 2008 to open an integrated school in Preljubiste village in Tetovo.<sup>35</sup> Though being divided in two separate classrooms, Macedonian and Albanian pupils were jointly involved in extra-scholar activities where bilingual approach was used. To overcome the initial difficulties in interaction and overall

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<sup>33</sup> [http://www.stat.gov.mk/Default\\_en.aspx](http://www.stat.gov.mk/Default_en.aspx)

<sup>34</sup> <https://borgenproject.org/education-in-macedonia/>

<sup>35</sup> <https://ndc.org.mk>

tensed climate teachers and parents were also engaged. Today, the project is implemented in 6 more schools in addition the pilot one in Preljubiste.<sup>36</sup>

In some other schools Teams for School integration have been established with an aim to organize joint activities for pupils with different instruction languages, thereby reducing ethnic preconceptions, and improve children's knowledge about each other's culture.<sup>37</sup>

## SECONDARY GENERAL EDUCATION

For secondary education, in addition to free of charge textbooks, transportation and accommodation for all is likewise provided for free (Strategy 2018-2025: p. 46).

Though not yet adopted, the curriculum for "Life Skills Education" and relevant manual have been prepared. Moreover, subject programmes have been analysed in regard with the existence of multiculturalism on both objectives and content (Strategic Documents, NDC Skopje). To promote democratic values, freedoms, diversity, and to reduce violence in schools, several extracurricular activities have been exercised.

To improve inclusion for pupils with special needs, schools have been provided with equipment; relevant services, such as psychologists, educators, etc. have been engaged, as well as each subject was complemented with special programmes (UNICEF 2014: pp. 12, 24). For Roma children, to tackle the problem of low enrolment and attainment rates, scholarships and tutoring activities have been launched since 2009. Programmes providing advice to parents were also implemented in majority of schools (Strategy for the ROMA 2014-2020: pp. 45-46).

USAID in cooperation with Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) started another inter-ethnic project for the period of 2017-2020. The Youth Ethnic Integration Project contributes to better understanding between different ethnic groups and teaches civic skills.<sup>38</sup>

## VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

In Vocational Education and Training (VET) as well, mediators have been included for Roma students (Shkrijelj et al. 2018: p. 24). The implementation of joint curricular and extracurricular activities aimed at strengthening inter-ethnic integration and cohesion, including practical training (practical teaching, vocational practice and summer internships),

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<sup>36</sup> <https://www.la-croix.com/Actualite/Monde/En-Macedoine-une-ecole-favorise-la-reconciliation-2014-04-27-1141938>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.usaid.gov/macedonia/education>

<sup>38</sup> *ibid*

should have been commenced by 2015.<sup>39</sup> However, as of today, no report on the actual implementation has been presented. The VET Strategy 2013-2020 also mentions interventions that attempt to make vocational schools more inclusive and accessible to all (pp. 43-46) but without exact references.

## HIGHER EDUCATION

In 2003, FYROM committed to implement recommendations of the Bologna Process and undertake actions to join the future European Area of Higher Education (EAHE) (OECD Report 2004: p. 16). Moreover, the intention to support the promotion of mobility for students and teaching staff in higher education, was formulated (NPDE 2003: p. 15).

To provide better access to higher education, 3 new public universities have been opened. Tuition fees have been decreased, and easier conditions for enrolment have been established for adults over 30/35. Share of persons with completed higher education in 2015 reached 27.75%,<sup>40</sup> which is rather close to EU average of 31% (EU target for 2020 is set at 40%<sup>41</sup>).

Based on governmental decision and in line with the Roma Strategy 2014, the MoES started granting scholarships for Roma students from 2015, facilitating their enrolment in universities that prepare teaching staff (Strategy 2018-2025: p. 57).

In 2007, Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window and Western Balkans Window Components were opened for FYROM. Starting from 2010, scholarships by MoES have been provided for mobility programs, with the later enlargement of budget in 2015.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, since 2013, grants are being issued for teachers for participation in European creative activities. Besides, in 2014, FYROM has joined the “Horizon 2020”, a seven-year EU programme for mobility of scientists (Strategy 2018-2025: p. 33).

Based on the presented research results the study hereby analyses to what extent the education, from perspective of democracy and human rights, has been addressed in possible domains of intervention. The following table briefly discusses each of these domains.

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<sup>39</sup> VET Strategy 2013-2020

<sup>40</sup> [http://www.stat.gov.mk/OblastOpsto\\_en.aspx?id=5](http://www.stat.gov.mk/OblastOpsto_en.aspx?id=5)

<sup>41</sup> Europe 2020

<sup>42</sup> <https://borgenproject.org/education-in-macedonia/>

**Table 3. FYROM initiatives by domains of intervention**

<b>Domains of Intervention</b>	<b>Major Findings</b>
<b>Legislative</b>	<p>The non-discrimination and equality is declared by Constitution and transposed to relevant legislation in the field of education.</p> <p>Laws largely address the protection of minorities' rights. For instance, right to the education in their mother tongue on every level (i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary) is ensured.</p> <p>Although promotion of democracy, human rights and civic participation are explicitly mentioned as the goals for Primary Education in respective Law, the laws on remaining levels do not include these notions.</p>
<b>Strategic</b>	<p>Equal access, democracy building and respect for human rights are specified as objectives in the majority of main strategy documents and programme papers.</p> <p>Integrated interethnic education was overlooked in Strategy 2005-2015, though addressed through various projects and eventually comprehensively discussed in Strategy 2018-2025.</p>
<b>Structural</b>	<p>New educational institutions have been opened.</p> <p>Limited number of initiatives has been organized to provide the educational institutions with equipment necessary for full inclusion of children with special needs.</p> <p>Trainings preparing staff to provide inclusive and integrated education are available; though target a narrow group of teachers and professional personnel.</p> <p>Financial support including scholarships are provided to the prospective students representing the minority groups.</p>
<b>Curricular</b>	<p>Curricula was modernised by introduction of subjects devoted to democracy and human rights education.</p>

Thus, the general situation and latest developments are discussed and analysed in this section, thereby answering the first research question. Moreover, it became evident, that FYROM in its official position admits education as democratizing force and states numerous times its role in promotion of European values. Finally, it might be inferred that the measures implemented also reflect this reality, however the implementation scale is limited and additional effort is yet required.

## 3.2 CRITERIA-BASED ASSESSMENT

Developments in FYROM education system from the perspective of democracy and human rights are assessed based on the requirements of the criteria, specified by commonly accepted theoretic approaches and practices discussed in Chapter 1. In Table 4 the compliance of relevant developments with criteria, structured in accordance to the methodology, is presented.

In upcoming sections all the criteria are separately visited.

### LEARNING ABOUT DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

#### Curriculum

##### *Availability*

In Curriculum, FYROM included education about democracy as a separate compulsory subject under the name “Civic Education”. Language and Culture of Vlachs/Bosniaks/Roma, Albanian Language, Ethics of Religion, Recognition of Religion and European Civilization are offered as optional subjects (Official Curriculum for Primary Level).

##### *Levels*

Civic education is included in the curriculum from primary level in 8th and 9th grades once per week. Additionally, from 1st to 5th grades the subject “Society” is taught. Language and Culture of Vlachs/Bosniaks/Roma are available for grades from 3 to 9. In turn, Albanian Language is offered from 6th to 9th, while Ethics of Religion, Recognition of Religion and European Civilization are provided only in 6th grade (Official Curricula).

The separate subjects devoted to democracy and human rights education are missing from preschool education, as well as secondary and higher education.

##### *Content*

“Civic Education” covers the knowledge of political and social concepts, basic human rights concepts, respect for different opinions and beliefs (Birzea 2005: p. 35). It does not include any reference to responsibilities and restrictions that are an integral part of democracy (EURYDICE 2017: p. 67). Multicultural/intercultural component is insufficiently presented.

**Table 4. Assessment of developments**

<b>Stratum</b>	<b>Criteria</b>		<b>Findings</b>
<b>Learn About</b>	<b>Curriculum</b>	Availability	Topic-related subjects are available
		Level of Education	Available for primary level
			Missing for other levels
		Content	Certain concepts are included
			Some components are missing
		Competence Based Approach	Not available
		Stakeholder participation	Not all stakeholders are considered
		Problem Solving & Critical Thinking Skills	Old-school approaches are prevalent
Materials	Not sufficient		
<b>Learn Through</b>	<b>Practice Rights</b>	Activities	Basic practices are available
			Number is limited
			Advanced practices are missing
		Decision Making	Nominal means are available
	Practically not exercised		
	<b>Classroom Climate</b>		Inappropriate
	<b>Management &amp; Academic Staff Education</b>		Poorly prepared
	<b>Inclusion &amp; Integration</b>	Generally available	
Certain aspects are omitted			
<b>Learn For</b>	<b>Whole School Approach</b>		Slightly applied
	<b>Community Service</b>		Missing
	<b>Parents Education</b>		Missing

### *Competence-based approach*

Macedonia does not practice competence-based approach, education is knowledge-based and curriculum guidelines do not contain learning outcomes.<sup>43</sup>

### *Stakeholders' participation*

In the discussions and writing process of the curricula students participation is missing, however teachers are consulted on all levels of educational system (Eurydice 2017: p. 43).

### *Problem-solving and Critical thinking skills*

The studying process is based on memorisation of information, rather than on understanding and imparting of problem-solving skills (Strategy 2018-2025: p. 36).

### *Materials*

Published or online support materials for democracy and human rights education are absent, however, in Strategy 2018-2025 the preparation of adequate materials covering human rights, respect for diversity and democratic values is set as an objective.

## LEARNING THROUGH DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

### Practice rights

#### *Activities*

Extracurricular activities that promote education for democracy and human rights are scarce and of basic nature (e.g. meeting politicians and visiting the governmental bodies) (EURYDICE 2017: p. 90). Moreover, no recommendations supporting these activities are given. Even if some extra scholar initiatives are organized, the financing is not enough (e.g. only 33000 euros for 2016<sup>44</sup>).

#### *Decision-making*

Class and school councils are at least formally established in every school (Springate 2013: p.3). In practice, however, the decision-making is centralised at the higher managerial level (Strategy 2018-2025: p. 37). The participatory approach, thus, is virtually not exercised, which is true for all levels of education system.

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<sup>43</sup> <http://bro.gov.mk/?q=mk/nastavni-planovi>

<sup>44</sup> UNICEF Annual Report 2017

### Classroom climate

The teaching manner, in general, is rather authoritative. Teachers do not secure sufficient respect for diversity, equality and multiculturalism and do not have a positive influence on the democratic attitudes of children. Moreover, they often contribute to inter-ethnic intolerance by confirming prejudices and stereotypes.<sup>45</sup> Almost half of the respondents of an OSCE study (2010) had reportedly heard their teacher making derogatory comments about other ethnic groups.<sup>46</sup>

Teachers are not adequately prepared for the inclusive education and are not capable of resolving conflicts in a constructive manner. A research conducted in 2014 suggested that for substantial number of teachers it was rather complicated to provide a good teaching atmosphere (Delcheva 2014: p. 4).

### Teachers/staff education

FYROM does not have any regulation on the teachers' citizenship education competencies on the level of the Initial Teacher Education (ITE), so the higher education institutions are responsible for this (EURYDICE 2017: p. 134). Subjects on teaching the democratic principles and practices can be found in Teacher Training Institutions (Springate 2003: p. 3).

Preparation and trainings for academic staff are underfinanced. Teachers from – “Gjorgija Pulevski”, “Dimo Hadzi Dimov” and “Dane Krapev” primary schools involved in a UNICEF programme claimed that educators are generally not prepared to work democratically, to work for inclusive education, as well as they do not have skills to build relations with parents (UNICEF 2014: p. 10, 16, 20). Principals, as well, should gain competencies to guarantee the appropriate learning ambience in schools.

### Inclusion and integration

The empirical research displays that the issues of inclusive and integrated education are systematically addressed. Numerous measures were implemented in that regard, especially for Roma inclusion, however, significant shortcomings have been detected.<sup>47</sup>

The schools with multi-language status have applied practice of student division based on instruction language<sup>48</sup> and due to limited number of extra-curricular activities create only negligible opportunities for interaction among these groups. Attention devoted to

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<sup>45</sup> [https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/TFYRMacedonia\\_49444.html](https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/TFYRMacedonia_49444.html)

<sup>46</sup> Improving Inter-ethnic Relations (2014), OSCE

<sup>47</sup> Progress Reports, EC

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.humanium.org/fr/macedoine/>

multiculturalism in everyday practice is inadequate (Skikos 2013: p 35). Strategy 2018-2025 makes reference to the stakeholders' comments about the incomplete implementation of activities regarding multicultural education.

Materials and resources for educational process realisation in all instruction languages are not sufficient (Strategy 2018-2025: p. 52). Some textbooks are not updated and missing elements concerning respect of differences, integration or multiculturalism, but sometimes include stereotypes and prejudices. The history books for ethnic groups offer variable content and make a basis for disagreements between the learners (ECRJ 2016: p. 22-23).

Roma representatives' enrolment in educational institutions is on low level (Progress Report 2018, p. 33). Some complaints come from Roma parents as they face difficulties during their children's enrolment process because of quota limitations. For summer period transportation for Roma is not organized and they are not able to take part in seasonal activities (Shkrijelj 2018: p.15). Also concerns are raised on the matter of poor preparedness of teachers who work with children with special educational needs (Skikos 2013: p. 34).

## LEARNING FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

### Whole school approach

The collaboration between teachers, schools management, parents and representatives of local communities is on a low level (Skikos 2013: p. 35). Any financial support in regard of activities devoted to improvement of parents' participation is absent.

### Community service

Practices related to community services are not documented and have not been detected in future actions plans either.

### Parents education

Education for parents at any level is not applied. Some actions are undertaken for developing initiatives for parents' consultation.

Thus, second research question is addressed through the criteria-based assessment of the current situation and main developments. The findings indicate that the criteria were fulfilled only partially. Particularly the Learning For Democracy and Human Rights stratum was almost completely neglected. For the other strata higher action density is recorded.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study was dedicated to the role of education in advancing the EU accession process for FYROM. Two components of political criteria, namely “democracy” and “human rights & respect for and protection of minorities” have been addressed through the lens of education.

By the means of this research, links between democracy and human rights on the one hand and education on the other, have been established. This was supported by body of literature. In this context, already decades ago, many philosophers, sociologists, educational reformers and other intellectuals were considering education as a powerful tool to prepare generations for adopting democratic principles and respecting the human rights. During the years, this concept has evolved and found many protagonists also among politicians. Today it is advocated by international organizations, with EU and Council of Europe among others, which attribute significant role to education in strengthening democracy and promoting human rights.

By examining the existing theory, experience and the best practices, the most efficient approaches to impart these values through education have been identified and later on were used as assessment criteria. They are as follows:

- Curricular practices – to learn about democracy and human rights, special subject(s) that teaches relevant concepts, skills, behaviour, etc., should be incorporated into curricula. Along with that, critical thinking and problem solving skills are a must for adequate engagement in democratic life;
- Practical activities – one should not only learn about democracy and human rights but also have an opportunity for its application;
- Academic staff – teachers are an important factor in democracy and human rights education. They bear the responsibility for ensuring the appropriate classroom climate, teaching in accordance to philosophy of democracy and human rights values. Therefore, academic staff preparation should not be neglected.
- Inclusion and integration – these concepts constitute the essence of democracy and human rights as they promote respect to, and equal access for all.
- Extrascholar approach – establishment of collaboration grounds between all stakeholders, as well as having students engaged in community life represent the key ways for contributing into democracy and human rights.

Thus, the most common theoretic approaches and practices regarding democracy and human rights promotion by means of education found in literature, have been summarised.

Thereafter, the findings of the empirical research are directly connected to the first research question (“*What Macedonia has done in the field of education related to democracy and human rights?*”), and provide evidence that FYROM in its official position admits education as a tool for democratisation of the society. Thus, in the laws, national strategies and programme papers, references to the significance of education in dissemination of European values of democracy and human rights in the country, were found. Certain practical measures also reflect this reality.

However, additional analysis carried out in this work by dividing the above-mentioned findings into four main intervention domains, i.e. legislative, strategic, structural and curricular, showed that there are still gaps in each of them.

The second research question which was formulated as “*To what extent do the developments in FYROM education system related to democracy and human rights comply with the commonly accepted theory and practices?*” was addressed through criteria-based assessment. The results suggested that there is still potential to be employed, as those criteria were fulfilled only partially: for the three strata, i.e. “Learn about”, “Learn through”, “Learn for”, out of 15 criteria and sub-criteria in total, only two sub-criteria were met, other five met partly, and the remaining eight almost not met at all.

Thus, the first and the second parts of the working hypothesis – ***Education is considered as one of the major tools to disseminate European values for FYROM, however, its potential has not yet been fully employed*** – were proven by the answers to the first and the second research questions, respectively.

The importance of this paper’s findings relates to the understanding of the gap between the “***inputs***” done in forms of policy declarations, strategy statements, and even formal legal requirements supporting promotion of democracy and human rights through education, and the “***outputs***” which should appear as implemented measures.

The further research on the topic selected for the present study could be the assessment of the “***outcomes***” related to the results of the implemented measures, i.e. the changes in the level of society democratisation and respect of human rights.

For the EU enlargement to the Southeastern Europe, the results of the study for the FYROM case might be useful for more careful assessment and deeper analysis of the situation with similar issues in other candidate countries to expose the real state of play related to both documents and practical measures.

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