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Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA
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Kingdom of the Netherlands

Within the Intelligence and Security Sector Reform Programme in the Republic of North Macedonia (2021-2026), DCAF continued to advance its efforts to strengthen the intelligence and security sector in North Macedonia, promoting resilience, democratic values, and effective governance. From January to March 2025, a diverse set of activities was implemented, targeting a range of beneficiaries, (including Parliament, the Executive, Judiciary, civil society, and media) to promote a comprehensive and inclusive approach to reform.

OUTCOME II

SUPPORT TO THE PARLIAMENT

DCAF continues to support parliamentary staff in enhancing and institutionalising oversight of intelligence and security. After several targeted trainings, DCAF organised **two workshops on Developing a Framework for Communication, Analytical, and Advisory Skills**, held in Veles on 27–28 January and 24–25 February 2025. These workshops aimed to strengthen the capacity of parliamentary staff to effectively analyse security-related information, provide strategic advice, and communicate oversight findings in a clear and compelling manner. The sessions also prompted peer learning and cross-institutional exchange of practical experiences.

Parliamentary Staff Workshops, Jan-Feb 2025, Veles



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

NEWSLETTER N° 15

JANUARY - MARCH 2025

DCAF & SSG/R

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

The highlights of DCAF achievements and contributions internationally are featured in the newest [video](#). You can also find detailed information about DCAF's activities and performance in 2023 in the [latest report](#).

POLICE INTEGRITY

With DCAF's support, the implementation of the **Ministry of the Interior's Integrity Plan 2023–2025** continues to advance. By providing strategic guidance and sustained assistance, DCAF played a key role in facilitating the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the plan. Following a DCAF-organized workshop held from **30 January to 1 February** to assess the **second year of implementation**, the Internal Control Department released its second annual public report. This comprehensive report is available on the Ministry's website in Macedonian, Albanian, and English. Looking ahead, the Internal Control Department remains committed to executing the **2025 Action Plan**, with DCAF continuing to provide support in all phases of implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Links to the Report:





AGENT OF CHANGE - journalist Miomir Serafinovikj

By attending DCAF events, I have expanded my analytical reporting skills on topics related to security reform and the security sector, and I have understood how policy is created in that area, specifically on prevention of abuses and protection of human rights. Most importantly, we managed to build a tight group together with DCAF - a real team of non-governmental representatives, journalists, former members of the security services, with whom we managed to articulate the citizens' needs to the stakeholders: MPs, Ombudsperson representatives, judges and prosecutors. The basis for my analysis of public information was the colleagues' experiences from the workshops, and the feedback I have received on my reporting on the need and selection of the Council for Civilian Supervision of the measures for surveilling communications. I will also highlight the exchange of views on the proposed reform of the secret services and the conclusion that there is a need for reporting on this sensitive topic.

"I am #AgentOfChange because change starts with yourself, with your own experiences and new knowledge. From the details you have adopted."

In line with DCAF's Programme priorities to strengthen internal control and prevent corruption within the Ministry of Interior (MoI), a high-level **Roundtable on Police Integrity: Roles and Responsibilities of Police Managers** was held on **5 March 2025**. The event gathered Assistant Ministers and Heads of Sectors of Internal Affairs to discuss managerial responsibilities in promoting integrity and accountability. The roundtable highlighted the importance of leadership in fostering ethical conduct, sharing best practices, and advancing anti-corruption efforts. As the first event of its kind for mid- and senior-level MoI management, it set the foundation for an annual platform to support professional and ethical policing.



Roundtable Discussion on Police Integrity, Skopje, March 2025

SUPPORT TO THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY

Between **10 - 14 March 2025** in Gevgelija, DCAF organized a **Training of Trainers (ToT) for representatives of the Military Service for Security and Intelligence (MSSI)** within the Ministry of Defence. The training enhanced the expertise of the MSSI personnel by strengthening and expanding their knowledge of **advanced methodologies for delivering instruction on military intelligence and good governance**. The sessions were accompanied by practical mock cases and simulation exercises. Following the completion of the advanced ToT, two comprehensive courses will be delivered to MSSI staff by the trained personnel, allowing them to apply their newly acquired skills in practice.



Workshop on development of 2024 Annual Report for Implementation of MoI Integrity Action Plan, Ohrid, January 2025



ToT for MSSSI Staff, March 2025, Gevgelija

BUILDING CAPACITIES FOR AUTOMATED EXCHANGE OF DATA

The **first meeting of the Thematic Working Group on implementing the PCC Prüm Agreement** focusing on automated Vehicle Registration Data (VRD) exchange— took place in Vienna **from 26 to 28 March 2025**.

Representatives from North Macedonia's Ministry of Interior, including the Civil Affairs and Telecommunications Departments, actively participated, presenting the country's progress, plans, and key needs for **operationalising automated VRD exchange** under PCC Prüm.

With DCAF's support, the Ministry has completed all necessary preparations to connect to the EU's secure TESTA-ng network. In coordination with the newly established Ministry of Digital Transformation, the designated national Point of Contact to DG DIGIT, the Ministry is well-positioned for integration.

TESTA-ng supports secure, automated exchange of biometric and identification data—including DNA, fingerprints, and vehicle registration—within the PCC SEE framework, also known as "mini Prüm."

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

April 2021 – March 2026

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

The Programme is structured to attain three outcomes:

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

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

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

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

Partners in the Republic of North Macedonia:

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

1st Working Group Meeting on Automated Vehicle Registration Data, March 2025, Vienna



FURTHERING GENDER EQUALITY

A **workshop on revising the Ministry of Defence (MoD) Gender Action Plan (GAP)** was held in Veles from 10–11 February 2025, bringing together working group members from the MoD and the Army of North Macedonia. The GAP serves as a strategic framework outlining measures, objectives, and accountability mechanisms to promote inclusiveness, equality, and alignment with international standards.

Due to recent structural changes within the MoD, the workshop focused on **reviewing outdated sections and enhancing the GAP's practical relevance**. It also provided a platform for participants to contribute to improving the document's clarity, effectiveness, and applicability as a planning and decision-making tool. DCAF will continue to support the MoD in the implementation of the revised GAP.

OUTCOME III

WORKING WITH JUDICIARY

On 12 March 2025, DCAF launched a **research initiative on judicial practices related to the authorisation and implementation of Special Investigative Measures (SIMs)** in North Macedonia. Initiated at the request of the Academy of Judges and Public Prosecutors during Judicial Steering Group meetings, the initiative aims to enhance transparency and accountability in the use of SIMs.

To support this effort, DCAF helped the Academy develop

Workshop on revising the Gender Action Plan of MoD, Feb. 2025, Veles



a **comprehensive methodology** of the research. This jointly agreed tool enables systematic analysis of judicial practices, both quantitative and qualitative, based on real case law and decisions. It also serves as a monitoring framework for ongoing evaluation of SIM authorisation and implementation.

The research will be carried out by a working group comprising Academy representatives and members of the Judicial Group of Judges and Prosecutors. The research started with focus groups, which were held in **Skopje on 24 and 25 March 2025** bringing together judges, prosecutors, Ministry of Interior officials, and legal experts to provide input and enrich the research with practical insights. As a next step of the research process, several workshops with the working group will be held to analyze the results from the interviews and the desktop research, review and compare the collected data, and conceptualize and draft the research report.

Kick-off Event and Focus Groups on Special Investigative Measures Research, March 2025, Skopje



ENHANCING CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT

DCAF also continued with the **Training of Trainers (ToT) programme**, dedicated to enhancing the skills of representatives from CSOs, media, and the Parliamentary Channel in North Macedonia. Between **23–25 January 2025**, ToT #5 was held in Veles. The ToT #5 included focused modules on learning retention techniques, voice and diction, effective language and communication style, body language, and the application of rhetorical principles to strengthen clarity, persuasion, and audience engagement.

The initiative aims to **empower CSOs and media professionals with advanced knowledge and skills to effectively disseminate information on security sector reform and governance** across their organisations and networks while strengthening oversight and accountability mechanisms.

Development Partner Steering Mechanism

For the Programme, a pooled funding mechanism was chosen and as of December 2021 four development partners have contributed. They are Switzerland (approx. CHF 1'500'000), Sweden (approx. CHF 1'310'000), the Netherlands (CHF 780'000), and the European Union (approx. CHF 320'000). Together with DCAF's own core budget contribution and in-kind support from national beneficiary partners through the provision of office space, venues, technical equipment, local transport, and experts the combined total budget for the period 2021-2026 amounts to approx. CHF 5'750'000.

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

ToT #5 for CSOs, Media, and Parliamentary Channel, Jan. 2025, Veles



SUPPORT TO THE OMBUDSPERSON OFFICE

Between **10-11 February 2025** in Veles, a **Workshop for Development of the Checklist for Conducting Oversight Visits by the Ombudsperson** took place. The event provided participants with comparative insights, practical tools, and interactive exercises to enhance their understanding and capacity for effective oversight, including the development of internal procedures and simulation of real-world oversight practices. The workshop focused on **structuring and finalizing a standardized tool to guide and enhance the effectiveness of oversight visits by the Ombudsperson in North Macedonia**.

Ombuds Workshop, Feb. 2025, Veles



Once finalized, the checklist will be intended to serve as a practical framework to ensure that all critical aspects of oversight were systematically addressed. The workshop facilitated discussions among experts and stakeholders to ensure that the checklist aligned with legal mandates, operational needs, and global standards for oversight and governance.

Ombuds Workshop, Feb. 2025, Veles



UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

APRIL – JUNE 2025

- Workshop on Classified Information #1
- Multi-Stakeholder Workshop #4 for MPs and CSOs/Media on Post-Legislative Scrutiny
- Multi-Stakeholder Workshop #5 for MPs and CSOs/Media
- Workshop for Communication and Advisory Skills Application for MPs and parliamentary staff
- Workshop & Interviews with Judges and Prosecutors on Research Analysis on SIMs
- Working Visit to Justice Academy of Türkiye
- Workshops on Project Management and Budgeting for Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors
- 1st Workshop on Research Analysis on SIMs
- Workshops on Strategic Planning and Communication for Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors
- Annual meeting with the Forensic Departments on ongoing activities and Data exchange
- Promotion Event of the GSA Findings and the Gender Action Plan
- Broadcasting Mini-Documentary on the Gender Self-Assessment Process
- Workshop for Development of Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting Framework for the Gender Action Plan
- Workshop #1 on Curriculum Outline for Specialized Professional Studies, UGD Stip
- Joint Workshop between UGD and CSO/media group: Input from CSOs/media

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