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BYZANTINE STEREOTYPES IN THE BALKAN COUNTRIES' CONTEMPORARY POLITICS TOWARDS MACEDONIA

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Апстракт

Поголем дел од европските византолози ја признаваат Грција за наследничка на Византија, поточно, Византија ја сметаат за грчка држава, што не е во склад со изворите. Оттаму најверојатно и потекнува целокупното недоразбирање во европските политички кругови, па во склад со средновековната византиска доктрина, државата признаена од Византија била и меѓународно признаена, а тоа го рефлектираат и на денешната грчка политика, така што онаа балканска држава што е признаена од Грција е признаена и од Европската Унија и станува членка на европското семејство. Македонија како посебна држава никогаш не била признаена од Византија ниту сега од Грција, па затоа и не може да стане членка на европското семејство, кое во голема мера се гради по примерот на Византија. Останува отворено прашањето: зошто европските политичари ѝ даваат толкаво значење на Грција во изградбата на новото европско општество?

Клучни зборови: Византија, името Македонија, традиција, државотворност, Србија, Бугарија

In order to distinguish the Byzantine stereotypes in the Balkan states' contemporary politics towards Macedonia, one must first examine Byzantium's state politics towards Macedonia and its present-day neighbors. The answer to this question depends on the period of Byzantine history being discussed, as well as on whether it is a matter of domestic or foreign policy.

When it comes to Byzantium's foreign policy towards Macedonia, one should take into account the presence and the influence of the ancient and Hellenic tradition. This is quite logical, since Byzantium was the successor to Ancient Rome and its ideology, mixed with the ideology of the Hellenic states.

The Byzantine Empire took the Hellenistic monarchy of Alexander the Great as an example of the political idea of unitary government, which was seen as a replacement of the polis with the territorial monarchy.¹ These Hellenistic ideas found their way to Byzantium through the politics of the Roman emperors, who included Macedonia in their titulature in order to present themselves as successors and heirs of Alexander the Great's state in front of the people. That was needed in order to keep the Macedonian people under control, so they often imitated Alexander the Great, celebrated his birthday, organized games to commemorate his death, as well as his victory over Persia, and they even undertook campaigns against Persia to show they adhered to his politics. During the establishment of their own government, the name Macedonia was present in the administrative division of the Roman Empire.

In the wake of the unsuccessful wars against Rome in 168 BC, Macedonia was conquered and divided into four regional districts—merides—each with its own capital. No communication whatsoever between the districts was allowed: no trading, no economic ties, and no marriages. The use of the Macedonian language was also strictly prohibited. This division lasted until 148 BC, when, after an unsuccessful uprising, Macedonia was turned into a Roman province, first of its kind on the Balkan Peninsula, and thus became the principal starting point for further Roman conquests in the Balkans. Each newly-acquired Balkan territory was annexed to the province of Macedonia.² It was not until 29-28 BC that new Balkan provinces such as Dalmatia, Moesia and Thrace began to emerge. In 27 BC, the provinces were divided into senatorial and imperial,³ with Macedonia under the Senate's jurisdiction. The prohibition regarding the use of the Macedonian language was still in force.

A new administrative reform was carried out during the reign of Diocletian (297 AD), when the so-called dioceses, larger administrative units than the provinces, were formed. The Diocese of Moesia, therefore, incorporated ten provinces, including Macedonia. Diocletian's successor, Constantine I, continued his predecessor's reform policies. He divided the Empire into four districts (prefectures). Macedonia was included in the prefecture of Illyricum. During the 4th century, around 325 AD, the Diocese of Moesia was divided into two parts: Dacia and Macedonia. In this way, before the official dissolution of the Empire, Macedonia, in terms of historical significance, was not only a province, but also a larger administrative unit—a diocese.⁴

¹ Георги Бакалов, *Византия*. София 1999, 284.

² *Titi Livi Ab urbe condita libri*, ed. M. Mueller, Lipsiae 1897, XLV, 29-30; *Извори за старата историја и географија на Тракија и Македонија*, София 1949, 160-170. For the boundaries of the Roman province of Macedonia, compare: Петар Коледаров, *Името Македонија в историческата географија*. София 1985, 17-22.

³ Петар Коледаров, *Името Македонија...*, 18.

⁴ *Латински извори за бугарската историја*, I, 229.

During the period between 386 AD and 388 AD, new administrative reforms were carried out, which saw Macedonia divided into two provinces: Macedonia Prima, with Thessalonica as its capital, and Macedonia Secunda (Salutaris) with Stobi as its capital.⁵ This administrative division was in force until the 6th century and the reign of Justinian I (527-565 AD), and ended in 535 AD, when he carried out reforms of his own in the administrative area. Unlike Diocletian and Constantine I, Justinian began uniting the provinces into larger units. Among the united provinces after 535 AD were Macedonia and Dardania, which formed a single unit named Macedonia. It was then that Macedonia Salutaris (Secunda) was mentioned for the last time. Meanwhile, the capital of the prefecture of Illyricum was also moved to Justiniana Prima.⁶

During the early Byzantine period, the name of Macedonia was associated with a military and administrative unit. That notwithstanding, the memory of the once powerful Macedonian state and Alexander's conquests was not gone. It was preserved in the heart of its successor Byzantium, particularly in more educated circles.

As far as the church was concerned, after the declaration of Christianity as a state religion, Macedonia was part of the Western Church. After the Empire's dissolution in 395 AD, Macedonia was included in the Eastern Church's subordinate areas, i.e. the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. This situation remained unchanged in the following several centuries, for which there is evidence in the list of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople during the reign of the Isaurian dynasty, composed between 733 and 787 AD.⁷

The Early Byzantine period (4th-6th century AD) was characterized by constant struggles between the Germanic tribes. On account of Macedonia's geostrategic position, there was constant presence of Early Byzantine emperors. This was due to the fact that all actions against the Goths were happening in or around Macedonia. In the end, the Byzantine Empire won the war, which was not the case with the war against the Slavs in 6th-8th century AD. Since Justinian I was engaged on multiple fronts, he left the Balkans, including Macedonia, without proper defense. In that way, the Slavs took advantage of Byzantium's neglect of this region, so they snatched these territories from the Empire and turned them into their own free principalities called Sclaviniae. Thus, Byzantium lost Macedonia, but administratively and legally still considered it as part of its territory, although it had no real authority whatsoever. As a result of the Slavic conquest of Macedonia, certain ethnic changes occurred. They shall not be discussed here but only briefly mentioned. Part of the indigenous population of Macedonia, especially the prosperous families

⁵ Compare: Б. Сариа, *Истраживања у Стобима* – Год. Скопског научног друштва, књ. V, 2, 1929, стр. 1-3; Fanula Papazoglu, *La Macédoine Salutaris et la Macédoine Seconde*. – *Bulletin de la Classe des lettres de l'Académie royale de Belgique*, V. 42, 1956.

⁶ *История Византии*, Т. I, 233. About ubication of Justiniana Prime, compare: Анета Шукарова, *Јустинијана Прима*. Скопје 1994, 93-117.

⁷ *Грџки извори за българската история*. Т. III, 184, 189.

and the Byzantine-oriented, fled Macedonia for the seaside towns. Byzantium banished them to Thrace, around the town of Odrin, and formed a military unit, a *theme* called Macedonia out of them. That name was later passed on the territory populated by the armed forces.⁸

At the same time, Byzantium also included Macedonia in both its domestic and foreign policies. Unlike the other Sclaviniae in the Balkans, which were all given general names, those of Macedonia were referred to as either “Macedonian Sclaviniae” or “the Sclaviniae of Macedonia” (“τὰς κατὰ τὴν Μακεδονίαν Σκλαυινίας”).⁹ Byzantium often went to war with these Sclaviniae because it wanted to conquer them, but those campaigns were only effective in the short run since the majority of the Macedonian Sclaviniae remained independent. After the forming of the new Bulgarian state in 681 AD, part of the Balkan Sclaviniae were included in its territory. It was the first medieval state in the Balkans formed on Byzantine territory that was recognized by Byzantium. Thus, Byzantium acknowledged the existence of another state, different from its own. The Sclaviniae of Macedonia remained independent. As a result, the Byzantine emperors constantly tried to conquer them.¹⁰ However, the Macedonian Sclaviniae continued to exist all the way to the 9th century, when in 836/37 AD were mentioned in the records for the last time.¹¹

Throughout the whole of its existence, Byzantium conducted a persistent and firm policy of assimilation, i.e. “Romanizing” its subjects of foreign ancestry.¹² Byzantine society, with its established physiognomy (not only in theoretical, but in practical terms as well), with its religion, culture, law and order, and historical tradition, stimulated the continued process of including the stranger into the Roman identity, the “Homo Byzantinus”.¹³ Romanization was carried out through Christianizing, awarding honorary titles, and finally through marriages. Children born from mixed marriages were considered Roman.¹⁴ This is why, when a peace treaty was signed between Byzantium and Bulgaria in 864 AD, which saw part of Mace-

⁸ Петар Коледаров, *Името Македонија*, 31.; About theme Macedonia, see: p. 52-69.

⁹ *Theophani Cronographia*, rec. C. de Boor, I, Lipsiae 1883, 430; *ГИБИ*, III, 265; *Византијски извори за историју народа Југославија*, I, Београд 1955, 222; 236; 230 и бел. 41; Стјепан Антолјак, *Македонските Склавинии. – Средновековна Македонија*. Т. 1, Скопје 1985, 129.

¹⁰ For the battles of the Byzantines with the Slavs in Macedonia, compare: Александар Атанасовски, *Византија и Словените од околината на Солун во VII век. – Годишен зборник на Филозофски факултет на Универзитетот „Св. Кирил и Методиј“ – Скопје*. Книга 60. Скопје 2007, 275-288 and the other literature which is listed there.

¹¹ *Византијски извори*, I, 255 и бел. 5-6; *Документи за борбата на македонскиот народ за самостојност и за национална држава*. Том први, Скопје 1981, 51; Стјепан Антолјак, *Македонските Склавинии*, 149; Стјепан Антолјак, *Македонија во IX век. – Средновековна Македонија*, 1, 195-196.

¹² Иван Божилов, *Българите във византийската империя*. София 1995, 108.

¹³ *Ibid.* p. 108.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 109.

donia annexed to Bulgaria and another one to Byzantium, the Bulgarian ruler Boris agreed to adopt Christianity from Byzantium. His son Simeon (803-927 AD) was driven by the idea of becoming a Byzantine emperor and constantly led battles against Byzantium. However, his endeavours were unsuccessful.¹⁵ After his death in 927 AD, his son Peter made a peace treaty with Byzantium. Byzantium recognized his title of “Tsar of the Bulgarians”, arranged a marriage for him with a girl from the Lekapenos clan, which made him a part of their family, and recognized the Bulgarian Patriarchate.¹⁶

Up until 927 AD, Byzantine authors distinguish between the Macedonian Sclaviniae and the Sclaviniae in the service of Bulgaria. After this year, a large section of Macedonia, stretching 22 km from Thessalonica, became part of the Bulgarian state, so the terms “Bulgaria” and “Bulgarians” started appearing in some Byzantine sources, the latter as the name for the people who were subjects of the state. All events that took place in Macedonia were said to have happened “in Bulgaria”. Similarly, the Byzantine authors wrote that the state of Tsar Samuel was established on “Bulgarian soil”.¹⁷

Throughout the existence of Samuel’s state (969-1018 AD), Byzantium led continuous attacks against it. Byzantium did not officially recognize this creation, alongside Samuel’s crown, awarded to him by Rome. Byzantium also failed to recognize the existence of the Orthodox Ohrid Archbishopric as a separate church, but rather considered it an extension of the Bulgarian Archbishopric, dissolved in 971 AD and added to the Patriarchate of Constantinople.¹⁸

In the wake of the dissolution of Samuel’s state in 1018 AD, Byzantium conducted a series of military and administrative reforms that included Macedonia as well. A larger part of Macedonia was included into the Theme of “Bulgaria” with Skopje as its capital, and that is precisely why all the sources concerning the events in Macedonia document that they happened in Bulgaria. This was done in order to push out the name of Macedonia from the region, whereas the same name continued to be used as a theme name in Thrace, outside the historical core of Macedonia. As a simpler approach, the Byzantine administration skillfully used a foreign name whose existence it had previously recognized, and since Macedonia had been a part of the Bulgarian state before the creation of Samuel’s empire, this made sense to Byzantium and its doctrine of assimilating the Macedonians and neglecting their ethnic identity. The Bulgarians could no longer claim any ancient state

¹⁵ About the war between Simeon and Byzantium, see: Иван Божилов – Васил Гюзелев, *История на средновековна България*, 247-250; Иван Дуйчев, *Византия и славянският свят*. София 1998, 49-55.

¹⁶ Иван Божилов – Васил Гюзелев, *История на средновековна България*, 271-277; Иван Дуйчев, *Византия и славянският свят*. 63.

¹⁷ Иван Дуйчев, *Славяни и първобългари*, 198; *Документи за борбата на македонскиот народ*, 78, бел. 332.

¹⁸ About Samoil’s state, see: Стјепан Антолјак, *Самуилова држава. – Средновековна Македонија*, Скопје 1985, also compare: Иван Дуйчев, *Византия и славянският свят*, 64.

traditions in the Balkans and that certainly went in Constantinople's favor. Their ruler, Tsar Peter, was included into the order of relatives of the Byzantine emperor when he was crowned as Tsar of the Bulgarians, not disturbing the already established dogma of the existence of a single Christian kingdom, that is, Byzantium.¹⁹

At the beginning of the 13th century, Byzantium was torn apart by the crusaders of the Fourth Crusade. A Latin Empire with a whole line of vassal Latin states was formed instead. On those territories where the Latins could not establish their rule, three states were formed—Nicaea, Trebizond, and Epirus—which adopted the legal and state tradition of Byzantium. In the end, after hard-fought struggles, the Empire of Nicaea re-established Byzantium in 1261 AD, and Macedonia was a part of this new state. Byzantine armies were constantly present in Macedonia in order to prevent the neighboring tribes and peoples from raiding the territory.²⁰

In the thick of those struggles in 1219 AD, the exiled Byzantine patriarch in Nicaea appointed Sava as the Archbishop of Peć, thus recognizing the independence of the Serbian Church whose parishes belonged to the Archbishopric of Ohrid,²¹ as well as the royal crown of the Serbian ruler. A similar thing happened in 1235 AD, when Macedonia was a part of the Bulgarian state; with the permission of Nicaea, in Trnovo, the Trnovo or Bulgarian Patriarchate²² was established, with parishes appropriated from the Ohrid Archbishopric. This is emphasized because even today, Bulgarian historians claim that the Ohrid Archbishopric is “Bulgarian”. Had that been the case, it would have been more logical for the Ohrid Archbishopric to be proclaimed a patriarchate, on account of its historical background, and in 1235 AD it was a part of the Bulgarian state. However, this scenario did not become a reality because there was an independent Ohrid Archbishopric, and the Bulgarian ruler asked for a “Bulgarian patriarchate” to be formed, which indicates that he did not consider the Ohrid Archbishopric “Bulgarian”. During the 1280s, the Serbs began populating the Macedonian territory. In 1299 AD, a deal was made between Byzantium and Serbia, supported by a marriage between the dynasties of King Milutin and Simonida.²³ With the marriage, Milutin became a member of the Byzantine emperor's family, whereas the territories he had conquered in Macedonia were given to him as a dowry. According to Byzantine law,

¹⁹ Иван Дуйчев, *Византия и славянският свят*, 32.

²⁰ Георги Острогорски, *Историја Византије*, 392-422.

²¹ About that question, compare: Јован Белчовски, *Охридската архиепископија од основањето до паѓањето на Македонија под турска власт*. Скопје 1997, 275; Александар Атанасовски, *Охридската архиепископија во XIV век*. – Годишен зборник на Филозофски факултет на Универзитетот „Св. Кирил и Методиј“ – Скопје. Книга 56. Скопје 2003, 32; *Ibid.*, *Македонија во XIV век*. Тетово 2009, 245.

²² Васил Златарски, *История*, III, 361-389; Петар Ников, *Църковната политика на Иван Асен II*, 65-110; Г. Цанкова-Петкова, *Восстановление болгарского патриаршества в 1235 г. и международное положение болгарского государства*. – ВВр. XXVIII, 1968, 136-150; Иван Божилов – Васил Гюзелев, *История на средновековна България*, 493.

²³ *Византијски извори*. VI, 46-48; 50-53; 168-171; 605-607.

should the marriage dissolve, Byzantium would have the right to claim those territories back (the bride had the right to take back what she had brought into the marriage). Milutin, on the other hand, had the authority to govern that territory, now part of the Serbian state. The Serbs, much like the Bulgarians, had no ancient traditions of statehood and presented no potential threat to the exclusive right Byzantium had on the world empire, as long as their ruler was included into the medieval family of the Byzantine emperor and did not infringe on the established practice of the supremacy of imperial authority.

At the beginning of the 14th century, Macedonia was under a threat of division again, this time between the Latin titular Emperor Charles Valois and the Serbian King Milutin. The deal was made in 1308 AD²⁴ and suggested dividing Macedonia into two parts, but nothing came of it.

During the reign of the Serbian ruler Stefan Dušan, a larger part of Macedonia was under Serbia. The Macedonian towns and areas were often a bone of contention in the negotiations between Dušan and Byzantium. Dušan, following the example of the Bulgarian ruler Simeon, was driven by the idea of creating a new Serbo-Roman kingdom instead of Byzantium, and therefore, in 1346 AD, proclaimed himself the “Tsar of Serbia and Romania”, but that title was unrecognized by Byzantium, so a schism followed.²⁵

Although for most of the 14th century Macedonia was on Byzantium’s borders, the names “Macedonia” and “Macedonians” were not erased from Byzantine sources, i.e. Macedonia was still considered a part of Byzantium. Byzantine historians, such as Nicephorus Gregoras and John Kantakouzenos used the name of Macedonia to describe the events that happened in the “real Macedonia” as opposed to the “theme of Macedonia”.²⁶ This was also done by Demetrius Cydones, in his correspondence with John Kantakouzenos. It became a practice in international (interstate) affairs as well. In the institutions and names of some official letters from Islamic subjects to the Byzantine emperor, the terms “Macedonia” and “Macedonians” were used as synonyms for prestige. For example, the letter of the Mamluk Sultan Nasir al-Din Mohammad from 1340-41 AD to Emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos (1328-1341 AD) reads [in translation]: “To... the noble Andronikos... the sword of the Macedonian Kingdom, of the honorable Hellenic military system, Emperor of Bulgaria, Wallachia, and Alania, the absolute ruler of Russia, Iberia and the Turks, heir of the Roman Empire, ruler over two seas and

²⁴ *Договорот на крал Урош II Милутин со Карло Валоа од 1308 година за поделба на Византиска Македонија*. Увод: Владимир Мошин, текст со превод и коментар: Лидија Славева. – *Споменици за средновековната и поновата историја на Македонија*, том II, Скопје 1977, 436-439 and the other literature which is listed there.

²⁵ Иван Дуйчев, *Византија и славјанският свят*, 34; Александар Атанасовски, *Македонија во XIV век*, 52; 75-76.

²⁶ According to: Александар Атанасовски, *Македонија и Македонците во делото на Никифор Григора, византиски историограф од XIV век*. – *Годишен зборник на Филозофски факултет на универзитетот „Св. Кирил и Методиј“ – Скопје*, книга 27 (53). Скопје 2000, 61-73.

rivers, Doukas, Angelos Komnenus Palailogos.”²⁷ Thus, Byzantine supremacy was expressed.

A more blatant example of the expression of supremacy is evident in a letter from the Sultan Melik Nasir-ad Din Hasan to the Emperor John Kantakouzenos from 1349 AD, “... sword of Macedonians... Emperor of the Hellenes, Emperor of the Bulgarians, Vlachs, Russians, Alans...”²⁸

Apart from expressing Byzantine supremacy, these data show that in the 14th century, one could make a distinction between the Macedonians and the Bulgarians and the rest of the peoples that were subjects to the Byzantine emperor.

After the dissolution of Byzantium, the Balkan states fell under Ottoman rule. Part of them managed to separate and form their own states in the 19th century (Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria). In its policies, Greece invoked Byzantine tradition and aimed to become Byzantium’s successor in the Balkans. The Ecumenical Patriarch, who continued to reside in Constantinople, was considered an heir to the Byzantine patriarchs and was Greek, naturally, as has been the practice to this day. On the other hand, Bulgaria and Serbia, which had ruled over some parts of Macedonia in the Middle Ages, both laid claim on those very same territories and considered them part of their respective states. This led to the Balkan Wars, which saw the Ottomans banished from Macedonia, which still could not gain independence since its territory was divided between the above three Balkan states, according to previously made agreements.²⁹ Naturally, each state conducted a policy of assimilation in its own territories towards the local Macedonian population and refused to recognize their rights. They went as far as prohibiting the use of the term Macedonia and the Macedonian language³⁰ in the period between the two world wars (1938). The European superpowers paid no attention to the cries for help from the Macedonians. Thus, this single people with a single history was now given three different names (Bulgarian, Serbian, and Greek) and this was quite “normal” for the great superpowers. The Greek ban on the use of the Macedonian name and language has still not been withdrawn, although after World War II, the Republic of Greece recognized SFR Yugoslavia, and implicitly, SR Macedonia as part of the Federation. The euphoria dissipated after the evident tendencies for the dissolution of SFRY, so in 1989, Greece shifted its politics and started spreading the ideology that Macedonia was Greek, or that there was no such a thing as a Macedonian language, it was all Greek. Europe still considered it “normal”. Something similar has been happening in Bulgaria and Serbia as well. Some recognize the state, but not

²⁷ Василка Тъпкова-Заимова – Русалена Пенджекова, *Византия през погледа на съвременниците и*. Пловдив 2002, 334. Сп. Георги Бакалов, *Византия*, 319.

²⁸ Василка Тъпкова-Заимова – Русалена Пенджекова, *Византия през погледа на съвременниците и*. Пловдив 2002, 334. Сп. Георги Бакалов, *Византия*, 319.

²⁹ About agreements between Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece, see: *Документи за борбата на македонскиот народ*, Т. 1. 529-533 и Букурешкиот договор, 527.

³⁰ *Историја на македонскиот народ*. Скопје 1988, 307. Example for someone who was judged because he had spoken another language, compare: *Документи...*, Т. 2, 66-67.

the people and the language, whereas others do not recognize the existence of the church. It is all a well-designed policy, constructed and headed by Greece, aiming to deny the existence of the Macedonian people and state in order to keep the exclusive rights to the ancient history, culture and tradition. All this goes in favor of both Serbia and Bulgaria, which are waiting for the right moment to realize their medieval aspirations towards Macedonia and thus help their ally Greece deal with Macedonianism.

It remains a mystery, however, whether European politicians are not familiar with the history of the Balkans or they are just pretending they are not. They cannot be that senile to forget what kinds of agreements their predecessors made with regards to Macedonia. Instead of gathering the courage to apologize for the injustices done by them and attempt to make things right, they are relentlessly trying to persuade us that we do not exist and that we should change our name, because that is the will of the Greeks. It is high time that both European and Greek leaders resolve the dilemma of who the Greeks really are: are they the heirs of the Hellenes, i.e. Greek, or are they the heirs of the Macedonians and thus Macedonian? They cannot be both. It is about time that the Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbs recognized the existence of a different people, an autochthonous people with the longest historical tradition—the Macedonians.

The majority of European Byzantologists recognize Greece as the successor of Byzantium, that is, consider Byzantium a Greek state, which does not correspond with any of the sources. This is what most likely caused the overall misinterpretation in European political circles so that, in accordance with medieval Byzantine doctrine, the state recognized by Byzantium was internationally recognized as well, as reflected in present-day Greek politics. The Balkan state that recognized Greece was in turn recognized itself and became a member of the European family. Macedonia has never been recognized as a separate state by Byzantium, or by Greece, therefore it cannot become part of the European family, which has largely been modelled after the Byzantine example. So, the question remains: why do European politicians care so much about Greece in the construction of the new European family?

The ties between European leaders are pretty much the same as they were in Byzantium. The states and the people that had been recognized by Byzantium were also internationally recognized afterwards, whereas the ones that had not been, such as Macedonia and the Macedonians, did not receive international recognition. Nowadays, every Balkan state recognized by Greece found a place in the European Union. Macedonia, unrecognized by Greece, cannot become a member of this very same family. All this is a clear example of the presence of the Byzantine medieval stereotypes and approaches in recognizing a state and its people. I believe that it is about time the EU set aside these stereotypes and saw things as they are. One state and its people cannot be the victims of another state and its people whose existence the former do not even deny. The hypocrisy is so great that Macedonia and the Macedonians are accused of being nationalists, just because they are fighting for their well-deserved place in the European family and they want to continue to call themselves Macedonians.