

# THE GREENS ARE COM- ING



# THE GREENS ARE COMING

Publication of the "Green Future" project dedicated to green values,  
social justice and anti-nationalism

CIVIL – Center for Freedom  
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# IMPRESSUM

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## THE GREENS ARE COMING!

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**GREEN FUTURE**

Green values, social justice and anti-nationalism

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# INTRODUCTION...

**T**he main objective of the “Green Future” project was improving the public perception, education and activities that support concepts of a society that fosters green values, social justice and anti-nationalism, and where they are interconnected and understood by the wider public and by those making political decisions.

Specific goals included awareness raising, education and promoting green values, social justice and anti-nationalism, through field work, monitoring, presentations, events and media coverage, with the purpose to have an impact on policy makers in the country to understand and implement the unity and interrelationship of the issues relevant to this project.

The project reflected on the issues of fake news, hate speech and nationalism that are infiltrating in civil society and in political structures.



## **I. GREEN VALUES**

# ORDANOSKI: A VIRTUAL ASTEROID CALLED CLIMATE CHANGES IS THREATENING THE EARTH

“It will cause unseen disasters in the future. But I’m not here to talk about black scenarios. I’m here about new hope that we have. A light in the tunnel of climate changes”, said Ordanoski.

Ordanoski sees hope in the young people.

“Young people just don’t buy politicians’ stories anymore. Today’s society in which we live in is the old version, something that is not functioning anymore. We have to bring a new version. It will be brought by the young people”, said Ordanoski.

At the conference he also announced the project “Ecomonitor”, partially financed by the Innovation Fund, the motto of which is that the fight against air pollution starts by measuring it.

“The situation with air pollution measurement in the country is tragic at the moment!”, considers Ordanoski.

Regarding the “Ecomonitor” project, Ordanoski says that it

represents hyper-local air pollution measuring with hundreds of devices in every municipality that will be able to realistically measure the pollution at any given moment. The idea is for all data to be available to everyone. By doing so, a network of sensors will be developed that will send data to the central servers every few minutes, measuring gases, pressure, humidity, PM particles, ambient sounds and so on...With this project, Macedonia will become one of the best equipped countries in the region in terms of air pollution measurement. But this is not the most important thing. Pollution forecast is also important. After a certain period of time, with data we will be able to predict what the pollution will be in a certain day, certain hour. This is important because authorities respond to pollution retroactively. This way, the authorities will be able to influence and react proactively in regards to the pollution.

**M. Ivanovska**



# XHAFERI: I HAVE HOPE, BUT WE HAVE MUCH WORK TO DO!

**A**rianit Xhaferi from Eco Guerrilla from Tetovo says that out of all creatures on the planet, the people are the only ones who are destroying it.

“Green parties are very popular on the old continent, they are fighting against climate changes, hence, the Greens can also come to North Macedonia. There are hundreds of organizations working on this topic, coalitions and partnerships as well. I hear that soon there will be a new green political party. But will these organizations finish the job they are supposed to finish, and will they save planet Earth from the enormous pollution? I don't think so. I will tell you honestly that I don't believe that only they are enough. As long as authorities, ministers, MPs, mayors are driving in expensive automobiles, I don't think so”, highlighted Xhaferi.

He spoke about the initiative of his organization for the subsidizing of filters for factories in Tetovo and Gostivar, an initiative that was accepted by the Government, but which



allocated only 40.000 euros, which are not enough for even just one factory.

"There is no environmental protection if we don't pass laws that give greater competencies and rights to state inspectorates", says Xhaferi.

He believes that the greens cannot deal with all the problems, as long as everyone does not become Green.

"We can't expect only for the NGO sector to do our job. We can't dream of Europe, as long as we work the Macedonian way. We can spit on Macron and France and Bulgaria and everyone else, but have we really earned it? We need to be green, regardless of whether we are leftists or rightists, whether we are Macedonians, Albanians, Roma....", said Xhaferi, adding that he still has hope, but that we still have much work to do.

M. Ivanovska

# THE TRASH IN US

by: **MILAN BANOVIĆ**

These days I had a guest from the Czech Republic, who, according to his mood I noticed while walking around Skopje, I can imagine what impression he will take with him from here, and even from us. First, I think, he was happy, or to be more precise, this man from the golden city of Prague “burst” into laughter everytime he would look at the bronze and plaster that grace/disgrace our capital city. I explained to him that this is no laughing matter, that this and such Skopje is a result of a totalitarian consciousness, of disturbed aesthetic and ethical criterion of a tyrannical, bullying dpmne government that found something beautiful in the kitsch. Pavel, that's his name, now seriously, tells me that it can be fixed, especially since plaster (and the plaster figures, of course) is brittle and of temporary character.

His second mood from our panoramic sightseeing of Skopje is a kind, shy remark, and then antediluvian silence, caused by ugly images, spread across almost every square meter, images from which you simply just cannot escape. It's a landscape of trash and dirtiness that attacks fiercely and

makes you feel ashamed. I'm also quiet, because no matter how much I want to clean things up, it's simply impossible to push the garbage "under the rug".

Really, does someone from aside need to tell us how "dirty" our city is, hasn't any one of us individually faced a series of framed images of a Skopje dead nature. Take a look at the streets and sidewalks – they're new, wide, contemporary, almost European, but with the additions resulting from the Balkans mental situation that is still inhibiting our heads and just doesn't seem to leave; additions in the form of overfilled garbage bins, with the same amount of garbage around them, of plant pots overfilled with garbage and the area around them, of bus stations covered with a carpet of stubs and pieces of paper, of benches where people sat, ate, drank and left everything behind that couldn't be used anymore ...

And furthermore: take a look at the parks, their "new plants" of plastic bags, bottles, torn and thrown away newspapers, paper in all colors and sizes... look at the monuments, their pedestals decorated with materials thrown that are not of bronze, but brings up the thought that some awareness fitting for the Bronze Age threw them there, look at the faces of those monuments – the birds have done their job, but not the communal services. What to say about the rivers, about the shallow and dirty Vardar River and the thick deposits of waste on its shores, about the Treska River, which its nearby residents, the "ecologists" there having recognized it as a landfill have transferred several meters of garbage from their outhouses, sheds, fields... Have foreigners been to the Skopje neighbourhoods (I didn't dare taking Pavel there), has the road led them to, let's say, the neighbour-

hoods of Shutka or Chair? Have they stayed here "after the rain", which first of all naturally washes the Skopje streets of everything we have made them dirty with day and night, but then leaves them flooded, muddy, sludgy and with an unpleasant smell.

And since we're already discovered by foreigners, I don't see a reason why not to "expose" ourselves to the end and speak not only about Skopje, but also about the entire dirty country, where we can clearly and tangibly witness the rural awareness of a large number of citizens, of their mental unhygienic and destructive habit of systematically destroying the environment. Yes, we are a beautiful, warm, hospitable and perfectly imperfect country with numberless images that irresistibly remind of the mythical Augean stables.

In my frame, for instance, is the remarkable image of historic Smilevo, where right next to the Monastery in the once clean little river and on its shores I managed to count 2,482,568 plastic bottles (who doesn't believe can go and count) that along with the countless plastic bags, cans, rubbish, paper, faeces, a dead donkey, a dozen dead chickens and other animals of unrecognizable species have turned the village into a giant landfill that nowadays even the Turks would hardly be able to burn down. Or, let's say, here is also that contaminated landscape near Lazaropole, which the neat villagers and owners of holiday houses have designated as their landfill, so in an organized manner with trucks they take the garbage every day to a higher point on the road and from there they pour it out on the downhill of the mountain. Here is also the image of the road section Veles-Stip, where, as flags, you are greeted by hanging plastic bags scattered on the trees. Here are also the dirty streets and squares, polluted cities,

towns and villages, destroyed parks and picnic areas, dead rivers and lakes... Finally, in the image a ripe Macedonian tomato is noticed falling from a ten-storey building in the Skopje municipality of Aerodrom, which splatters in front of year feet and momentarily turns into a metaphor. For a level of awareness, for a destructive provincial mentality, for a primitive person who still believes that hygiene is a contagious disease.

I am concluding, too much trash even for a text that deals with the topic of garbage, plus I can't escape the impression that I'm disfiguring my own country. But that's how it is, sometimes you will write with pride when you see her beautiful face, and the second time with shame when behind the face appears the character who built that idiotic realization that when it comes to trash, it should be thrown, it doesn't matter where and how, it's important to throw it away and to get rid of it. Hence, decontamination of awareness comes next, in order to clean the trash in us.

## RADISHANI, FROM UP-CLOSE

**O**n the sidewalks of the main street of “Radishanska”, in the suburban neighbourhood of Radishani – Municipality of Butel, under the shopping center and in front of the primary school “Aco Shopov”, there is no space for pedestrians to walk freely.

In order to get to the bus stop, you need to walk in the middle of the street, or go through the shopping center in order to arrive safely and without getting dirty to the bus stop. The garbage bins are placed on the sidewalk, on the very edge, the garbage is spattered almost to the middle of the street, and there are vehicles constantly parked on the sidewalk.

The “Radishani” neighbourhood is considered as one of the cleanest, most peaceful and most organized urban areas, but that goes only for the interior of the neighbourhood. The main street, on which vehicles pass to get to the second, third entrance of the neighbourhood, and to the village of Ljubanci, in the commercial part of the neighbourhood, is not safe for passers-by, especially for the students of the “Aco Shopov” primary school. As a resident of the neighbourhood, I urge the municipal authorities, namely, the Municipality of Butel, to take measures to take care of the chaos on the “Radishanska” street. To dislocate the garbage bins to an appropriate place, in order to free the sidewalks



for citizens to be able to move about freely and safely. Not to allow parking of vehicles, since the shopping mall has a parking lot, and to punish police officers who occasionally appear on the street, but do not take any measures.

The photos are taken at 8.30 in the morning. From 7.00 am to 7.30 pm, the sidewalks are filled with parked vehicles of parents bringing their children to school, so we have to walk on the street, often waiting for several minutes in one place, as there is traffic chaos.

**Diana Tahiri**



# DOES SKOPJE REALLY WANT CLEAN AIR?

**W**e really are pathetic when we say that we want clean air. This topic may not be so prevalent at the moment, but it will be a matter of weeks when the mass wining will start again and the “posting” of graffiti that will show a new wave of pollution with PM 10 particles. Like every year, we will probable start from the beginning: Skopje wants clean air... and Bitola too, so does Tetovo. We want, but there is no. What we have had, and probably will have, are quarrels in regards to whether the residents or the big businesses are to be blamed most for the fact that we and our children this year again will be suffocating.

In order to have clean air as soon as possible, drastic measures would be needed that wouldn't be popular neither for the residents, nor for the authorities. Putting a lock on most of the landfills and more rigorous controlling of the illegal landfills certainly is possible. This will also reflect upon us and our habits – how much waste we will produce and how we will get rid of it. Let us remind that throwing bathtubs with tiles and doors into a lake protected by UNESCO is not the most fitting move. Additionally, the fact that more than half of the vehicles on our streets don't meet even the most basic environmental standards that apply to the European countries is worrying.

What should we do? Ban or confiscate the old vehicles and

make drivers buy new ones? This is unrealistic, especially having in consideration that if these drivers had money, they wouldn't be driving old cars, but would buy a new one that meets European standards.

But let's be fair in the assessment – some residents (who are difficult to describe as citizens), if they could, would even go to the bathroom with their cars. Hence, the recommendation to walk to short distances falls on deaf ears, particularly if we have in consideration that part of the sidewalks and parks are converted into parking places for those who want to drive around but don't want to pay for parking. Even if you try to escape from the traffic, for example to Vodno Mountain, it's impossible – it's silly to complain about cars in the mountains and picnic areas, when there is a parking lot there. It doesn't matter that cars are washed in rivers – like at Matka. This will be photographed, posted on the social networks and it will end here until the next rerun.

Why not make them use public transportation? Even if we solve the problem with the busses not being on time, how many of you would dare to get on a narrow Chinese bus on Tuesday and Friday? Especially if it stops near a green market? Those who have felt the problem know exactly what I mean.

All right. Everyone on bikes! And on electric scooters! This certainly is a practical initiative that points to progressive thinking, with which some of us equate ourselves with the Swedes or Dutch. But this "image" is broken from the moment when on the bicycle lanes you run into some talented people who have broken the safety posts in order to park there. As we can determine from numerous photos on the

social networks, for some residents the automobile is a synonym for a wheelchair. For some residents, on the other hand, bicycle lanes are promenades. The sidewalks that are right next to the lanes, are probably not enough interesting, although, visible and wide enough. Let's not forget also about the parked cars. In certain cases, pedestrians really don't have where to walk. If there are no bicycle lanes that you need to fly over the parked cars and cordons of pedestrians you need to avoid, then there are streets. Whoever survives on a bicycle on the Skopje streets can tell us.

All this creates the impression of a dead-end situation: that no matter how much we try, there's no chance for the air to be clean. But there is also an alternative conclusion that few are willing to make – to start from ourselves, and then to argue against the city and the authorities. There have been and should be protests against air pollution, but in order to refer such criticism, we need to set an appropriate example. If on our way to the protests we throw the garbage out of the window of our building, and then we start the old car to arrive just one hundred meters further down and park in the middle of a park, then we cannot protest against the air pollution. Let's not forget, the children for whom we claim to be fighting for follow our example more than they listen to our advices.

**Aleksandar Peshev**

# ABOUT THE FUTURE AND SHAME BEFORE THE COMING GENERATIONS

I don't know about you, but I feel ashamed before the generations that will come to live here after me.

Shame is eating me alive when I think about what kind of country I had found when I was born, and what kind I'm leaving behind to those who will live here after me.

I am more and more ashamed during each trip across the country. For the garbage and lakes and rivers and...

My latest shame is because of the mountains.

Those wonderful, covered with forests or mountain flowers, beautiful combinations of stone and greenery, habitats of various species of animals, created hundreds of thousands of years, full of stories and enchantment.

Those mountains that are gradually disappearing along with the forest and mountain flowers, the spectacular combinations of stone and greenery, with the habitats of the animals, with the stories and enchantments.

According to Article 8 of the Law on Environment, when dealing with the environment, a sustainable development principle should be included – “for the purpose of meeting the needs for a healthy environment, as well as the social and economic needs of the current generations, without

jeopardizing the rights of the future generations to meet their needs, when taking any action or performing any business activity, special considerations has to be paid to rational and sustainable use of natural wealth".

#### Article 14

Principle of prevention – "Measures and activities of environmental protection shall be taken prior to the occurrence of adverse effects"

In the Law on Minerals, on the other hand, Article 36 stipulates "A concession for exploitation of minerals is awarded by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia".

Despite the very good and clear regulation, the Government (this one and all previous ones in order) is destroying the future of the future generations.

Precisely the Government (this one as well as all previous ones) stands behind the quarry in Veles, and behind the quarries in Labunishta, and quarries in the Gostivar area, and behind the ruthless exploitation of the sand from the rivers, and behind all the excavations and places for exploitation of minerals from the 367 that have been awarded or extended in July 2019.

Precisely the Government (this one as well as all previous ones), without mind and reason, without any shame, is most cruelly and irreversibly destroying our heritage from previous generations and is destroying the future of the coming generations.

Each of these excavations (from first to last) violates several provision of the Law on Nature Protection, and each of these excavations (from first to last) is made in way that threat-

ens the lives of people, and each of these concessionaires is playing us, incorporating in the elaborates the provision for "...recultivation of the area upon completion of the exploitation of the minerals".

I really would like to see how the forest and environmental systems and protected animal species are protected by all these concessionaires. And I would like to see what is being done for protection of the population from noise and dust and exhaust fumes. And I ask you to show me at least one area where minerals have been exploited, and how that area has been "recultivated".

I personally think that we need to start filing criminal charges against senior government officials (current and former) in accordance to Article 218, Article 225-a, Article 226, Article 230, Article 232-a and, of course, Article 234 of the Criminal Code, until they learn that our present and the future of the coming generations must not be destroyed.

And, perhaps in one voice to demand for the constitutional provision of 1946 to be returned, which reads as follows: "Article 84: Members of the Government of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia are responsible under criminal law if, in the execution of their official duties, they trespass against the Constitution and the laws. They are responsible for any damage they may cause to the state by illegal acts".

We are already late. Very much.

## INTERVIEW

## Steinecker: Protecting nature and the environment is the greatest challenge in the region

**G**udrun Steinacker is a former Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in our country. After completing her mission in North Macedonia, Steinacker was Ambassador in Montenegro, after which she retired. As an experienced diplomat, but even more so as a civil society activist, Steinacker is exceptionally active in more areas, of which she mostly focuses on green topics.

She is now Vice-President of the Southeast Europe Association, formed in 1952, an organization that is in search of building bridges between political debate, scientific dialogue and socio-cultural exchange dedicated to Southeast Europe.

We used her visit to Skopje that is related to the topics that she is dealing with in this period, to have a short conversation on current topics.

**CIVIL MEDIA:** In the context of our big expectations from the decision to be made in Brussels on the start of the negotiations for North Macedonia's EU accession, and you as a former Ambassador of Germany in North Macedonia, I would like to ask you, having in consideration that you are very active in the region, as part of organizations working in the region, what is your perception on Macedonia's progress in terms of the EU, in light of the anticipated decision that is expected to be made these days in Brussels for setting a date for negotiations for North Macedonia to join the EU?

**STEINACKER:** I am convinced that North Macedonia has made many steps in the right direction. I must say that since the new Government came into power in 2017, it is incredible what they have achieved. Certainly, I am also aware of the many problems in your country, social, political ones, and now as an activist for environmental protection, working for the non-governmental organization "Euro Nature" in Germany, I am aware of these problems as well. I think that they can only be resolved in the process of the country joining the EU. I am really glad that the German Parliament decided to support the opening of the process for setting a date for negotiations. I truly hope that Brussels and other EU governments will follow the example. I am really optimistic that this will happen and that as of next year North Macedonia will already be leading the accession talks and that the process of approximation towards the EU, the rules and standards, including Chapter 27 will begin then. This is an area in which I was really active in the last country I was an ambassador in, Montenegro.

I think that protection of the environment and nature is perhaps the biggest challenge and task in the region. Of course,



in the context of the social and economic development, because we know what the situation is like, and that young educated people are still massively moving out of the region. This is a huge problem for North Macedonia, as well as for other countries. We, especially I as a former German diplomat, and Germany as an important country- partner of the RNM, should do as much as possible for this process to be stopped and for young people, once successfully educated in Germany or anywhere else in Europe, to return and to help the development of your country.

Nature and the environment are the most important assets that you have to protect and develop, and only then you be able to profit from them.

I wish North Macedonia all the best and am really optimistic that in the next steps to come you will be successful. There are really wonderful people in your country, and every time I am here, last time being in 2017, I meet with these wonderful people, with your very active civil society. I hope that, especially the young people, will see their future here, in this country, in this region, and that EU accession will contribute to them being optimists and for them to invest their capacities here, in their country.

conversation led by: **Xhabir Deralla**

text editing and transcript: **Biljana Jordanovska**

# TARAVARI: WE HAVE NO COMPETENCIES, WE REFERRED THE INVESTORS TO THE GOVERNMENT, THERE IS NO REACTION

**T**he Mayor of the Municipality of Gostivar, Dr. Arben Taravari, openly and directly talks with CIVIL Media about the environmental problems affecting the city and the municipality. The problems that the local administration and the residents of Gostivar face are an illustration of how much the policy of the central level is distanced from green policies and practices and how badly it impacts the quality of life. Gostivar “produces” 80 tons of waste daily. It is all deposited at the regional landfill of Rusino, which is located 600 meters from the city center. The municipal authorities in Gostivar, like everywhere elsewhere in the country, have no competence in regards to the waste. On the other hand, the landfills that are now the biggest problem for all the settlements throughout the country, are a serious economic potential. However, for now, they are just black eco points...

**CIVIL Media: What is the attitude of the municipality towards the green topics, the environmental protection in the region and in the municipality?**

**Taravari:** We as a new administration in the Municipality of Gostivar, in these two years have started with the preparation of a new strategy, as there was no strategy, in general for the ecology, which is prepared by the municipal employees that are under that sector, and also NGOs in Gostivar. In that working group we engaged people from Tetovo and Skopje, and I hope that by the end of the year we will have a strategy of the Municipality of Gostivar, how to behave towards the environment. Otherwise, I can say that the Municipality of Gostivar is one of the municipalities that invests the most in green areas and is trying to preserve the parks that exist in the city. Certainly, there are environmental problems, especially with the air pollution, because close to our municipality, no more than a kilometre away, is the regional landfill of Rusino, which is a landfill of all nine municipalities in the Polog region. No matter how much we do for the environment, it is still not enough, but at least we can start with a strategy, to see where our city would be, our region, in the next five to ten years.

**CIVIL Media:** What is the relationship between the local and central government in terms of topics such as the landfill?

**Taravari:** Unfortunately, we have no relationship. With the new minister, we will see, but so far, we have had almost no communication in regards to these topics. I hope that with the new leadership in the ministry, we will achieve some communication and think together about the problems, because the Rusino landfill is not a problem of the Municipality of Gostivar, but a problem of the entire region. You know that from a year and a half ago, the competencies in regards to the landfill were taken away by the government, not only for the Municipality of Gostivar, not only for Rusino, but for

all regional landfills, so we have our hands tied. We can't do anything, invest or think about what next with that regional landfill. Though, to be honest, several investors have come to our municipality, who are interested in investing, in recycling the waste and further on, production of energy, which is a trend in the world. However, because we have no competence, we can't even discuss this.

We referred those same investors to the government, namely, to the Prime Minister and the competent ministry, but there is no reaction from there. I would appeal to the central government, either for them to find a solution, because they have the competencies over that landfill, or return them to us, and for us to sit down as the Polog region and find some kind of solution that would be more long-term for the Rusino landfill, since it is a burning issue for the Municipality of Gostivar because it is very close to our municipality and it is the biggest air polluter.

**CIVIL Media: What is your communication with the other local authorities, for example with Tetovo and the other municipalities, in regards to this issue, because it is, nevertheless, a regional landfill?**

**Taravari:** We have relatively good relations, because the local population up until four, five months ago didn't allow for any waste from other municipalities to be thrown there, but now there is already good communication, from ten requests of the local population, I think that four or five have been realized. One of the requests was to pave the road, the other was for examining the soil and the water in the area around Rusino, to put walls around the landfill, some investments have already been made, by all municipalities.

However, a more serious approach is needed, in order for the local population to allow all municipalities to use the landfill as a regional one.

**CIVIL Media: If the landfill is under the competencies of the Government and the Ministry of Environment, then why is entrance to the landfill charged?**

**Taravari:** They shouldn't be charging, but the municipality has no competence there. We occasionally engage the public enterprise Komunalec from Gostivar for certain activities. Through the public enterprise we have engaged a firm for further regulation, as it concerns huge waste that comes from the entire city, and sometimes the surrounding municipalities also happen to take something there. I don't know who is charging, some measures need to be taken towards those who charge. However, since not everything is under our competence, we cannot take any measures.

**CIVIL Media: Who should take measures?**

**Taravari:** The Government or the competent ministry. They need to go on the spot and see who is charging entrance to the landfill. And I hope that soon they will take certain action, to prevent this and for this to further be happening.

**Diana Tahiri**

# MITKO JANCEV, MAYOR OF KAVADARCI: THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT NEEDS TO WORK MORE (PART 1)

**M**itko Jancev is the only mayor of an urban municipality who is from VMRO-DPMNE. He is a successful businessman and politician, with a profound sense for local issues, especially in the domain of environmental protection. On the ground, we learned that he is favoured among his fellow citizens, regardless of political or other affiliation. The team of CIVIL Media had an interview with him on two topics: local policies and practices with an emphasis on green policies, whereas in the second part we reflect on the current political situation in the country.

**CIVIL MEDIA:** What is the relation of the Municipality of Kavadarci with the central government? How is the uncompleted decentralization process reflecting on the state, local policies and practices in this municipality?

**JANCEV:** As the only mayor of an urban environment, from VMRO-DPMNE, and as a winner at the last local elections, who on the other side has a Government, that is, a gov-

ernment of the Social Democratic Union, which is a direct opponent of our party of VMRO-DPMNE, having in consideration the uncompleted decentralization process, that you mentioned yourselves, for the sake of the truth, after a year and seven months in office, we have super relations and super cooperation. I need to say this specifically and clearly, without politicizing it.

All strategic projects, that were in my election program, are supported by the Government. It concerns several more strategic projects, such as the entrance in Kavadarci, the Western Boulevard, construction of a bridge in the village of Vatasa, reconstruction of several roads, and in the area of preschool protection, in which area we have received 850.000 euros for complete construction of a new kindergarten through the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, through the World Bank.

I would like to decisively say that even though they can, that if they wanted to, because the decentralization processes are not completed, to obstruct and in any way block the municipality, but for the sake of the truth, the people of Kavadarci and I as a mayor are successful in that matter and have no obstacles in that the central government is on the other side of the municipal government.

**CIVIL MEDIA:** However, the uncompleted process also implies certain unfinished matters.

**JANCEV:** The uncompleted process leaves room for human will, or in the part of unfinished laws or unfinished authorities. That means that if we succeed to move towards complete decentralization of the municipalities, and it's obvious that we are fighting for greater decentralization, in the area

of education, public order and peace, VAT returns, the mayors will have less tied hands.

**CIVIL MEDIA:** When you came to power as mayor in 2017, you showed initiative in the area of environmental protection in the very first three months. You had several interesting and unusual steps you made, and which in the sense of the budget were not too expensive. What was the response of the public, and of course of the institutions at the central level, to what you proposed? How far along is that matter?

**JANCEV:** In the area of environmental protection and ecology, there is much space and I think that both as a central government, a state and as municipalities, we are still at a very low level.

We have started with several initiatives with which we showed that we can move a step forward, and with less funds and less money achieve at least reduction of pollution of the environment and of the ambient air. We managed to install four measuring stations, through a donation through the University of Goce Delcev from Stip. We have those four measuring stations online and we detect all the problems, when, where and what time there is pollution.

These measuring stations are also good for conducting analyses, because we are primarily an agricultural region, in regards to the soil, precipitation, temperatures and so on. With these analyses we can also reduce the amount of pesticides that wine growers use, particularly in terms of when and how crops should be protected.

We created several subsidies in regards to heating devices. We have given over 350 heating devices. We have donated



bicycles twice so far, and there was great interest. We organize many actions in the area of ecology and social protection.

In the area of ecology, we have also provided more sophisticated machines for daily maintenance of the hygiene in the city. They are in daily use and are of benefit to the citizens, which collect the garbage and spray water for cleaning the ground, whether it is a sidewalk, a street or a boulevard.

We had an action for planting greenery in several areas that were at risk in areas like bare hills and ones threatened by landslides, floods, where we planted appropriate trees.

The most important thing that I think we have done is in the area of preventing fires, by parcelling several vital places. For example, the Ljubos site, which is the lung of Kavadarci. With the help of mechanization, we carried out parcelling of the very site, so that in case of a fire we would have access roads and smaller parcels, in order for us to be able to act much easier.

**CIVIL MEDIA: Where do you get these ideas, or plans, from?**

**JANCEV:** We work with our services every day.

**CIVIL MEDIA: Do you have a service that did that?**

**JANCEV:** No. There is no classical service in the area of the daily work and in the area of the problems encountered by the services. For example, that they have no access to Ljubos. This is where the idea came from that we first need to make access.

**CIVIL MEDIA: So these ideas are made here, in your office.**

**JANCEV:** In a way, they are spontaneous ideas that are the



result of the daily communication with our services and institutions.

**CIVIL MEDIA:** In that sense, does the Ministry of Environment have any function in supporting your ideas? What is your relation with the Ministry? What is your opinion about their work?

**JANCEV:** The Ministry of Environment needs to work more actively. I think that, primarily, focus should be put on protecting what we have, and then expanding in the area of the nature, regions, sites and so on. I am always in favour of first protecting what we have and then starting to build and upgrading what is necessary. Of course, it is better if we do these things at the same time, but not if we are not trying to protect what we already have, that is unacceptable for me.

Discussion led by: **Xhabir Deralla**

Text editing and transcript: **Maja Ivanovska**

# POLLUTION IN SKOPJE WOULD BE HALVED WITHOUT A QUARTER OF THE HEATING STOVES

**T**he air pollution in Skopje and the surrounding area would be reduced by more than a half if every fourth household that uses wood for heating changes the method of heating their homes, and every tenth household installs contemporary thermal insulation in their homes, shows the analysis "Skopje is heating", prepared in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program – UNDP, published in December 2017. According to that research, 90 percent of PM particle pollution comes from households, 45 percent of households in the Skopje Valley are heated by wood, for which they spend 317.000 tons of wood during the heating season, whereas 92 percent of homes don't have proper insulation. Half of the households, is stressed in the study, have no thermal insulation.

In the first comprehensive study about the manners of heating in the Skopje Valley, carried out on a representative sample of 5.044 households, of which about one third residents of rural settlements in the Skopje area, it is estimated that there are 133.633 households in the Skopje Valley, of which of which 73.220 (almost 45 percent) use wood for heating, around 51.000 (31 percent) use electricity, while

35.000 or 21 percent are connected to the central heating system. Only 2.500 households, or 1.5 percent, currently use pellets stoves

The study consists of five documents, in which the situation is analysed and proposals are given on how to improve it. All the measures and activities are presented in detail in the document 2017-2025 Roadmap for reducing local air pollution caused by household heating:

“We are setting ourselves an ambitious goal: Significant reduction of emissions of polluting substances from household heating in the Skopje Valley, as the biggest local air polluter, that is, reduction of following emissions:

PM10 and PM2,5 by 62%;

CO and SOx by 50% and 54%, accordingly;

NOx by 22%;

To achieve this goal, measures, or the scenario “Skopje is breathing”, are proposed in the study, which until 2025 should include four fifths of the city households and 42 percent of the rural households:

“Changing the existing stoves on firewood, coal and oil with more efficient stoves on firewood, pellet stoves, thermal pumps (including inverter air conditioners) or a central heating system on natural gas. Applying measures for energy efficiency of homes increasing the number of users of the central heating system”.

To reduce the local pollution from the heating of households, according to the study, by 2020 half of the households in the urban area and a quarter in the rural area need to be

included by either of the measures, or 81.3 percent and 42 percent by 2025 for urban and rural areas accordingly.

Around 20.000 homes, or 12 percent of households, need to receive thermal insulation according to the highest standards, and around 27.000 households need to receive more efficient wood stoves. About 9.000 households need to start using pellet stoves for heating, 22.000 thermal pumps, 3.150 gas stoves and 10.000 households to connect to the central heating system.

"If the goals of the 'Skopje is breathing' scenario are realized, the total number of households that will be using firewood would decrease by about 18.000, namely, the total number of households that will be using firewood in 2025 would be 35.4%", is estimated in the study.

The total price of the entire "scenario" was already published and is 378 million euros. However, by far the biggest part of the estimated costs, more specifically, 325 million euros, "would be intended for implementing measures for improving energy efficiency in households (facades, roofs, floors and similar), which would meet the strict and highest criteria for an energy efficient building according to the respective national regulations", is stated in the study. "The modelling showed that most investments are needed for the measure: building energy efficient buildings, which means that activities for the target groups households with energy inefficient facades of homes and households with energy inefficient roofs of homes will be difficult, but also need to be one of the priorities, because they will be implemented during the entire period until 2025".

All the other measures together are estimated at 53 million

euros.

"Therefore, this is the maximum expected amount of total costs that are expected to be financed by multiple parties, for which a financial plan needs to be prepared", is said in the study.

The study proposes for the initial activities to be directed towards household that use coal (04 percent) and wood for heating, in order to achieve greater impact in terms of the local pollution.

"They need to be primarily focused on municipalities that mostly participate in the consumption of firewood, such as: Municipality of Center, Municipality of Gazi Baba, Municipality of Saraj, Municipality of Kisela Voda, Municipality of Gjorce Petrov, Municipality of Butel, but also the municipalities of the City of Skopje where firewood is almost the only fuel that is used for heating homes (Suto Orizari, Saraj) and all other municipalities of the Skopje region that are not part of the City of Skopje. For households using firewood and coal for heating, and which at the same time are also in the target group of low monthly incomes, funds need to be set aside to help them in the changing of their technology for heating or during the insulation of their homes".

The best results in the short run, without any greater investment, according to the study, would be achieved by reconnecting households that have disconnected themselves from the central heating system.

**Igor K. Ilievski**

# Environmental stickers on cars can have an impact on less than 0.38% of air pollution

**B**ans for driving cars without an environmental sticker can have an impact on less than 0.38 percent of the air pollution with solid particles, shows the comparison of data of several state studies.

The Parliamentary Committee for Economic Affairs on Tuesday accepted four of the 13 amendments to the text of the draft law on amending and supplementing the Law on Vehicles. With these amendments, the anticipated obligation for vehicles to have to be subject to environmental categorization according to the degree of pollution is excluded, but a ban is introduced for driving uncategorized vehicles, or vehicles without a green sticker, which in zones will not be allowed to drive when there is increased pollution. In days when the local authorities will declare such a ban, only vehicles with a green stamp will be able to be driven.

Transport participates with less than 2 percent in the total pollution with solid particles PM 10 and PM 2.5, is said in the Plan for Clean Air that the Government adopted in November last year, announcing that in two years it will reduce the air pollution by half in Skopje, and by a third in other cities. The same data is also included in the last Annual Report on the quality of the environment, published on the website of the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, but also in other similar documents. According to the data, transport participates with 3.5 percent in the emission of PM 2.5 and with 1 percent in pollution with PM 10, or with a total of 1.9 percent in the emission of total solid particles – TSP.

"It is expected that the share of traffic in the emissions of solid particles will increase when the national emission factors are applied in estimating the emissions of brake and tyre wear, but it is not expected for the traffic to become a key source in emissions of these polluting substances. This sector, despite having a low share in the total emissions at the national level, has a significant impact on the measured concentrations at the local level. Still, the fact remains that the dominant use of wood for household heating as well as the non-application of the best available techniques for reduction of emissions in large thermal power plants contribute for these sources to be the most dominant in the emission of dust at the national level", is said in the Annual Report on the quality of the environment, published on the website of the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning.



Panorama of Skopje, December 4, 2018. Photo: Robert Atanasovski

In Skopje as well, traffic participates with about 4 percent in PM 2.5 particles, shows the study of MANU presented at the Conference "Pollution in the cities in the Republic of Macedonia: what are the solutions?", in November last year.

However, the main culprit in the emission of PM particles lies in the diesel vehicles. This, on the other hand, further decreases the participation of passenger vehicles in the pollution with these particles.

According to the data of the State Statistical Office, about half of the vehicles use diesel, but this fuel is used by more than 90 percent of busses and trucks.

Eighty percent of the diesel that is sold in the country is consumed by busses and trucks, is pointed out in the National Plan for Ambient Air Protection 2013-2018, prepared by the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning. According to these data, of less than 2 percent participation of transport in the emission of solid particles (PM), trucks and busses, according to the consumption of diesel, account for 1.52 percent, and the remaining 0.38 to all diesel cars in the country.

The issue of the efficiency of the environmental stickers has been raised many times in discussions on legislative changes. At the last debate, the Deputy Minister of Economy, Kire Naumov, had also agreed that the measure will not solve the pollution, but had stressed that in any case will contribute to its reduction.

# Eco- friendly vehicles would cost the people of Skopje alone 686 million euros

In order to have almost no pollution with PM particles from vehicles, which are now emitting about 4% of these particles in Skopje, and to reduce the pollution from other harmful gases by 2025, the population in Skopje would have to spend around 686 million euros to renew the vehicle fleet, is said in the study "Transport in Skopje, realities and challenges" published by MANU November last year. The Parliamentary Committee for Economic Affairs on Tuesday accepted the draft law on amending and supplementing the Law on Vehicles, with which it introduces environmental stickers for vehicles. The stickers are not mandatory, legal changes have been anticipated, but vehicles without a green stamp will be banned from the streets during days with heavy air pollution.

According to the study, the transport in Skopje in 2015 accounted for 80 percent of nitrogen oxides emissions, 20 percent of carbon monoxide and 4 percent of emissions of PM particles.

"Accordingly, transport's share is the highest in the NOx

emissions (nitrogen oxides), however, despite its high participation, the total measured NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations in 2015 (from all sources) did not exceed the permitted limit values for the protection of human health. Nevertheless, it is necessary to go in the direction of changing the vehicles by replacing the diesel vehicles (as the largest NO<sub>x</sub> emitters in transport) with hybrid or electric, which is proposed as a measure in this study".

With the scenario "Moving in the right direction", which anticipates a series of proposed measures, according to MANU, in 2025 the emissions of pollutants would be reduced compared to those of today by 89 percent in PM particles (from 4 to 0.44 percent), 9 percent in emissions of carbon monoxide and 63 percent in nitrogen oxides.

"In order to implement the 'Moving in the right direction' scenario, it is necessary to invest an additional 686 million euros in the period 2018-2025 compared to the 'Business as usual scenario'. If these additional investments are represented on an annual level, it turns out that an additional EUR 85.7 million should be invested each year. Most of these investments come from legal entities and individuals. Here again, it should be emphasized that the additional investments do not mean higher costs, because the total costs at the time of exploitation of the vehicles in the 'Moving in the right direction' scenario compared to the 'Same as present day' scenario are lower", is said in the study.

With additional analyses made in the study, with "electrification of the transport sector, by 2025, about 230 additional job positions could be opened, most of which in the

infrastructure. In addition, it was calculated that with the implementation of the "Moving in the right direction" scenario the number of deaths will be reduced by 7 and at the same time it will allow for reducing of the number of people suffering from various diseases caused by the harmful PM emissions".

Among the measures that need to be applied are changing the methodologies for calculating the environmental taxes, increasing the price of diesel fuel, electric vehicles subsidized with around 5,000 EUR, while hybrids with EUR 2,000 per vehicle, or around EUR 10 million subsidies annually, banning import of used vehicles to a maximum of 8 years, controls on the exhaust gases and penalties.

Taxi vehicles need to be replaced, with 60 percent electric and 40 percent hybrid, the participation of diesel busses should be reduced in public transportation and environmental stickers for vehicles need to be introduced, is said in the study.

According to the data of the study, in 2016, around 36 percent of the vehicles in the country had been registered in Skopje. Around 22 percent had been vehicles of legal entities. On diesel were a little more than a third of the vehicles, two-thirds of the trucks and 90 percent of busses.

"In Skopje, in 2016, 39% of the passenger cars, even 63% of the light commercial vehicles and 44% of the buses have EURO4 or higher standard. On the other hand, 40% of the heavy-duty vehicles have a standard lower than EURO1 (which was introduced in 1992)", is stated in the study.

**Igor K. Ilievski**

# Stoves in Skopje pollute as much as 17 million cars

**T**he data from the survey “Skopje is heating”, conducted by the UNDP Program in cooperation with the City of Skopje and the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, shows that stoves in 17 municipalities in the Skopje Valley in one heating season pollute as much as 17 million old diesel cars would pollute in the same period if they were to pass 20 km a day in the same heating season. It is a first comprehensive survey on the heating practices in the Skopje Valley, conducted on a representative sample of 5.044 households, one thirds of which are citizens of the rural areas around the capital city.

According to the study, it is estimated that in the Skopje Valley there are 133.633 households of which 73.220 (almost 45 percent) use wood for heating, around 51.000 (31 percent) use electricity, while 35.000 or 21 percent are connected to the central heating system. Only 2500 households, or 1.5 percent, currently use pellets stoves.

The main findings of the study are that “Heating is the largest air polluter in the Skopje Valley, of which heating of households in the greatest part” and that “The studies performed in these past two years show that 90% of all emissions of PM particles come from heating (firewood) of households.

The findings and recommendations of the research, in which

all state analyses and plans have been taken into consideration, are described in five documents. The third document 2017-2025 Roadmap for reducing local air pollution in the Skopje Valley caused by household heating, contains examples on how much a single family pollutes, in comparison to one automobile.

"According to the information from the poll, a family in the Skopje valley during the heating season spends 8,38 m<sup>3</sup> of firewood. The firewood that they use has 20% humidity (acceptable humidity). According to this, one family emits around 41 kg PM<sub>2.5</sub> in the atmosphere, that is, 42,5 kg PM<sub>10</sub> during the heating season.

To see how much this household pollutes the air, a comparison has been made with emissions from an automobile.

"One member of this family living in Gjorche Petrov goes to work to Aerodrom and passes 20 km both ways per day. The family has a pretty old diesel car manufactured in 2000 and running on EURO 3 standard fuel emitting 0.05g/km of PM (cars running on gasoline make no PM emissions). During the heating season, this family passes 3,600km by its car, and thus emits only 0.18kg of PM during the entire heating season".

"So, it can be concluded that a family using firewood emits as much PM in the atmosphere as 230 cars running every day and passing 20 km a day each", is concluded in the comparison.

With this ratio, 73.220 households that use wood for heating in the Skopje valley pollute as much as 16.840.600 diesel cars running on EURO 3 standard fuel and passing 20



kilometres a day during the entire heating season.

“If this family decided to switch to a pellet stove to heat the same area, it would emit around 1.6kg of PM<sub>10</sub>, which equals the same amount emitted by 10 cars passing 20km a day. If the family decided to replace its vehicle with a new one running on EURO 5 or EURO 6 standard (0.005g/km) then, during the heating season, it would emit 0.018kg of PM”, is concluded in the study.

**Igor K. Ilievski**

## **II. SOCIAL JUSTICE**



# NAUMOVSKI: BOTH THE LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT ARE TO BE BLAMED FOR THE URBAN MAFIA

**G**reen Tetovo, as it used to be called in the past and as it was known among writers of travel books in the past, is a city with remarkable nature and natural resources at the foot of Shara Mountain. But, today Tetovo is a city of traffic chaos, with an urban mafia that is building uncontrollably, and parks turned into concrete squares and buildings built in an unplanned manner for various purposes. There is less and less left of Tetovo from the past, while the new image of the city is decorated with landfills and with no concern from the authorities for environmental protection and for the health of the citizens.

"In the past, Tetovo had much greenery, parks, even the city square was then one of the many parks. Now with the new urban (non)plans there is not a single park in Tetovo. Unfortunately, after 5 years we still don't have an urban plan, and there are increasingly less green areas in the city. The lungs of Tetovo and Skopje, as many urban planners call the Shar Mountains, instead of being fostered and preserved, are subjected to people illegally and shamelessly cutting the forest. On the other hand, Shara is one of the most important resources for the development of the economy and

tourism. We have a massif that extends from Mavrovo up to Ljuboten, which everywhere in the world would be used for the development of tourism and mountaineering. Unfortunately, not only have we not done anything, but even that little that has been done is not as it should be, and is not functioning", stated a citizen activist and collaborator of CIVIL from Tetovo, Pero Naumovski, with whom we spoke about green values.

Ecologists from Tetovo are constantly urging for the problem with the ski center on Popova Sapka to finally be solved and the entire massif of Shar Mountain with long-term planning. As Naumovski says, the absurdity is in the resistance of the local authorities towards initiatives of environmentalists to declare Shar Mountain as National Park.

"There is no new afforestation, there are no new parks, on the contrary, what is still there is additionally being destroyed with the urban mafia and with such conditions of the municipality and the state", explains Naumovski in a disappointed way.

"The state is also responsible, and a large part of the competencies belong to the local self-government. The still unresolved relations in the transfer of competencies from the state to the local level also have a big influence. Perhaps it would help if all the municipalities that gravitate around the Polog planning region were to engage in joint projects for ecology, development of tourism, agriculture and everything that is a natural resource.

I pinpoint the problem in all holders of power, but we ourselves, the citizens, are also to blame. Environmental awareness should begin from the education. And I don't

even want to talk about the conditions of our education", stressed Naumovski.

Pero Naumovski, as a long-time supporter and member of CIVIL, was present at CIVIL's info stand in Tetovo, where the project "Green Future" was promoted, and we spoke about green values, social justice and antinationalism in direct communication with the citizens.

**Biljana Jordanovska**

# SMILEV: THERE IS NO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRESS WITHOUT ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRESS

**S**milev considers that although nationalism in Veles may not be as visible as in other cities in the country, it does still exist. He adds that precisely such latent nationalism is much more dangerous.

"Hate speech and nationalism are a lethal cocktail, which are a sore point of every society", thinks Smilev, but hopes that as a society we are moving toward better.

"I honestly hope and want to believe that we are moving toward better and that the real economic and social policies will suppress nationalism", he adds.

In terms of the environment and the situation in Veles, Smilev is decisive that the Ministry of Environment is the last ministry that is taken seriously and that environmental ministers have just been a political reward to all the political cliques until now, instead of realistically and substantially handling the environment.

"There is not a centimetre of economic and social progress, if there is no environmental progress. Veles is living a sad social moment, but on the account of that we have the en-



vironmental moment, which is several classes ahead of the others. This is a basis for us to hope that one beautiful sunny day, Veles will be an economically prosperous city, because environment, economy and social development are a sacred trinity", says Smilev.

**Dehran Muratov**

Text editing: **Maja Ivanovska**

# MY GREEN VISION

Several days ago, on a trip across the eastern part of our country, I watched the beautiful green landscapes, the mountains in the distance, the little villages scattered on the gentle slopes... Before the end of the day, I was having coffee with my colleagues in a small town, at the same little square where in 2016 we had a small performance with our Freedom Caravan. Tired of the numerous stories related to the elections, I was resting my thoughts by going through the sights that remained in my memory from throughout the day. And I recollected the ideas and thoughts for a green and social state, which, in my opinion, we can build. And later I shared them with my friends, and now with you.

We can, if we want to, turn our country into a completely environmental one, with happy and dignified citizens. Imagine settlements with self-sustainable buildings made of environmentally friendly (suitable) materials, with an infrastructure that will be in harmony with the natural resources, by using renewable energy resources. Settlements where you will invite different professional profiles such as programmers, architects, scientists, artists...

With smart planning and promotion, such settlements can become attractive also for foreigners, organized in companies or as "freelancers", real international colonies that can be maintained financially by selling their labor. We don't

need industrial zones, rather we can turn the entire country into a place where green products are produced, where green tourism is nurtured, where every new building, private or public, is made with one hundred percent green orientation. The old structures, with money from the budget, are transformed into self-sustainable buildings...

My friends, just for a moment, tried to discourage me with the word "utopia", not you too now, please. Especially because they also listened to me to the end, and even, to some extent, supported me in my view that, nevertheless, what I'm "dreaming" isn't impossible. Have in mind that all it takes is just will and vision, everything else is possible and checked.

Imagine the new buildings blending in with the natural environment in which they are being built. We have all seen such drafts and projects, designed by our people, selling them outside of our country or just having them on their computer, after previously they had used them for their graduate work. These are modern and wonderful projects which, after some time, become super profitable, as they save money, protect the health of people and prolong people's lives. Yes, rest assured in this, this is not a science fiction film, but a reality that people in other countries have been living for quite some time already.

And the working hours in such a country could be reduced to six hours, with a one-hour break included. And the working week can be reduced to four days, instead of five. With 20 hours of active work during the week a lot more can be done than with 40 hours. People will have more energy, desire, concentration, and they will be happier. They will be able to use their free time to learn, enjoy in art or to have fun.

The old and abandoned buildings and factory halls can be turned into cultural centers such as the old complex of the Berlin Brewery. It is now called Kulturbrauerei (Culture Brewery), where the city of Berlin gives space to artists from all areas to create and present their artistic achievements. The complex includes also cinemas, theatres, galleries and entertainment clubs. Millions of visitors visit this complex annually, which radiates with wonderful energy and beauty. We also have such ugly structures and complexes that we can turn into centers of culture, fun and tourism.

Then, when we will make this country of ours green, when we will shorten the working week by half, and double the salaries, the young people will not only not be leaving the country, but they will be returning. I believe in this. All that is required is to find will and vision among those who create practices and policies.

And now.... Election silence!



# WAITING FOR CLARA ZETKIN

In two days, two literally shocking news about the cruelty, the ruthlessness of the capitalists of the Macedonian textile cluster.

The first one: In order to be more competitive on the international market, the bosses of the textile factories demanded for the state to allow them to increase the working hours of the factories to eight and a half hours and for the workers to sew also during weekends and holidays.

The second one: A worker testifies that during the entire time she is working, the doors of the building are locked from the outside. That without permission no one is allowed to even think about, let alone leave the sewing machines in order to go to the bathroom, which is also locked. Their boss controls and limits even their physiological needs.

The news is as if it's coming from somewhere from the Far East or from Africa, and not from a European Macedonia. If we were a sound country, a stronger institutional one, if we were more like a Scandinavian public, more freethinking and less selfish, the society would have exploded from such a mental twist of the jeeped textile bosses, from such torture on the textile workers. Out of anger, revolt, torture.

The situation is not new and, to be honest, the current government, with the subsidies for salaries of textile and leather dressing workers, has more or less mended it. But the silence to the mentioned news terrifies as much as the news itself. Our collective indifference only confirms our mental

atrophy. Our endless selfishness. Our shocking and unique egoism. Our silence to the exploitative demands of the textile cluster and to the testimony of the textile worker. That is our disgrace, our selfishness.

While the public is preoccupied with the dull inter-party verbal attractions, life goes on in the deep shadow of the constitutional social state. That typical everyday life of people. But also the one of the Macedonian textile girls, mothers, wives, grandmothers.

These days the media have started the dark situation. They have turned on the alarming light. It remains for us to turn on ours. The one on conscience. And not to push the difficult existential topics as far away from us as possible. And to awaken the state and its inert inspectorates and office inspectors.

And the cruel exploiters here will be able to carry on. They will be able to until in some smothering basement, in an atmosphere of a slave-owning textile darkness, with a locked bathroom, someone doesn't lose it.

Until Macedonia doesn't create its heroine liberator, its Clara Zetkin.

**Zoran Ivanov**

# "BAD WORKER" AS OPPOSED TO "GOOD EMPLOYERS" – EVERYTHING FOR A 14,000 MINIMUM SALARY

**M**embers of the textile cluster (employers) yesterday had discussions on increasing the minimum wage... From the meeting we find out that they do not agree with the increase of the minimum salary and, moreover, demand for what the Constitutional Court declared as unconstitutional to be reverted. They are looking for a possibility not to pay the "bad" workers a minimum salary, due to not fully completing the work obligation? Have I misunderstood you? That's what you get when such debates are held behind closed doors.

Now, let us also say something.

You know very well that the productivity or non-productivity of the workers is not a result of them being "bad" workers, but rather a direct result of your working conditions, your attitude towards the workers and the valuation, that is, devaluation and disrespect for their labor and health and time and life, spent in your factories that are far from dignified production sites.

That word "bad worker" hit me so hard in the head that I

thought – why don't we make a list of good and bad employers and demand from the state to take part of their profit in order to give it to the good ones. What do you think about the idea, dear employers? And what do you think, how many of you will remain on the list of good employers?

Start answering the questions: Am I treating the workers in a dignified manner, respecting their personality? Am I caring about the health of my workers? Are they working in appropriate and safe conditions? Is there an appropriate temperature in the production plant? Am I paying for holiday and overtime work? And sign up yourselves on the list. Because we have the answers.

If you cannot keep up with the increase of the minimum wage, close your business. Because you probably can't even imagine how it is to be surviving with 12,000 denars, or even 14,000 denars, and to be looking for a possibility to be paying someone less than that.

You will increase the productivity of the workers if for starters you start treating the workers in the textile industry with respect. If someone was hanging over my head every day and demonstrating power to me, I would also not be productive and would be a bad worker... The very fact that you are looking for a possibility to cut the small and poor salaries that you are giving, with all the manipulations, shows that you are still thinking that you are a special category of citizens and that you can allow yourself to publically seek for the employees to be your slaves, for their children to suffer for a piece of bread, while you're sending yours on excursions around the world from the age of 16.

A fierce debate had been led among the "textile companies"



for 14,000 denars and we already know exactly what awaits us from January: returning money to the employers, pressure, blackmail, dismissals...

Well dear employers, this can't go on, the workers have not been alone against you for a long time. You either respect the laws and the employees, or return the factories and make room for the good employers to operate.

You are not all the same and all due respect to the exceptions!

**Simona M. Zhivkova**

# INCLUSION BETWEEN WHAT IS



# DECLARED AND THE REALITY



**O**n July 9, at a government session, the text of the Draft Law on Primary Education was adopted, which has been submitted for adoption in the Parliament. In the new draft law, a comprehensive strategy has been included that is focused on an inclusive education system for all students with disabilities.

It is precisely inclusiveness that stirred the public. Some experts support the idea, but some consider that in this and such social and educational system in the country, it is simply impossible, and could prove as counterproductive.

We spoke with professors Jasmina Trosanska and Mirjana Najcevska about the advantages and the weaknesses of the new draft law, whether the educational system is ready for full inclusion, whether the society is ready, and what priorities have to be realized in the direction of implementing this idea.

### **INCLUSION NEITHER BEGINS, NOR ENDS WITH EDUCATION**

Professor Trosanska stresses that inclusion implies including people with disabilities in society, adding that in order to prepare them, work needs to start from the moment we have learned about them.

"For children revealed at an early age of having some kind of disability, it is necessary for us to take all measures to include them in pre-school institutions. Because it is there that inclusion begins. It is there that children build their views. Later, these children will be prepared to be included in the regular system of education. Today, we are witnessing that a great part of these children are not accepted in kindergartens. There are many children who are not accept-



ed because teachers cannot cope with them. Because they have too many children. If we include that child who has not gone to kindergarten immediately into primary education, it will be a real shock", says Trosanska.

Professor Najcevska, on the other hand, insists that one must understand that schools do not function as separate entities in a community.

"The community is the one that should support the school. This is specifically the idea of inclusion, that teachers are not to cope by themselves in the school, but that they receive incredibly great support from the entire community. This means that every child with a disability is automatically supported by special resource centers that give support with special defectologists, or professional help that they need, medical assistance, assistance from NGOs and, certainly, with greater involvement of parents. This is not about throwing the child with disabilities in school and saying do whatever you want with the child. Rather building an entire system of support both for the entire school and for the teacher, and for all the children in the class in which the child is in, and for the child itself", says Najcevska.

### **AN INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF FUNCTIONALITIES NEEDS TO BE CARRIED OUT**

Najcevska also considers that the Law has to include absolute inclusion as something that implies respecting what constitutes equal right to education for all children.

"This is not related only to the children, but also represents building a society in which we recognize diversity. Because that recognition begins from here. I would recommend for

the law to include very rigid, very strict norms, with which inclusion in the community will be imputed. What should be done further is to find ways how to enable this", says Najcevska, insisting that 98% of children with disabilities can and must be included in the regular education system.

Professor Trosanska, on the other hand, says that there are children with combined disabilities, who if assessed properly, will bring us to the conclusion that they will not manage in the community and in regular schools, but still, we must find a way in which they will be educated and will be visiting a facility that will educate them and maximise their abilities.

"Therefore, first and foremost, that international classification of functionalities has started being prepared, for all children with disabilities to be checked functionally. When I say all, it means all! First the children need to be counted. We here in Macedonia have no records of how many people there are with disabilities, and how many of them are children. For example, I do not know whether the Ministry has data on how many first-graders with special needs there will be in September. This is necessary, for us to know to plan the capacities. Imagine, if there are too many children in a regular school, and there is no defectologist. Many schools have just a pedagogue or psychologist, some have a defectologist and some have a municipal defectologist. So we do not have the staff. What is most important is to count them, to take records by functionality, how many children there are and what type of disability they have, that is, what type of need they have. In an inclusive society we will not be looking at their weaknesses, rather their strengths. And then the children will be placed in an appropriate place, in a proper setting of education", says Trosanska.

## **POOR EDUCATION SYSTEM CREATES PROBLEMS AMONG CHILDREN**

We, as a society, are building an education system that is unfriendly towards children, considers Najcevska, stressing that many assessments and researches have shown that we have many aggressive children in education.

"Children that do not know what discipline is, who do not know the boundaries in behaviour, who do not have elementary, general culture of mutual behaviour. Our entire education system is very bad. It is bad also for children who do not have any particular problems. That is, we are creating problems among children when they enter the education process. And now, if we put in also the children who have disabilities, the question is how this education system will reflect on them. However, this is something that we need to perceive, to identify, and to find a way how to build an education system that will be good for all children, both for children with disabilities and for children without any particular problems", says Najcevska.

Education has the purpose of preparing citizens, that is, persons with special needs and all other children from the neortypical population, to be prepared to contribute in society, but we have a totally different picture, considers Trosanska.

"Our education is in a crisis, where many children are unprepared after finishing school. When they finish primary school, very few of them are prepared for secondary education, hence a large part of them go to general high school, and very few to vocational high schools. Children with disabilities, however, almost do not even attend high school. Very often they are recorded as attending, but are not. A

large part of children with disabilities who do attend regular education, when the school cannot meet their needs or the child cannot cope in the setting, are often dependent on a personal assistant and stay in school for only two to three hours. That is not education. That is just keeping records!", she is decisive, stressing the fact that inclusion implies bringing the services that the child with disabilities needs in the environment in which it is in.

### **WHAT DO THE CITIZENS THINK?**

Although there is desire among citizens for inclusive society, there is, however, also scepticism in regards to how much the state and the education system have the capacity to further implement it. CIVIL Media spoke with citizens in Veles and Skopje, who were divided in their opinions on whether full inclusion in education is needed or not.

"I think that it is great and that we are ready for such a step", "I think they can learn together. With greater attention to them, they will be able to achieve the desired success", are some of the responses of the people in Veles.

Still, there were responses that suggested that the entire process of inclusion will be a bit difficult, and that it would impair children with special education needs. There were also responses that contained discriminatory and insulting terminology for people with special needs, such as "handicapped that should have separate teaching", "inclusion depends on the degree of retardation", and similar.

"That is nice, but still they should be separated. They will be teasing each other the whole time. The other children will be mocking them", said one citizen.

Unlike the survey that CIVIL Media conducted in Skopje, where citizens saw the problem in the unpreparedness of the state to fully implement the law, the people in Veles in general, at least those who were surveyed, considered that the problem is in the children themselves who will not fit in the regular education system.

**DECLARATIVELY WE ARE ADVANCED, BUT IF WE SCRATCH BENEATH THE SURFACE, UNBELIEVABLY GREAT RESISTENCE WILL EMERGE**

"I am glad things are moving forward. But in order for us to be able to move forward faster, we have to bring reasonable solutions", says professor Trosanska. She thinks that our society is not completely ready and that unreasonable solutions are still being made, and even that people allow themselves to insult others and hurt them.

"We are still a nation that does not know of controlling itself emotionally. We still have uncontrolled emotions, and we easily burst out and say all kinds of things in those moments. We still have people that use a terminology that insults. We have people who look strangely at people with disabilities on the streets. For example, some laugh at them, some look at them because they feel sorry for them, some sympathise, some think it is contagious, some are afraid that their child could be hurt from a child with special needs. We still do not have enough information about all this. We are not sufficiently developed. However, it is good that things are starting to happen. But in order for them to happen properly, we need to bring reasonable solutions. Because in such situations, parents of children with special needs and children with special needs will suffer the most, if we make a mis-

take. All of us will be talking about this topic, today we will quarrel on this topic, tomorrow on another. But this topic for them is eternal", concluded Trosanska.

Professor Najcevska shares a similar opinion, who says that when it comes to inclusion, we must not leave ourselves to the general perception and general opinion, but should find systematic solutions that will impose inclusion, because only in this way we can build a system that will be equal for all.

"I do not think that parents of children who do not have disabilities are ready to accept inclusiveness in schools in which their children go to. Very often those parents give socially desired answers, declaratively they want to present themselves as being advanced, full of understanding and so on. However, if we scratch the surface just a little bit, we will see that they have an incredibly great resistance that is typical for some primitive societies in which disability is God's punishment and that children and people with disabilities should be hidden, should be kept away from the eyes of the public", she says.

### **WE ASPIRE FOR THE EU, BUT GIVE RESISTANCE FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION – THIS HAS TO CHANGE!**

We also spoke with Blagica Dimitrovska from the Association for promotion and development of inclusive society "Inclusion", from Kumanovo on whether as a society we are ready for full inclusion.

Dimitrovska welcomes the new law on primary education, outlining that as an association they will make efforts to promote the law, because according to them, it is high time

for a legal obligation to be brought for children with disabilities to be included in the regular education system equally with the other children.

"There is resistance among teachers, there is resistance among parents of children with typical development, and there is least resistance among the children, among the students. They accept children with disabilities. The new law provides for the curriculum to be carried out at home until necessary, if the health condition of any student worsens, regardless of whether the child is with a disability or not, which really is according to European standards. We aspire for membership in the EU, but do not agree with inclusive education. Here there has to be a process where there will be adaptation in school. Maybe the law is not ideal and will undergo additional changes, but is much better than the current one. That is the kind of people we are, if there is no punishment, we do not respect the laws. When this starts to function, then the process will quickly start happening", thinks Dimitrovska, reminding that the state has already ratified several conventions with which it commits children with disabilities and people with disabilities to have equal rights with others.

### **How does inclusion function in reality?**

A year ago, CIVIL Media worked on a story about Viktor To-sevski, then graduate at the State Music and Ballot School Center "Ilija Nikolovski – Lui", today a freshmen at the Academy of Audio and Visual Arts.

Viktor was born with impaired vision, but despite the numerous daily obstacles, he did not give up on his greatest wish to become a musician. When we met him, he practical-

ly had no conditions to work in the secondary music school. In addition, Viktor did not even have transportation like all the other students. He had one free secondary school bus ticket, but just one. Can you imagine how a student with impaired vision can go on public transportation busses? Moreover, Viktor did not have an assistant. The only companion was his mother, who was deprived of the possibility to work and earn, just so that she could realize her child's dream, hence having to pay by herself for the transportation.

Although many times, from the moment when he enrolled in the school, he had been promised that he would be provided with appropriate equipment, that did not happen. At least not until the moment when his harmony teacher, Damjan Temkov, revolted with what was happening with one of his best students, turned to CIVIL for help. After CIVIL's story created reactions in the public, the school immediately managed to provide a computer with special programs that enabled him to follow classes according to his needs. And the help was justified. Viktor was declared the best student in his generation.

The story about Viktor is just a small illustration about how our society treats not only children with special needs, but also talented and advanced students. That is why when such laws are prepared, it has to be done systematically and gradually. So that all children can be covered.

## **WHAT NOW?**

It is very important for those who will be making decisions in the following period to take into consideration all people with disabilities and to make reasonable solutions that will be in favour, and not at harm, to those for whom they are



actually intended for.

In order to have inclusion in the true sense of the word, we must look at the strengths of the people with disabilities, instead of their shortcomings, and depending on that, determine what type of teaching is best for every child individually.

What is most important, and something our interlocutors emphasise, is that society may have divided opinions on this issue, but the persons facing these problems are the final voice before a conclusion is reached. It is, nevertheless, something that they live with every day.

Topic prepared by:

**Maja Ivanovska** (interview with Jasmina Trosanska and Mirjana Najcevska)

**Biljana Jordanovska** (interview with Blagica Dimitrovska)

**Biljana Jordanovska , Angela Petrovska, Arian Mehmeti** (surveys)



# CIVIL DEMANDS FROM INSTITUTIONS UNCOMPRO-MISING EFFORT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

**A**mendments to the Law on Social Protection, amendments to the Law on Child Protection, Draft Law on Prevention and Protection Against Discrimination, are all still in parliamentary procedure...Higher minimal wages, shelter centers for victims of violence, homes for children without parents, movements in the trade union work, are part of the social reforms that have marked 2018 in the Republic of North Macedonia.

Nevertheless, World Day of Social Justice in Macedonia faces us with the fact that we are a poor country in which social justice comes last, regardless of individual government departments that have achieved certain visible results. We were and have remained a country of extremely rich and extremely poor, where citizens are deprived of basic social rights, if they do not have money or if they are not protected by party structures, nepotism and clientilism.

Violation of workers' rights, unemployment, all possible forms of corruption are existing problems not being solved

for decades. The successful reform efforts in the area of social justice implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy are not enough. Determined, comprehensive and systematic solving of problems is needed in the domain of social justice in order for changes to be felt.

As an organization for human rights and freedoms, CIVIL is constantly alerting the public and the institutions about the difficult conditions in the sphere of social justice, which includes social justice, health care, education, workers' rights and many other.

No matter how big the effort of the institutions is to overcome social injustice, to deal with poverty, still, social and economic exclusion, discrimination, unemployment, the catastrophic health care and education instil fear and uncertainty among citizens as to how and whether they will survive the next day.

In such a social situation in Macedonia, it is quite easy to abuse the social issues in the election context as well. The referendum was yet another proof of the abuse of socially endangered citizens through vote-buying, threats and pressures. Ahead of the presidential elections, without a doubt, the social instability of the country will be used for political points and party profits.

The United Nations General Assembly, on November 26, 2007, decided to observe February 20 as a day devoted to social development, solidarity, equality and harmony as fundamental values in achieving social justice, "society for all", with equal opportunities for everyone.

CIVIL demands an uncompromising effort for social justice

in overcoming the poverty, with inclusion, and not marginalization of socially vulnerable categories. CIVIL demands from the institutions and competent bodies responsibility for each individual human life. "Equal society and life for all", has to become a real commitment, and not an ordinary empty phrase.

**CIVIL – Center for Freedom**

# Job interview

- Do you plan to give up civic activities if we hire you?
- No.
- Though, you should do that.
- I do not think so.
- Are you married and do you have children?
- You shouldn't be asking me these questions at a job interview...

Simona M. Zhivkova

Silence... I decide to continue:

- To be a civil activist, to fight for rights, for justice, to raise my voice against everything that is not upright in this damaged society and to work hard on creating a culture in which everyone will care about everyone else is my civil duty and of course I will do this, every time it is needed, and it has nothing to do with the job I came here for. In regards to the question about my marital and family status, how can I tell you... Maybe I'm not planning a family, maybe I like girls, maybe I like cats, that doesn't make me a good or bad worker and it has nothing to do with my ability or inability to perform the job.

\*

When you will be reading this text, I believe that somewhere in the questions, each of you will recall of a same or similar situation you have went through. Maybe you didn't even notice that they were asking you questions that are forbidden by the law, questions that have absolutely nothing to do

with the job you are supposed to do... And you answered. So, based on that, the employer carried out direct discrimination in the employment perhaps against you or against the other candidates.

Perhaps the employer considers that if you are married, you are a serious person and will do your job more seriously than the other candidates who are not married, so you will have advantage in the employment. Perhaps they consider that if you are married and have children, you will be more often absent from work due to obligations with the children, colds, school... So, it will be more convenient for them to hire someone without such obligations, because of which you immediately fall off the employment list... This cannot be like this and you can prevent it!

Unfortunately, many employers allow themselves without any regards to go into private matters of the potential employment candidates or employees in the company. Sometimes even lists are sent out that women in their early pregnancy need to sign, and later all of them get fired. Therefore, dear ladies, you must know that you have no obligation to answer the employer questions related to your intimate life and plans.

The only thing the employer may request from the potential candidates is proof for fulfilment of the job requirements and nothing more that is not directly related to the work you will be required to do. The employer must not ask you questions about your marital or family status or about your family plans. Maybe you cannot forbid them of doing so, but you don't have to answer them and you can keep that part of your life to yourself and to those with whom you would like to talk to.

Having in consideration that all of us are somehow trying to survive every day, and if you're not a member of a political party and not included somewhere there on the list for employment, it would be a miracle to find a job that suits your professional profile. And when such an opportunity does come by and they call you for an interview where you are supposed to leave an impression, it's a bit difficult to answer the questions in the above manner... But when we're already sinking, employed or unemployed, at least we can sink in a dignified manner and in solidarity!

# K15 (Annual Leave Allowance) and other workers' rights... Sad story...

**T**he General Collective Agreement (GCA) for the private sector in the field of economy is an agreement that further regulates the rights and obligations of private sector employees and employers. It should be a kind of social dialogue between the employees and employers through which they themselves will regulate the labour relations without the facilitation of the Government. In our country it is signed by the Organization of Employers of Macedonia and the Federation of Trade Unions of Macedonia.

The GCA for the private sector in the field of economy is mandatory for private sector employees and employers. More specifically, the GCA regulates certain issues that are not regulated by law or are not clearly defined. What is of great importance is that lesser rights than the rights regulated with the Law on Labour Relations must never be regulated with the collective agreement. Provisions may be written that give more or more favourable rights than those regulated by the Law on Labour Relations, but never less or less favourable.



The right of payment of an annual leave allowance, better known as K15, is not regulated with the Law on Labour Relations. This means that the law that regulates labour relations in RM does not recognize the right to annual leave allowance. For this compensation, though still mandatory, but because it does not exist in the LLR, too much freedom has been left for this right to be regulated as they wish, and even deleted if it comes to their mind.

First in the collective agreement it was stated that the employee is entitled to an annual leave allowance in the amount of at least 40% of the basis, if the employee had worked at least 6 months during the year for the same employer. But for the employers this seemed a bit too much, to be paying for this every year, and so in 2015 they changed it as follows:

"The employee is entitled to an annual leave allowance in the amount of at least 40% of the basis, provided that the employee worked at least 6 months in the calendar year for the same employer. Employers that confront operational difficulties, assessing the economic and financial situation of the employer, after prior mandatory consultation with the branch union, or department, with an agreement signed by the employer and the representative trade union organization can determine the annual leave allowance to be in a lesser amount than the amount specified in this collective agreement. For the employers who do not have union, this agreement shall be signed with the elected workers' representatives".

They set this up so nicely, so that it does not function. If confronting difficulties in lesser amount... And what does

lesser amount mean? A lesser amount of 9,000 denars is also 1 denar. According to the GCA, an annual leave allowance can be paid in the amount of 1 denar.

Hence, the employer prepares the necessary documentation that they are operating at a loss, that is, that they are confronting financial difficulties (although until now I haven't received an answer from anyone on what those difficulties mean and how the economic financial situation is assessed) and drafts an agreement in which it is stated that all employees agree to be paid an annual leave allowance in some miserable amount of, for instance, 1,000 denars, and an employee close to the employer signs it. There have been cases where even just 500 denars and less have been paid.

This provision that allows payment of an annual leave allowance in an insignificant amount, is introduced because of the recognized need of the employers who, due to financial difficulties, are not in a situation to pay an annual leave allowance once a year to the employees. The employers had demanded for those companies that do not have a financial possibility to be released from this obligation, employees need to demand their rights, and so some kind of compromise had been made. They found the compromise in this provision, which actually allows for this right not to be respected at all, which seemingly is mandatory and is stated in the General Collective Agreement for the private sector in the field of the economy. Currently, because of this reason, even companies that do not confront any financial difficulties, pay K15 in a very small amount.

Apart from the fact that this non-functioning provision has been somehow left hanging, which is respected only by dil-

igent companies, in the Criminal Code a criminal liability has also been introduced for employers, namely, for those who will request an employee to return a certain amount of the salary or other compensations paid by the employer, for which a prison sentence between three months and three years has been anticipated. This criminal liability was introduced due to the realization that some employers who pay salaries and contributions, which also implies payment of annual leave allowance in accordance to the law and collective agreement, later ask from their employees to return the money back. However, I still don't know any employer who has been in prison for this, while this phenomenon still exists in practice.

And in regards to whether dismissals can be easily made... Yes, because a greater percentage of employees are employed for a certain period of time, and with contracts of several months they keep them for years. This type of employment contract enables the employee to be fired, more specifically, for their employment to be terminated during pregnancy, during sick leave, in cases when the employee becomes "louder", when the employee joins a membership or, God forbid, establishes a trade union, and in all cases when the employer, according to the law, cannot cancel the employment contract. This agreement simply enables for the employment contract of the employee to be terminated after it expires. And no one from aside sees that this employee has been working for 10 years under an employment contract for a certain period of time and in any procedure the employer does not bear responsibility for not transforming the employment relation – the employee is to blame for not asking for the employment relation to be transformed.

Employees employed with a permanent employment contract are a bit more difficult to be fired. In order to be dismissed, with such employment relationship, employers need to have a reason for this that is determined only by law. Earlier it used to be easy, because, as one of the reasons for a dismissal without a notice period that is stated in the law, is if the employee did not appear at work for three days in a row", and they would tell them, without a written decision" "Go home, you no longer work here". Employees would go home and get fired because they hadn't been to work 3 days in a row.

I hope that employees have greater awareness now about their rights and about how employers can manipulate them, and although employers still have this card up their sleeves, this does not happen very frequently.

**Simona M. Zhivkova**

### **III. NATIONALISM**

# XHAFERI: IN TETOVO THERE IS NATIONALISM ONLY IN STADIUMS

**CIVIL Media: Is there nationalism in Tetovo?**

**Xhaferi:** In Tetovo, nationalism can be seen and heard only in the stands of stadiums, from any side. The racist and fascist shouts that can be heard in the stands during major sports matches are perhaps the only moments when nationalism is expressed in Tetovo. Otherwise, the people of Tetovo have a harmonious co-existence and live peacefully with each other, Albanians and Macedonians, there are many cafés where they hang out, have fun together, there are many businesses that are jointly managed. They communicate normally between each other in their everyday life, Albanians and Macedonians, we visit them on Easter, they visit us on Eid al-Fitr, therefore, I don't believe that nationalism exists in a more prominent form, regardless of the fact that often politics is what encourages certain sentiments among one and the others, certainly, in order to gain political points. But in the end, I don't believe that there is nationalism in Tetovo.

**CIVIL Media: How do you deal with fake news, do you recognize them or are they referred to you?**

**Xhaferi:** Personally, I have built an impermeable wall against fake news, and when I read headlines like "You won't believe what happened" or "This is what he and he said...", I don't open that link. So, not only do they encourage negative re-



actions, fake news are also annoying and harmful the moment you expose yourself to those news, like creating some kind of resistance against such news, and they can be real news, but you won't read them because you have resistance to them. As an organization, we pay much attention to fake news, often we receive information from people, information that we would use and that would cause much greater reaction. But our organization's way of work is not to react to unconfirmed information. We have the same approach also with fake news. We may read them, and if they are not confirmed, if there are no clear sources of that information, if it's from anonymous sources and only for our editorial office, as they usually say, we don't react to this news. That's why it's good to have this work regulated by law, because often it has been the case and often fake news cause also inter-ethnic, inter-religious conflicts, intolerance among people, and it can cause much bigger problems than just an insignificant unpleasant situation on the social networks.

**Diana Tahiri**

# IVANOV: NATIONALISM IS CONTEMPORARY INQUISITION

**CIVIL MEDIA:** How and where does nationalism arise from, and how is it usually manifested?

**IVANOV:** If we begin from the basic political science point of view of interpreting the term “nationalism”, where theory says that it is political ideology in the center of which is the nation as the supreme good, imagine, “supreme good”, then what is existentialism? It does not recognize the nation, it recognizes life and the constant struggle for an elementary decent life, for elementary existential equality. For humanity, for everyone to have a job, a home, healthcare protection, education, and from there on, as much as God gives them, some a yacht, others luck. The important thing is for everyone to have equal starting and life opportunities.

That is why my human matrix is existentialism. The elementary individual human rights and needs. As for nationalism, it is contemporary inquisition.

The sad thing is that nationalism arises from everywhere. From all human environments, from all communities. From groups and from individuals. From unexplainable reasons



from the streets and from culture, from men and women, from educated and illiterate and academics and teachers, from elderly people and young people, from athletes and from the public, from artists and consumers, from fathers and from children, from priests and believers, from writers and readers. And what is most sad is that it even comes from mothers, not to mention political subjects. For them, in various circumstances in the political dimension, nationalism wrapped in a form of patriotism, in certain moments of crisis, is an elementary political offer.

I am neither a philosopher, nor political scientist, and I cannot offer some deepened thoughts about the phenomenon, about the need of manifesting nationalism. I cannot even imagine, let alone figure out where those negativistic, paranoid, xenophobic urges of the people are coming from. What internal force pushes them to such feelings, and what external factors encourage them. I understand the need, and even necessity, for our self-identification, both as a group and as individuals. To belong somewhere and to someone. And let it be the nation. That's nice, but why hatred towards other such identification, the different one, actually identical to us and ours? There is no answer. Where do those urges come from for manifesting inhumanity only if the other one is not from one of us, from our tribe, when in fact, basically, we are both all us and ours.

Whatsoever, but if there is something on this topic and particularly on this phenomenon, on the rise of nationalism and on its manifestation that startles me most, it is women nationalists that startle me and disturb me. I am talking about women who are mothers. They have breastfed their children, and the mother of the other nation also breastfed her child.

She brought up her child and rejoiced. One and the other. And now, in given circumstances those two young somewhat older kindling are in aggressive mood against each other. In a real war or war between fan groups in sports competitions, it doesn't matter. And the child upraising it not important. Nationalism usually does not come from the family, rather from the political and social environment. But what is least clear is how those women on various occasions, political, protesting or any other one, manifest nationalism. When by definition it is practiced by mothers as symbols of something most humane, let alone the others.

But let science, anthropology, for instance, deal with this issue as well. Nationalism comes from everywhere, it is fostered in certain centers, usually political ones, and is manifestation of hatred towards someone we do not even know at all. So this mysticism is also for a separate expert elaboration.

**CIVIL MEDIA: What are the consequences of nationalism?**

**IVANOV:** If we begin from the constant that nationalism is a lie and hatred all in one, that the empty phrases for positive nationalism are a lie, claiming it to be patriotism, dosed nationalism that is just an ordinary wafer for nationalism, the real cruel and bare tribal primitive one, then the consequences are atrophy of the environment.

Politics, a state and a society in which and where nationalism is fostered, under the pretext that it is healthy both for politics and for the state and that the national is a structured element, some kind of pillar of the homogenous group in the community, then those politics, that state and that society are no good. We need to say go away to nationalism in

any form, from anyone, in any manifestation, even the most benign one.

Especially go away to the most popular politicians, most professional professors, most prominent artists, most successful athletes. Go away to all of them if the forced national is so primary to them that it in the everyday life it is reflected as nationalism, and nationalism is sowing hatred. Communities should commend such stars for their expert values and artistic and sports achievements, but at the same time turn their backs because of their fake patriotic, in fact, chauvinistic matrix.

The consequences of the actions of such holders of emphasized national is nationalism. Alive and a dangerous wound of all contemporary societies. A disease of the past two, three centuries. An infectious disease for which the twenty-first century has a vaccine, but not everyone can receive it.

The most horrible thing is that nationalism is contagious. Transmissible from parent to child, from teacher to pupil, from professor to student, from director to actor, from coach to athlete, from priest to believer, from writer to reader. And so on, generations wise. It is found in a human environment where instead of happiness there is hatred in sight. And this makes living ugly. The consequences are immense.

**CIVIL MEDIA: Who can be engaged in the fight against nationalism, and how?**

**IVANOV:** Antinationalism should become a mission. To grow into a movement. To be promoted to an emphasized distinguished value social category.

Every society, every environment also has healthy elements. Here, fortunately, they are a majority. Our multicultural society can praise precisely with the ability to isolate nationalists, to recognize them, to disclose them. To prevent crisis encouraged by nationalistic idiots. However, in order to prevent and suppress the evil called nationalism, a phenomenon not adequate for nowadays, for this global digital time, the system should be engaged.

Primarily the system, and then everyone in it, and of course the most responsible. First politics and the politicians, all of them in order. Writers of textbooks, teachers, public figures, politicians, journalists, cultural and sports authorities. Everyone who in some way have any kind of influence in the public. It is their and our obligation to constantly and publically stigmatize nationalism, in all forms, as something destructive in politics, in education, culture and sports, as uncivilized, as retrograde.

And certainly, in addition to the inertia of the state, the agility of the non-governmental sector is and should continue to be that bright fighting point against nationalism in any of its cruel or any kind of hidden chameleon form.

And certainly the media, the loudness and the public. Nationalism is supported by deep roots. Its field is even broader. But the field for fighting with it is just as big.

**Biljana Jordanovska**

# SARACINI: NATIONALISM DOESN'T BRING ANYONE VICTORY!

**"C**reating enemies is the key mobilizing point that nationalism has and is using. The hidden goal behind the mobilization of citizens is to minimize the disappointment or failure of the ruling elites. These elites find reasons or justifications for their failure in others, in the enemy or in the different one", says Saracini.

"Nationalism is not rationalism, but irrationalism in its action. It does not relate to the truth or to information, but to emotions. If one wishes to fight against this evil, then one should detect precisely these emotional reasons that impact the spreading of nationalism and direct the actions there. If you eliminate the causes of nationalism, you will also eliminate nationalism itself", he considers.

"Nationalism ends with hatred. Hatred is not benign. It requires action. Action that will be directed towards the different one, towards the enemy. This action will produce conflict, it will produce a clash, it will produce victims. These are the consequences and this has to be clear to the people, nationalism is not something that brings anyone victory, but often brings suffering and defeats", says Saracini.

Text and editing: **Maja Ivanovska**

# WHAT WILL YOU BE SINGING ON FRIDAY?

**A**gain, like always, when instead of being happy for someone's success, which by the way we experience as collective, we managed to jeopardize the joy as opposed to the hatred, where definitely we all lose! Again, the primitivism managed to conquer the joy. Vardar has risen to the top in Europe, but we have remained the asshole of the world!

The primitivism, chanting and wishes for someone's death, the nationalist-chauvinist messages referred while celebrating the victory of the European champion, which in its team has players from almost all former Yugoslav Republics and parts of the world, are just as disgusting as their relativization. And so I hear that's how it is in the fan world. Others also chant... So some will no longer call for easing of tensions among "their" fans, because the others have not stopped with hate speech and similar stupidity of the century!

It's high time to take appropriate measures, because at the end of the day, some little child will again be a victim of hatred. Some of the children, who instead of joy, yesterday saw your hatred and anger. Because you taught them that way! Just look at the reports of the MOI. Five! Five minors were

detained last night by the Alphas (police unit), because you didn't have what to sing?! Shame on you!

I wonder what you will be singing on Friday? What will you be chanting at the city stadium while the representation of Macedonia will be competing with Poland to enter the European Championship? What kind of message will you send the team that will be defending the colors of your country, where besides Pandev, Gjorgjev, Velkovski, Nikolov, Nestorovski, Zajkov, Gachevski, Churlinov, Mitov, Dimitriev, Ristovski, Ristevski, Trajkovski, Trickovski, Babunski and Spirovski, Ibraimi, Alijoski, Hasani, Elmas and Bardi will also be playing?

You want a clean Macedonia? Start from your own brains and the disgust that you sowed at last night's celebration! Both literally and figuratively! And pick up you trash from the streets!

**Maja Ivanovska**

# Kalash loaded with nationalism!

**T**he world speechlessly marked the terrorist attack of the beardless blonde terrorist, in two mosques in New Zealand, where a week ago he killed about fifty Muslims in the midst of a prayer. Yes, a terrorist can also be a person who has no beard, is not a Muslim, has blonde hair, or no hair... We saw that his automatic rifle was inscribed with names of radicals, nationalists and fascists who have carried out terror and massacre over everything that is different from them.

Some of the world leaders have sent already written and just copy-paste statements with condolences and support, just changing the name of the state where the incident took place. But this time without the hashtag #JeSuis...

However, these days the residents of New Zealand are introducing new "standards" and are abandoning the formats with hypocritical support and solidarity that always remain only on paper. Literally, everyone, from students to bikers, have stood against nationalism and hatred.

I see the Prime Minister of New Zealand fighting against nationalists and I think to myself – Why didn't you adopt us?





For our society it is worrying that the guy who carried out the massacre had made the “white power” sign in the courtroom, or here better known as the sign of the “Hardcore”!

Even though that symbol in our country means Vardar, Pirin and Aegean Macedonia, still, there is also another message.

These days, the topic on the construction of the minaret of the Ali Pasha Mosque in Ohrid has emerged again. Certainly before elections, in order to get greater attention (and)/or for political bargaining.

It is worrying that most of the residents of the “Balkan Jerusalem” are fighting with their entire strength for the minaret of the Ali Pasha Mosque not to be built, it's as if a nuclear missile was being built, and not a religious symbol!

The question is – who does one minaret bother? Who does diversity bother? For whom is a Kalashnikov loaded with hatred a “justified means”?

**Dehran Muratov**

# Ethnic and party muscles, nationalism and corruption

A head of us are days and weeks of new disappointments and anger because of the injustices and impunity. Just further exacerbated because of the ruthless election battle that will often be anything but a presidential election. We will see matching of the strength of the ethnic muscles, and certainly of the party ones.

In anticipation of the finalization of the lists of characters who will be aspiring for the presidential seat, (let's hope not) another political puppet in the system with a huge digestive tract (from the throat to the opening for extracting unnecessary substances from the body), it's good to remind ourselves of two huge black holes in our lives. The two things that will spill over us as poisonous rain that irritates the eyes, burns our chest and makes us scream loudly on the inside.

Nationalism and corruption... Nationalism is in an incredible rise, in all its forms, hidden and open. It's usually stupid and cheap. But what worries me more is that it is a pillar of the strategies of serious players on the field with sophisticated and expensive tools in their grasping hands. Nationalism is

used most subversively, most inhumanly. And there is nothing in its essence. It is a tool for gaining money and power. Nationalism is used to come to as much as possible a better position in the negotiations with the one who is leading the government at the local or central level.

We have already gotten used to seeing those who are on the other side of the political poker table, players who lie skillfully and hide aces up their sleeves, instead of being thrown out of the game, they become partners and share the pile of money at the end of the game, without a real winner. Then, all of them together, they wait for a new victim, a naïve tourist with a deep pocket.

Those who propagate nationalism, hatred, gas chambers, cleavers are not real patriots. We found this out through the long, difficult years of living in this Macedonian country of ours. We know the ways very well, and we also know the dirty players who have jerseys of all colors in their bundles. And they always put on the "right ones", the ones that will bring them the most benefit, and the most harm to the rest. We have all the arguments to claim that they are just dishonest, dirty characters who will always want just more power and more money.

And corruption? Deep, deep, in the root of the system, of every structure, of the everyday life, in the life of each of us. Visible and invisible, understandable and incomprehensible, voluntarily accepted or imposed... it is part of our culture.

How many time must we bitterly accept the fact that it comes back to us in life all over again. And to accept the increasingly more obvious fact that the government did not manage to find the strength, does not have enough determi-

nation to overcome a system, previously established in the nineties, and one that continues to the moment I am writing these lines.

There is no determination to wipe off the face of the earth a corrupt system that has gained monstrous proportions with the rule of VMRO-DPMNE and DUI. Not only is there no determination, but that system is being accepted, with only some cosmetic changes being made to it, between two glasses of whiskey, to celebrate yet another tender or wave of employments. That's the cruel reality that gives us room to doubt that all the black spots we see on the X-ray image of society are, in fact, either intentionally tolerated, and even intentionally created or upgraded in the palaces of power and political tents of the party generals.

# Nationalism as the last ideology

I thought that even in such unsettled times, strongly burdened with national, confessional and ideological intolerance, that the fear of some traumatic events that could irrationally spread throughout the country, if nothing else, would at least smooth out some things. And with that hope, I turn the pages of the newspapers, watch TV, listen to analyses, political assessments, opinions, views for the "Racket" case and for everything that it will cause later, almost sure that common sense will bring more or less some positive reactions and at least some relief.

However, regardless of the fact that such views, certainly, can be noticed, the restlessness is with an amazing pace relentlessly upholding VMRO-DPMNE and its "fearless leader" Hristijan Mickoski, who in his scattered agenda is unmistakably, to the dot, repeating the same (...Berovo, Stip...), during which he is even more unmistakable in recognizing the Macedonian enemy (more than half of the Macedonian inhabitants); an enemy who with "Udba methods" in the coming period will try to make a breakthrough in the right wing in order to demotivate it and demoralize the patriotic right electorate. And, in order to prevent this, in order not to leave room and time for the "Udba installations", early parliamentary elections are needed, that will take place soon following the mass taking to the streets.

Although aware of their own poor analytical abilities, as opposed to the professional, deep and radically essential ones, which in a KURIR and INFOMAKS way they have entered the heart of things, during which, logically, they have given faith to the alchemy of Mickoski's words, I am humbly offering my opinion as well, not hiding the ambition for me to also get into the essence of the announced revolt and, of course, if possible, to recognize the real reason for it in the unrecognizable.

Hence, in my opinion, there should be nothing unrecognizable, because, you will admit, the protests organized by the dpmne mob always unfold according to a same, established azimuth: epically dimensioned problems in the country, cleansing of their own sins, transferring their crime on everyone different from them, radicalism, hostility, hatred, nationalism and fascism. A new "quality" of the announced protests, possibly, could be the final recognition of the "most Macedonians", because they are and always have been against the Euro-Atlantic integrations and because the Macedonian airtightness is the ideal position in relation to the foreign democratic world. Then one can rule totalitarian, identically as in the time of Gruevski.

Honestly, I don't believe that in the heads of the dpmne radicals there is even the slightest elementary sense of freedom and right and that the mental situation has ordered them to go in defence of the rule of law. But that's why, on the other hand, let me repeat again, I still have conviction that the supposed protests will be nationalistically colored, angry, with expressed hostility and hatred towards those who are not like-minded; protests that will seek and find the reason to violently come to power.

And now, because I feel that I have entered into a polemic with those who don't see nationalism in the views of the radical right wing, in our country called VMRO-DPMNE, here is a question for them: can the fight for freedom and for human rights have an equal sign with denying others and with throwing a handful of hatred towards all those (let me repeat: according to Mickoski half of Macedonia), who, isn't it right, primarily for the real "traitors", recognize in patriotism democratic processes in the country, rule of law, fight against the crime and corruption, economic prosperity, breakthrough towards European, civilized values, during which, in achieving all of this, they don't want to again find themselves on that despotic-criminal roadside where the refugee in Hungary placed us, and which his obedient Mickoski is now trying to trace – to a dead-end.

Just so that there is no misunderstanding: I have nothing against protests, I myself have participated in many, but protests that are free of the burden of overemphasized nationalism. Because, it, nationalism, is paranoia, collective and individual, lives off relativism, doesn't recognize others, neglects the true values, aesthetic, ethical ones... and is the last ideology and demagogy that addresses the people, actually, the one at the top of VMRO-DPMNE.

**Milan Banov**

# Deralla: Nationalism is used as a tool for money and power

“I believe that nationalism truly is on the rise, but it is used most subversively, most inhumanly as a tool for money and power. As a tool to gain as much as possible a better position in the negotiations with the one who is leading the government at the local or central level. Those who propagate nationalism, hatred, gas chambers, cleavers are not real patriots... We know and we have all the arguments to confirm that they are just people who want only

more power and more money”, stated Xhabir Deralla at the conference #Perspectives2019, organized by CIVIL.

#Perspectives 2019 was held on February 13 at the Kino Kultura, with addresses made by German Ambassador Thomas Gerberich and Minister of Labor and Social Policy Mila Carovska, furthermore Professor Mirjana Najcevska, Dzevdet Hajredini (former Minister of Finance), Aleksandar Krzalovski (MCIC), Mersiha Smailovic (Legis), Koco Andonovski (Center for support of LGBTI+) and Faton Aliti. In addition to Deralla, Dehran Muratov and Biljana Jordanovska spoke on behalf of CIVIL.

Text editing: **B. Jordanovska**



# Religion and nationalism

**D**ear friends of mine! It is no secret that throughout history politics have misused religion as a tool for occupying the brain of the masses. It is no secret that the political establishment wouldn't have been able to rule, let alone survive, if it hadn't been in conjunction with the religious institutions that gave the regime its selfless support every day. At times, the ruling system had even been proclaimed Divine Providence by the Church or Islamic community around the world.

Today, Russia and Egypt are the best examples for this, where a secular system strongly supported by the religious dogma of the local religious institutions rules. The worst thing in such support is that politics plot the nationalism, among certain political options, while the "holy institution" unreservedly supports such a hellish idea and genocidal intent against the different. However, let's see what the view is of the two dominant world religions, that is, Islam and Christianity, in regards to nationalism, chauvinism, racism and discrimination, but also how the religious "dignitaries", undisputed narcissists, have influenced the development of nationalism in society.

Islam and Christianity, by their nature, are international religions, they respect all nations and their cultural ties with others and they exist almost among all nations of the world.

These two religions build a broad supranational community and advocate humanity, justice and benevolence. These characteristics are not a feature of a certain nation or state, they don't recognize national or cultural boundaries and therefore are features of all nations and their homelands.

Islam condemns any such intention for national or racist superiority over the weaker or disadvantaged. The Quran is decisive: "O mankind, We created you from a single male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted. (Quran, Al Hujurat/ 13)

The Bible doesn't lag behind in condemning national or racial superiority: There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus..."- (Epistle to Galatians/29).

In one occasion, Bilal al-Habashi, a black man from Ethiopia who had been a slave before converting to Islam, was insulted by an Arab notable man and prominent Islamic missionary Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari, saying "Oh son of a black slave!". Offended by such an insult, Bilal went to Muhammad, Peace be upon him, and complained to him, who addressed Abu Dharr saying: "You are a man with traits of pre-Islamic ignorance!". This is a strong condemnation and reprimand for all kinds of racism and pride in its origins. That is the view of Islam. This statement is genius and kindness of Muhammad from 1400 years ago, when the level of civilization didn't even exist at all. Wonderful!

Christianity, on the other hand, speaks of the event in which road thieves attacked a Jew and left him injured alongside

the road. Two Jewish priests had passed by but didn't help him because they didn't want to get dirty with his blood, as in the Jewish religious law it was stated that blood was unclean and performing religious ceremonies were not allowed in clothes stained with blood. But then a Samaritan happens upon the traveller and helps the man. He even pays for the expenses for his treatment out of his own pocket. Jesus, may God's peace be upon him, called this Samaritan close and dear. But do you know what the point of this event is? Well, here let me tell you. At that time, the Jews and the Samaritans were in fierce conflict and there was great intolerance and hostility between the two ethnic groups. The Jews went to extremes and even forbade speaking Samaritan!! You can now imagine the kind of rage and social revolt Jesus caused with this statement, full of tolerance and justice. Wonderful!

From the above-mentioned examples, and there are many more, it can clearly be seen that religion recommends tolerance, compassion for one another and humane cooperation between people regardless of race and nationality. Religion absolutely rejects extreme nationalism that causes intolerance, oppression, violence and injustice towards "the different", because such silliness creates a sense of superiority, and this will result in chauvinism, racism and discrimination, with all of its forms, and that is definitely a recipe for destruction and collapse of a community.

Denial, trampling others' rights and freedoms, rejecting others' awareness and conscience because of ideological reasons is something that is condemned by the dogma of the religion, and especially when it's done with a nationalistic background. Why is it then that throughout the world, and

unfortunately in our country as well, religion is misused as a catapult of radicalism in politics if religion condemns such foolish experiences? The answer is simple: greed and self-love!

If you ask some theologians about this theory, if it concerns tendentious apologists, as we could see every day until a year and a half ago, they will immediately engage in interpreting that what is said here is not always the rule and they will brainwash our brains with comments that are "above the intelligence level of the ordinary mortal", and that, of course, would refer to us!

If things were different, leaders of religious communities around the world, and in our country as well, would need to immediately step down from their positions and have an investigation immediately against their action, as with their silence they incite religious conflicts encouraged by the daily political gain. Have you ever heard that the superiors of the Macedonian Orthodox Church and the Islamic Religious Community have stood up and condemned the nationalist hate speech and the intolerance of the rightist political options of the Macedonian and Albanian political squadron that has been making all of our lives bitter for decades?!

Come on, we are waiting for the conscience to finally start working and for them not to abuse the position and to help the people, as God requires of them, and not the political poltroons!

# Tuneva: The media need to be correctors, not the ones causing manipulations, fake news and hate speech

## **CIVIL MEDIA: What is the role of CMEM during elections?**

**TUNEVA:** The role of CMEM is practically the same as in regular circumstances. This means that we as a self-regulatory body work on receiving complaints from the public, citizens, institutions and the civil sector in regards to what implies professional and unprofessional reporting in the media. We will do this also during the elections, that is, we will closely observe the behaviour of the media through the complaints received by the CMEM. We are also in regular communication with the public, during which we have indications of situations and events in the media, whether they are abused for certain political goals, whether there is manipulation, whether they notice certain trends that are unwelcome in the journalistic reporting.

Hence, it's not always in the form of a complaint, but what I would like to say is that we closely monitor the situation just as until now. We know how frequent the elections are in our country, which practically means that we have our hands full with work. But we continuously have political processes,

events that concern the public, which is why I consider that the existence of such a self-regulatory body is especially important in order to see what is happening in the media. Both during elections, and in other circumstances.

**CIVIL MEDIA: How will you assess the election process after the announcement of the elections, and before the start of the election campaign, in terms of the ethical coverage of the media?**

**TUNEVA:** We absolutely expect for the media to stick to objectivity, balance in reporting, to have an educational role, to help the public to assess who will be the right choice on behalf of the citizens. Accordingly, for they themselves to be informed enough from the media coverage with the purpose of being able to make the right choice.

We absolutely expect for them to adhere to the principles of the Code of ethics of journalism and, in general, to the principles and criteria stated in various ethical documents. Such as CMEM's Charter on Ethical Reporting During Elections. We remind the public again, and will further be reminding the public on what is their role in regards to reporting during elections.

Some of those principles imply informing in a way that means keeping balance between all sides, finding the real voices that are the real sources of information that should be presented to the public, distinction between information and comments, honesty and neutrality, all this is stated in the Charter on Ethical Reporting...we expect for them to also adhere to the principles of the International Federation of Journalists... both during elections and in regular circumstances.

What we expect during elections is putting a special accent on what a real information role means, but also a well-implemented educational role of the media. They can help the public with guidelines, with the manner in which they behave during elections, they can capture the programs of the politicians, they can preclude attempts of certain centers of power of abusing the media or of manipulating the citizens...

Having in consideration how sensitive the atmosphere is during elections, the behaviour of the media is extremely important.

**CIVIL MEDIA:** How much awareness and social responsibility is there in the media, in this election period, according to your knowledge, in order to meet your expectations in the context you are talking about?

**TUNEVA:** Following the work of the media until now, we are trying to summarize in one statistical review what we receive as information, the results of the Complaints Committee of the CMEM. What we have noticed as the most frequent tendency is violation to Article 1 of the Code of ethics of journalism, which refers to correct informing and finding the real sources of information. If we connect this with the fact that often there have been cases of disinformation, propaganda and fake news reported to us, then it's quite clear why there are such events in the media. It really is disappointing that the biggest percentage of complaints that we receive refer precisely to the accuracy of the information. Even the citizens are in the possibility to assess what the greatest problem is in journalism.

**CIVIL MEDIA:** Has CMEM noted fake news and hate speech, how much, and which media spread them the most, the tra-

### **ditional or electronic media ones?**

**TUNEVA:** We are in a phase of regularly receiving complaints, so at this moment an assessment cannot be made or a conclusion drawn on what the behaviour of the media is in the pre-election period, or what it is like in this early phase of the elections. Soon we will have a clear picture about what is happening in the media.

However, having in consideration that we have gone through and are still going through election processes, we were aware of the tendencies that were happening, the manipulations with the public opinion, we had hate speech, the aggressive rhetoric of some politicians or holders of public office shifting into the media. When we have this type of events, when politicians themselves use such rhetoric and when it spills over into the media, what can we further expect? They themselves can contribute quite a bit in inciting such appetites. Here we see a huge role of the media. They can help in exposing such attempts of holders of public office and of those that aspire for certain public functions. They can help by noticing, and by applying the principles of ethical and professional reporting, present such a problem to the public and thus help in preventing further manipulation.

In fragile moments, in a society such as ours, it is quite expected for such a rhetoric to continue, for tendentious vocabulary to be used with the purpose of denying the work policy or acting against the candidate.

**CIVIL MEDIA:** According to your experience, what is the easiest channel for flow of such information?



**TUNEVA:** Our data from last year show that the greater part of the complaints for unprofessional reporting by the media refer to the Internet portals. So it will continue as a tendency, but having in consideration that they are the most numerous media, perhaps the situation is expected. On the other hand, having a long tradition of not implementing the laws, when it comes to this type of media, then such tendencies will further continue. We will notice these deviations from the ethical norms in the Internet portals. What is especially disappointing and what we try to show as a Council of Media Ethics is that very often we have situations when contents from the social networks and Internet portals spill over into the traditional media. They, on the other hand, try to avoid the responsibility saying that someone else had did it.

We sent a request to one media outlet to explain why some violations had been made to the ethical norms. They justify that by saying that that the content they had published was from a certain portal or Facebook page and that they have no responsibility in regards to the news they had conveyed.

But this is not so... In downloading the contents from them, we participate in that process. If the norms are already violated or if even greater violations to professionalism have been noted, then it's everyone's responsibility...

What are the reasons and factors that contribute to this, is there conditioning from certain centers of power, are there pressures, influences, all this is very important to be taken into consideration. If we don' capture all of this with the help of the media in order to educate the public, no one else will be able to.

**Biljana Jordanovska** (text and editing)

# Frontally against the virus of the modern-day world – false news

**T**he Internet and other new digital wonders, like any other developmental technological revolution, this one as well, brought mankind many benefits, but also many headaches. With just one very private tool, the mobile phone, and with the help of the Internet as contemporary transportation means accessible to everyone, from three to one-hundred-three year-olds, in just one moment transformed humanity from a consumer of information to a creator of information.

Because of these technologies, because of the widest availability of a variety of news, on the one hand, it is ever more difficult to manipulate with people. On the other hand, those same consumers are in the possibility of creating authentic news, but also of placing false and manipulative information. Hence, in a plural democratic social environment, traditional media have gained strong competition both among the countless web portals, and among every citizen individually as a potential co-creator of news. In such an array of possibilities for creating and placing news, in such disloyal competition towards the traditional media, and in efforts to gain readability through attractiveness, but also in deliberate planting of lies of lucrative motives, from the most ordinary character caprices of their creators, to well-thought

out and strategically planned social wars, societies, even ours, are faced with a problem called false news.

Countries have opened a front against the phenomenon of false news for some time now. Therefore, it's good that our government, finally, knowledgeably and strategically, is engaging in those endeavours to create an environment for its citizens, for the institutions, and for the entire society, to protect themselves from lies and their consequences.

The announced strategy that the government promoted is comprehensive, integral, and includes all segments of society. Through institutional activities, to engaging the civil sector by promoting educational programs for recognizing false news. The goal is to create a wide front against the virus of the modern-day world.

Certainly, the greatest responsibility for the truth still lies in the institutions and the editorial offices of traditional media. The inertia of the official sources of information, their non-openness and slowness enable, open space for manipulations. Journalists are powerless if their access to authentic information is disabled by the state bodies and institutions. Hence, the emergence of assumptions and speculations, and, hence, the responsibility of institutions for timely and accurate informing of the public, but also the obligation and responsibility of journalism, of the media and their editorial policies for authenticity and truthfulness.

The strategy that the government promoted against false news can succeed if it's implemented without a breath, continuously, long-term and if, as they announced, it is by including all social stakeholders comprehensively and most broadly. Especially if it relies on the experience of the most

vital segment, the civil sector. For the civil sector to be the main educational training center that, judging also by resent experiences and practices, has motives and capacities and can take the lion's share of the burden in the fight against the modern evil – false news.

**Zoran Ivanov**

# Fake news and hate speech

**F**ake news are a type of “tabloid journalism” or propaganda that consists of intentional disinformation or fraud that is spread through the media or online social networks.

The news later is often reflected as disinformation in the social media, but often it can also be seen in information programs of the mainstream media.

Fake news are written and published usually with the purpose to mislead, harm or gain financial or political points and often use sensationalist, dishonest or entirely fabricated headlines in order to increase the number of readers.

False informing of the public is made with the purpose of deliberately publishing propaganda or disinformation, while the social networks are used to increase their spreading and readability. The difference between fake news and news that serve for entertainment or satire is that with the first ones, efforts are made to seduce the readers for financial, political or other purposes.

Fake news usually are linked also to hate speech, namely, many of them are used to intimidate people or to impose upon them a bad opinion for a certain group.

Hate speech is a term that refers to speech that has the intention to degrade, disturb, cause violence or activities,

based on prejudice, based on their race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, handicap, political views, occupation or appearance or any other feature, against a person or group.

According to the law, hate speech is any speech, gesticulation or behaviour, written text or display that is prohibited due to the possibility to incite violence or prejudice against or by a protected individual or group, or because an individual or group is degraded or intimidated.

Neither the world, or our society, are not immune to the phenomenon of "hate speech". We often come across all kinds of insults, calls for violence and similar, especially on the social networks, in places where the authorities cannot fully act. The social networks are filled with all kinds of ugly words, and they serve also for grouping of certain individuals where they exchange their destructive messages.

Hate speech and fake news can be reported to CIVIL also anonymously. It is important to make a screenshot of posts and comments that contain hate speech and fake news, as well as of the links to those contents, namely, to their author(s). Reporting hate speech and fake news, as well as all other irregularities, is possible also through the online application on the website Free Elections, if it is in the electoral context. In the wider context, the reporting can be made by sending a Facebook message to CIVIL or by email to civil.macedonia@gmail.com.

Comments and posts with hate speech on the social networks and in the media can be reported also to the MOI. On the MOI's website, there is a Red button where abuse of children, human trafficking and hate crime and calls for

violence can be reported.

The email address [cybercrime@moi.gov.mk](mailto:cybercrime@moi.gov.mk) is also available for conscientious citizens, where hate speech can be reported. In the application, the name of the user needs to be stated and the link to the Internet content.

**A. Petrovska**

## **IV. FIELD ACTIVITIES**





## INFO STANDS

The info stands were part of CIVIL's field activities, where in direct communication with the citizens, green values, anti-nationalism and social justice were promoted. At the info stands, through the distribution of information and educational material, CIVIL's teams gave citizens the opportunity to actively participate in decision-making at the local and national level, as well as to be involved in CIVIL's activities in the efforts for green values, in the demands for social justice, in the fight against nationalism, but also on how to be part of the initiative for demanding an end to profligacy of officials by cancelling their privileges. Furthermore, for CIVIL's team the views and opinions of citizens were important, for the purpose of better and more efficient implementation of the forthcoming activities.

## WORKSHOPS



**T**he workshops were an opportunity for all socially active citizens, regardless of where they come from, whether they are part of a non-governmental sector, or part of a political party, to express their views and proposals. In addition to promoting the “Green Future” project, the workshops also included discussions on the links between the European and green values, social and environmental justice, as well as a discussion on the topic “Green values at the local and central level: situation, challenges and perspectives” and “Civic participation in the social processes for support to the democratic reforms, green alternatives and anti-nationalism”.



## SURVEYS

CIVIL conducted several surveys, where the citizens replied to the survey questions “Is there nationalism in the country” and “How much does the Government care for the environment in the country”. From 5 to 10 citizens participated in each survey, depending on the municipality.





