

Breaking the Macedonian deadlock before the end of 2012

What is needed is a way forward that accepts the bottom lines for Athens and Skopje. This can be achieved through a constitutional amendment in Skopje that changes the name of the country with a geographic qualifier today: to replace "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" where it is currently in use, allowing Athens to support the start of EU accession talks and to send an invitation to join NATO later this year or early next year, but which foresees that the change will enter into force permanently and erga omnes on the day Macedonia actually joins the EU.

Such a solution is possible if the following happens:

1. There is active mediation between both sides, which focuses solely on finding a compromise name for the country with a geographical modifier, addressing the issues of NATO accession and the opening of EU accession talks.
2. Greece and the Republic of Macedonia (RM) agree on a compromise name, XYZ, with a geographical modifier. This will immediately replace F.Y.R.O.M. wherever that is currently in use in international relations.
3. Greece commits to allow RM to join NATO under this new provisional name XYZ and an invitation to join NATO is extended.
4. RM changes its constitution to say something like this: "From the day the Republic of Macedonia joins the European Union, the international name of the country will be XYZ, used erga omnes in all languages other than the official languages of the country."

The promised referendum on EU accession at the end of the negotiation process becomes the de facto referendum on the name issue (there was no referendum for F.Y.R.O.M., and until accession the new name is used only in place of F.Y.R.O.M.).

Leaders in RM replace one name their citizens do not like (referring to a state that has disappeared decades ago, Yugoslavia) with another name they do not like, both used in the same way.

Neither side loses leverage in the future. If future Greek governments block EU accession of RM or make additional demands judged unacceptable in Skopje this would also delay the entering into force of the core provision of this compromise. Greece shows its EU partners that it remains actively in favour of Balkan enlargement. Greece also keeps its leverage until the very end of the accession process.

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