



Government of the Republic of North Macedonia

# COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

2019/2020





## VISION

North Macedonia is a society in which the communications of the institutions are completely dedicated to the public interest and in which there is a high level of trust between the citizens and the institutions



## MISSION

Accurate, clear and timely informing of all citizens using various communication channels about the services and policies of the Government, including establishment of mechanisms for two-way communication between the citizens and institutions

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# FOREWORD



Dear citizens, Dear colleagues, Ministers in the Government, Dear advisors and public relations officers,

The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia initiated and implements an ambitious program for political and democratic reforms in order to restore the confidence of the citizens in the institutions of the system. In order to build this trust, it is necessary for the institutions to communicate honestly, objectively and in a timely manner with the citizens and with the representatives of the media.

We, as a central executive institution, have pledged that in our work, and especially in the area of communications, we will be an open government. We started in that manner from day one when we opened the Government gates to journalists, cameramen and photo reporters, and we will continue in the same manner with the daily publication of data, documents, and information of public interest.

This Government decided to speak out proactively, and not to be silent. It is good to speak out and we are proud to have contributed to the creation of this environment. This allows the professional and the independent media to express the attitude of the citizens and the public interest in a democratic country. This open and democratic government listens to the voice of its citizens in order to continuously improve itself and to be consistent with the established priorities.

Therefore, the policies of the Government through this Communication Plan, are brought closer to the citizens. We are developing proactive government communications and, together with the citizens, we contribute towards building North Macedonia as a country that is part of the global democratic world, with strong economy that offers a chance for every citizen, a country that cares and invests in its people, a just and equal society, a country led by an open government.

Today, I am happy and proud that we can all rely on this strategic document that defines standards of the open communication between the Government and the public. We are developing a democratic system of public relations, a completely new concept for active transparency and accountability of the Government institutions towards the citizens, as well as a new culture of critical and free public discussion in the media ether. That is freedom and democracy.

At the end of this opening address regarding the Government Communication Strategy, I would like to wish to all the citizens to remain committed to their contribution to building a common democratic and fair society, and I would like to thank the Government colleagues for their efforts and dedication towards the opening of the institutions, in the same time conveying the message that there is still a lot of work, since that is requested by the citizens and their expectations. I would also like to thank the Government of the United Kingdom, USAID and the Institute for Communication Studies for supporting the creation of this strategic document and for building a professional communication service of the Government.

**Robert Popovski**

Minister for Communications, Transparency, and Accountability in  
the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Dear citizens, Dear colleagues,

The document in front of you is the result of almost two years of engagement and cooperation of the government public relations officers who, in accordance with the government determination to be open, invested themselves in creating a system of government communications that is organized and is primarily democratic and service oriented.

Today, the citizens, in their service and in the service of the public interest, have a government press service consisted of public relations sectors of the Government and of the Ministries, whose main task is to answer questions from the media, to explain the measures and policies from the Program for Work of the Government, to ensure the accountability of the institutions and to improve the image of North Macedonia beyond the borders of the country.

This concept of openness and service orientation of the public relations of the Government was not inherited, nor could it be found through the institutional protocols for work of the

Government until 2017. We built it from scratch, with great support from the President of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, Zoran Zaev, and with the readiness and commitment of the Ministers and of the government communicators.

The voice of the public has greatly helped us to build communication capacities that are based on democratic values, such as understanding of criticism, accountability, service-orientation, and freedom. We networked internally in order to achieve the precise organizational structure described in this document. We have developed a Professional Development Plan, standards for public interest communications and a Code for the government communicators. According to these standards, the government relations with the public, both practically and formally, are ordered according to the rules of ethical, responsible and professional communication.

In our work, we are guided by the public interest and from our vision to provide a high level of trust between the citizens and the institutions. In addition, the greatest obstacle on the path to achieving the desired trust is the misinformation and the organized creation and spreading of manipulations. We are fully aware of these challenges and will invest all the capacities of our organized system to confront and reduce the damage that false news cause on the public interest.

We wish to all colleagues to have professionalism and success in their work, and we pledge to the citizens that we will be opening the Government even more, in accordance with their expectations.

**Marjan Zabarchanec**

Special advisor for public relations of the President of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia

1

**WE ARE NATO,  
GOING TOWARDS THE EU**



2

**STRONG ECONOMY -  
A CHANCE FOR ALL**



3

**COUNTRY FOR THE CITIZENS -  
WE INVEST IN PEOPLE,  
WE CARE**



4

**ONE SOCIETY,  
FAIR AND EQUAL**



5

**OPEN GOVERNMENT IN  
SERVICE OF THE CITIZENS**



# COMMUNICATIONS PLAN IN FIVE THEMES

This is the first adopted Communications Plan of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia. It was developed to assist the government communicators to understand better the Government priorities for the 2019-2020 period and to communicate more effectively the vision and the plans of the Government to the citizens.

More importantly, the document sets the professional and ethical standards for government communications and skills that should have government officials working in the area of communications.

The Communications Plan is based on five major themes on which the government policies are further based:

**1 | WE ARE NATO, GOING TOWARDS THE EU**

**2 | STRONG ECONOMY – A CHANCE FOR ALL**

**3 | A COUNTRY FOR THE CITIZENS – WE INVEST IN PEOPLE, WE CARE**

**4 | ONE SOCIETY, FAIR AND EQUAL**

**5 | OPEN GOVERNMENT IN SERVICE OF THE CITIZENS**

This Strategy is only a starting point. The implementation of it will depend not only on the Government communicators but also on all implementers of the government policies and all officials who are in contact with the citizens. In developing this document, the Sector of Public Relations of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia closely cooperated with the communicators in each Ministry, while the priorities, objectives and, tasks outlined in the document are product of a joint inter-ministerial work.





# 1

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**WE ARE NATO,  
GOING TOWARDS THE EU**



*The Republic of North Macedonia as an equal partner on the international stage - part of the prosperous, democratic and equitable world that offers an opportunity for all its citizens.*

## KEY PRIORITIES

- 1.1. Stable and safe country – We are NATO
- 1.2. Through reforms to European values – Going towards the EU
- 1.3. Integrations bring investments

### 1.1. STABLE AND SAFE COUNTRY – WE ARE NATO!

The race between the NATO member states for ratification of the protocol for membership of North Macedonia in the Alliance has started. We managed to achieve a strategic objective of our country that has been around for 27 years and that guarantees stability and inviolability of borders. On the other hand, the country opens up for foreign investment and economic development.

The Government will be informing the public about the accession of the country into NATO and will be presenting the best practices and examples from the NATO member states in order to explain the reform process stemming from the accession of our country to NATO and to bring the opportunities and the benefits of these reforms closer to the citizens.



## 1.2. THROUGH REFORMS TO EUROPEAN VALUES – GOING TOWARDS THE EU!

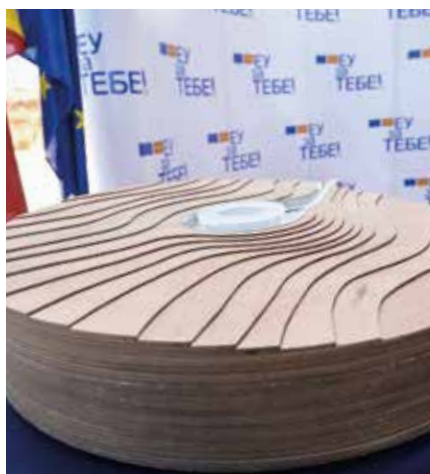
All citizens in the Republic of North Macedonia made a commitment to walk the path to the EU in order to develop our country into a place where it is good to live.

We are preparing to start the negotiations and we expect a positive evaluation in the next EU progress report, with the decision to open the negotiations this year. The package of EU reforms that are our homework, obligation and necessity, include:

- Reform of the Public Administration
- Judicial Reform
- Reform in the area of intelligence and security
- Fighting corruption and organized crime







In addition, the development in several sectors in order to develop European standards of life for the citizens will be supported by EU funds.

The Government of RN Macedonia will be informing the public about the preparation and the negotiation process with the EU, as well as about the implementation of the reform package, in order to ensure consultations with the society and to bring the reforms closer to the citizens. This is also about increased dynamics for essential implementation of the reforms.

The Government will be informing citizens about the opportunities and the manner on how to apply for EU development funds in various areas, in order have increased and effective use of the funds.



### 1.3. INTEGRATIONS BRING INVESTMENTS

The stability of the state brings certainty to the investors. The foreign investments are growing. In 2018 the National Bank of North Macedonia noted record levels of foreign direct investment in the amount of 624.5 million euros, which is higher by 267% compared to the average level of FDI in the period 2010-2017 year. The focus is on attracting foreign companies with a higher level of technological development, for higher paid jobs. In the mandate so far, this Government has 18 new foreign investment in the phase of implementation, with some additional positive decisions being announced, and dozens of others express their interest to invest. This year the allocations are around 10.5 million euros from the budget of the Republic of North Macedonia for support of foreign direct investment,

technological development and higher productivity for knowledge and skills, for stimulation of competitiveness on the markets and for improved cooperation with the domestic companies.

The Government will communicate with foreign investors about the investment conditions in the country through three regional offices around the world in order to attract investment and create new well-paid jobs in the country. In addition, we will be informing the citizens and the business community about the news and outcomes of the operation of the Technological-Industrial Development Zones (TIRZ) in the Republic of North Macedonia.







## FOREIGN INVESTMENTS

**624,5**  
 Million euros  
**FOREIGN  
 DIRECT  
 INVESTMENTS**

**18**  
**NEW  
 FOREIGN  
 INVESTMENTS**

**10,5**  
 Million euros  
 Support for  
 foreign  
 direct  
 investments





2

**STRONG ECONOMY -  
A CHANCE FOR ALL**



*Creating a strong and fair economy that stimulates the growth, creates jobs and supports those who are most vulnerable.*

## KEY PRIORITIES

- 2.1. More money for the citizens
- 2.2. New and better paid jobs
- 2.3. Support for the businesses, equal treatment of domestic and foreign companies
- 2.4. Capital investments - safe roads and clean energy

### 2.1. MORE MONEY FOR THE CITIZENS

The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia will carry out public communications that will bring closer to the citizens and the companies the following measures: Refund/return of 15% VAT to the citizens and Refund of VAT to the companies.



The Government will regularly inform about the policies for growth of the average salary, about the new increase of the minimum wage, as well as about increase of the salaries in health, education, child and social protection, defense.



The Government will be promoting the social reform and the policy aimed at assisting people to get out of poverty and to activate them on the labor market.

**#СеГрижиме** 

**За солидарна и праведна Македонија**

**СОЦИЈАЛНАТА РЕФОРМА  
КАЈ 4 ЧЛЕНО СЕМЕЈСТВО**

2 возрасни и  
2 деца во основно образование



<b>6.800</b>	Гарантирана минимална помош
<b>500</b>	Енергетски додаток
<b>1.900</b>	Детски додаток
<b>+ 1.400</b>	Образовен додаток
<b>10.600</b>	(Претходно: 3029 денари)

The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia will be informing the citizens about the measures related to subsidized annual holiday, as well as about the subsidies for energy efficiency in order to increase the range of beneficiaries and to support the tourism and the environment in the country.

**ОБЈАВЕНИ СЕ ЈАВНИТЕ ОГЛАСИ  
ЗА НАДОМЕСТУВАЊЕ НА ДЕЛ ОД  
ТРОШОЦИТЕ ЗА КУПЕНИ И ВГРАДЕНИ  
СОНЧЕВИ КОЛЕКТОРСКИ СИСТЕМИ И ЗА  
ПВЦ ИЛИ АЛУМИНИУМСКИ ПРОЗОРЦИ  
ВО ДОМАЌИНСТВАТА ЗА 2019 ГОДИНА,  
ЗА КОИ СЕ ОБЕЗБЕДЕНИ  
25 МИЛИОНИ ДЕНАРИ.**



Regular information will be provided for the farmers as well, especially about the measures related to cost reduction (green oil, refund of the personal income tax) and the subsidies offered as support for modernization and increase of the agricultural production.





## 2.2. NEW AND BETTER PAID JOBS

The Government will deliver a campaign to inform the citizens and the companies about the policies for opening new and well-paid jobs through the Operational Plan for Employment 2019 and the Plan for economic growth - Law on Financial Support of the Investment.

The economic sectors in the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia will report on a regular basis about the activities undertaken by the Government for reduction of the unemployment.



## 2.3. SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES, EQUAL TREATMENT FOR DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN COMPANIES

The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia will bring closer to the citizens and the companies the measures for support of the investment, for growth of the exports and for improvement of the competitiveness, for support of the small, medium and micro businesses, innovation and start-up companies from the Plan for Economic Growth and the Program for Competitiveness, Innovations and Entrepreneurship.





## 2.4. CAPITAL INVESTMENTS – CLEAN ENERGY AND SAFE ROADS

The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia will be informing the citizens and the companies about strategic capital projects related to road, railway and energy connectivity in order to provide fast, secure and competitive transport and flow of people, goods and products, regional connectivity, gasification and conquering of new markets – as a solid basis for rapid development of the economy.







**EQUAL TREATMENT FOR DOMESTIC  
AND FOREIGN COMPANIES**

A young child with dark hair, wearing a dark t-shirt and dark pants, is seen from the side, holding a small flag with a sunburst design. The child is looking towards the right. In the background, there is a blurred crowd of people, including a man in a striped shirt. The entire image has a purple tint.

# 3

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**COUNTRY FOR THE CITIZENS –  
WE INVEST IN PEOPLE,  
WE CARE**



*We are building a country the future generations will be proud to call home.*

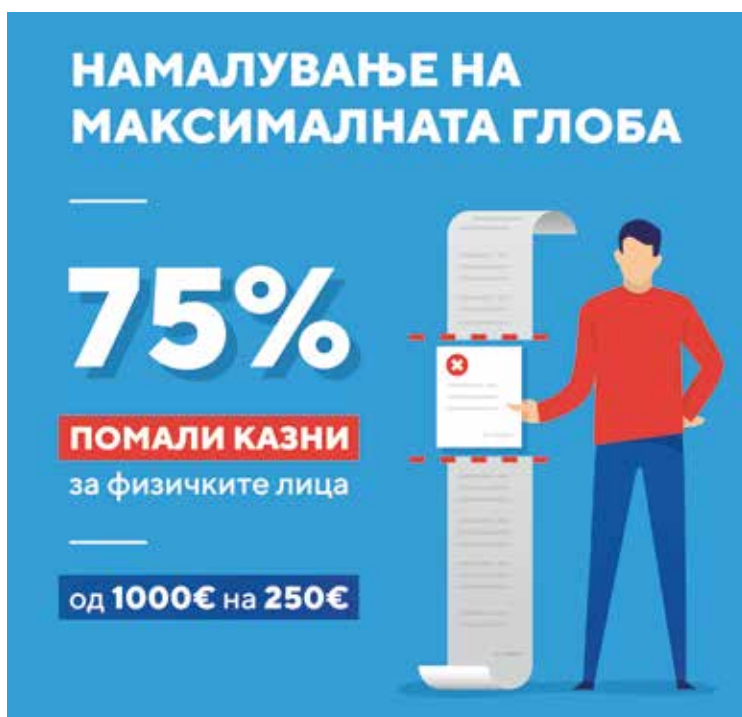
## KEY PRIORITIES

- 3.1. Decent living
- 3.2. The Police – friend and protector of the citizens
- 3.3. Service closer to you
- 3.4. We are investing for a better living environment
- 3.5. The children and the youth are most important
- 3.6. Patient Care and Modern Hospitals

### 3.1. DECENT LIVING

The citizens and the businesses will be informed about the new fair penalty policy which reduces the penalties and adjusts them with the living standard - up to 70% less for the citizens and up to 60% less for businesses. The Government will deliver communications that will promote the reduction of the enforcement and notary costs between 50% and 90%.

The communication will also focus on raising awareness and informing of the vulnerable groups about the use of free legal aid in order to ensure better protection of the rights of the vulnerable groups. Adaptation of the fines to the standard of living of the citizens and companies. In addition, campaigns will be implemented to inform the vulnerable categories of citizens and businesses about the change in the tariff for enforcement and notary services, in order to acquaint them with their rights and protection of their dignity.



### 3.2. THE POLICE – FRIEND AND PROTECTOR OF THE CITIZENS

Through public campaigns we will inform the citizens about the introduction of community constables that increase the security and the trust between the citizens and the police.



### 3.3. SERVICE CLOSER TO YOU

The institutions are working intensively in order to provide the citizens with less time spent on the counters, fast and digitalized services available in every home, and increased confidence towards the public services.

The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia will be informing the citizens about the opening of the Single Point of Service, for the shortened time and deadlines for issuing documents, with home delivery, and about the introduction of a single border crossing control point, which will ensure reduction of the duration in which citizens receive the needed service.





We will be implementing educational campaigns towards the citizens in order to inform them about the electronic and digital services that can be obtained from the institutions.

The public will be informed of the construction of new roads and of the reconstruction of the existing road network in the country, so that citizens, municipalities and businesses can have better connectivity, easier communication, fast and safe transport of goods and services. We shall be informing the citizens and the businesses about the construction of new railroads through which we connect with our neighbors, we open new routes for the citizens and greater competitiveness for the companies, meaning entering new markets.

We will continuously inform the local population about the construction of treatment plants and the wastewater treatment which will provide clean rivers, soil protection and protection of groundwaters/ wells and urban hygiene, but also about the construction of regional landfills that will increase the quality of living, ensure environmental protection and sustainable development of communities.

We will be informing the citizens from the rural areas about the possibility of health services and nursing home services, including the patronage nurse services. We will also implement an informative campaign to the patients and doctors at the polyclinics about the reforms and opportunities in the strengthening and expansion of the primary health care in order to provide more health services for the patients.



### 3.4. WE ARE INVESTING FOR A BETTER LIVING ENVIRONMENT

We will motivate and mobilize the citizens, the civil society organizations and the institutions in order to ensure joint action for implementation of the Plan for Clean Air. We will be informing the public about the series of measures for the protection of natural resources and biodiversity, providing a long-term healthy environment and its sustainable development for the citizens.

ПЛАН ЗА  
**ЧИСТ ВОЗДУХ**

## ОТВОРЕН ДЕН ПЛАН ЗА ЧИСТ ВОЗДУХ

Иницијативи на граѓански организации и временската рамка за спроведување на „Планот за чист воздух“ за 2019-та година



Република Северна Македонија  
Влада на Република Северна Македонија

ПЛАН ЗА  
**ЧИСТ ВОЗДУХ**

### 3.5. THE CHILDREN AND THE YOUTH ARE MOST IMPORTANT

The Government will be informing the citizens about the investments in child care, elementary, secondary and higher education and in health in order to provide quality early childhood development and quality human capital. We will promote the advantages and opportunities of fostering children without parents in order to provide foster families and a warm home for as many children as possible. The citizens will be also informed about the social policies that expand the right to use the educational and child allowance for over 70,000 children in order to pull them out of (above) the poverty line and their inclusion in the educational process.

The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia will be informing the students and their parents about the use of the new digital methods of learning and acquiring skills in the educational system, about the modernization of the secondary vocational education and about the reforms and quality control in the higher education.

The Government will promote the European Youth Card in North Macedonia which will enable the young people to obtain thousands of services from various companies and institutions in the country and in Europe at preferential and lower youth and solidarity prices.

The Government will be informing the young future doctors and the current medical staff about the investments in the domestic medical staff, the increase of salaries and improving the working conditions in order for the young doctors to remain in the country and provide quality health care for the citizens.





### 3.6. PATIENT CARE AND MODERN HOSPITALS

We will continue with the delivery of communications about the immunization and about the expanded database of medicines for rare diseases in order to raise the collective immunity and ensure timely and contemporary therapy for those who need it.

The Government of the Republic of Macedonia will be informing the citizens about the preparations and beginning of construction of the new clinical center, as well as about the ongoing projects for construction, reconstruction and equipping of public health institutions.

The Government will bring closer to the citizens the benefits of the new Law on Abortion.



Донесен е новиот  
Закон за прекинување  
на бременоста.  
  
ВОЛЈАТА НА ЖЕНАТА  
НА ПРВО МЕСТО!





4

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**ONE SOCIETY,  
FAIR AND EQUAL**



*Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, driven by the need for internal integration and cohesion between different communities and cultures in our society, and for implementation of the recommendations of the Council of Europe mentioned in the latest report of the European Commission from 17.04.2018, singled out the Once Society policy as one of its essential pillars. The aim is to develop our country as a single, fair and equal multicultural society that cares about the diversities, supports the universal rights and ensure equal access to services and protection for all citizens.*

## KEY PRIORITIES

4.1. Non-discrimination and equal opportunities

4.2. Balanced inclusive development and interculture

4.3. Gender equality and combating gender-based violence

### 4.1. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Government will be informing the public about the benefits of the new Law and the mechanisms for protection against discrimination, in order to ensure protection of the rights and equal opportunities for all citizens in society.

By incorporating the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, the Law extends the protection against discrimination towards this group of citizens. The term "segregation" is introduced for the first time, including protection and prevention of discrimination against persons with disabilities.

It will report about the reforms in the elementary and secondary education in order to increase the inclusion in the educational system, especially for students with special educational needs, students from marginalized groups and geographic areas, and children who have not been involved in teaching. We will promote the revision of curricula and textbooks in accordance with the concept of equality and non-discrimination.



The Government will be informing about the introduction of access ramps in the public and cultural institutions and the introduction of sign language at theater performances.

We will continue to promote the ongoing process of deinstitutionalization, i.e. abandoning of inhumane institutions in exchange for a warm family care for children without parents. The Government will be informing about the promotion of the use and application of languages spoken by citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia, under the new Law on the Use of Languages. The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia will also promote the introduction of an optional educational subject - language and culture of the Roma, Bosnians and Vlachs, and strengthening of the program for studying of the native language in the diaspora, by increasing the number of teachers. The Government will continue to promote the protection and improvement of the Macedonian language spoken by citizens in North Macedonia and abroad.

Within the National Strategy for Cooperation with the Diaspora, the Government will report on all activities of cooperation between the state and its diaspora, about its political involvement, about the exercising of its civil and social rights and about the establishment of cultural relations and preservation of the cultural identity and cultural heritage of the diaspora.





## 4.2. BALANCED INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERCULTURE



The Government of RN Macedonia will be informing the public about the projects implemented within the Program for Equitable Development which, through financial support of the planning regions and municipalities, aims to develop better and equal access to services for all citizens in accordance with their needs, regardless whether they live in urban or rural municipalities, and regardless of their ethnic, religious and gender background, social status or condition in which they are in.

Additionally, the Government will be also informing about the mechanisms it is developing to encourage the citizen participation in defining and implementing priorities for local and regional development in order to ensure informing, predictability and greater citizen participation at the local level.

The Government will also promote the decentralization and de-monopolization in the culture, implemented through systematic



development, planning, financing and implementation of cultural programs with a dual purpose: access to the cultural content from "the capital" into the periphery of the country and vice versa - a greater presence of cultural content from the periphery into the capital. The Government will be reporting about the processes of reconstruction, rehabilitation and adaptation of buildings of the national institutions - in 2019 reconstruction is planned of several cultural buildings in various areas of the country in order to ensure balanced and inclusive development of culture throughout the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia and to bring the artistic content to as many citizens



The Government will be promoting the possibilities and the content of the "New Cultural Wave" through which mechanisms are offered for activation of the indie cultural scene. The competition aims to promote and stimulate the authors and projects with multimedia and interdisciplinary character and at the same time encourages them to become alive in some abandoned and alternative facilities and spaces, including support for small mobile projects in local communities in cooperation with associations and individuals from the civil society and the local cultural institutions.



### 4.3. GENDER EQUALITY AND COMBATING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia will be informing the public about the implementation of the Strategy for Gender Equality in order to achieve equal participation of women in all segments of the society. There will be informing about the new Labor Law which provides for equal participation of women and men in the labor market, and about the revision of the contents of the curriculum and textbooks in the elementary and secondary education in terms of promoting equal opportunities for women and men.



The Government will also promote the process of drafting and adoption of a law on gender-based violence in order to provide prevention and protection against all forms of violence against women and girls, including domestic violence. At the same time, the public will be informed about the opening of new shelter centers and about those currently in operation, as well as about the SOS phone in order to raise the awareness in society for reporting cases of violence. The public will be also informed about the introduction of standards in the elementary education, which aims at reducing the number of peer violence in the schools.





The term "segregation" is introduced for the first time, including protection and prevention of discrimination against persons with disabilities



## "NEW CULTURAL WAVE"

The competition aims to promote and stimulate the authors and projects with multimedia and interdisciplinary character and at the same time encourages them to become alive in some abandoned and alternative facilities and spaces, including support for small mobile projects



# 5

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**OPEN GOVERNMENT IN  
SERVICE OF THE CITIZENS**



*We are working on the transformation of the Government and the inherited institutions of closed type, into open type institutions, and we are departmentalization and professionalizing the administration. Transparent and accountable institutions, along with professional and independent media, can strongly oppose corruption and provide professional services for the citizens.*

## KEY PRIORITIES

5.1. Transparent and accountable institutions

5.2. Professionalization and departmentalization of the public administration

5.3. Fight against corruption

5.4. Freedom of expression

## 5.1. TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE INSTITUTIONS

The Government will continue to proactively disclose information and documents related to the operation of the institutions and will increase the number of institutions that are transformed from closed to open. It will increase the volume of the open data that are published on a regular basis on the new open data portal. The Government will continue to publish the spending of public officials, including the overall spending of the institutions. It will promote the possibilities of amendments to the Law on Free

Access to Public Information, in order to increase the responsiveness of the institutions and to facilitate the citizens' access to the public information.

Through the Strategy for Transparency, the Government will systematically enshrine the Open Government standards and will ensure the sustainability of the process of reforming of the institutions.



## 5.2. PROFESSIONALIZATION AND DEPARTIZATION OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The Government is actively working on professionalization and departization of the public administration, including improved fight for eradication of the nepotism in the institutions.

The public will be informed about all the news emanating from the horizontal functional analysis of administration, from the new Law on High-managerial Service, from the amendments

to the Law on Administrative Servants and the Law on Employees in the Public Sector.

The Government will promote the concept of a transparent method of selection of directors and state secretaries, who will have the greatest competence background and experience from all the applicants, rather than directors by political party affiliation. It will promote the abolition of some of the managerial and supervisory boards in institutions.

## 5.3. FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

The Government will pursue an active public communication against the corruption, supporting the institutional arrangements arising from the new Law on Prevention of Corruption and from the work of the reformed State Commission for Prevention of Corruption. The Government will urge the citizens to resist corruption using the mechanisms for reporting and prevention.

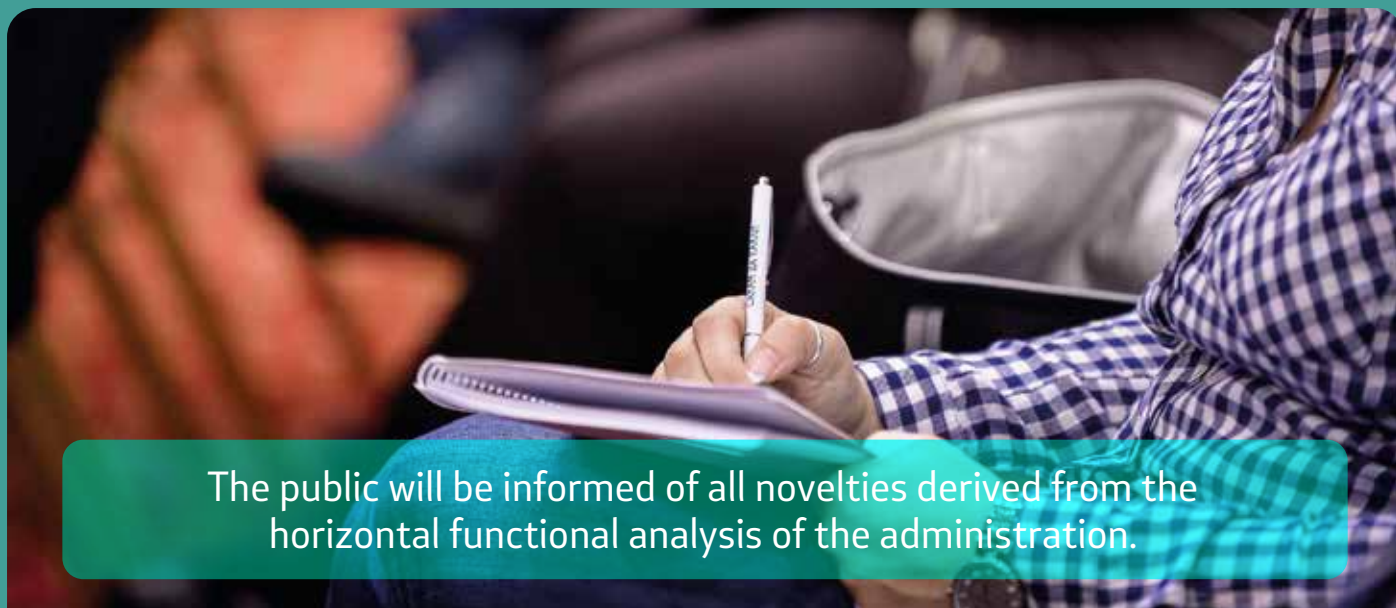


## 5.4. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The Government, through public communications, will continue to support the independent media space, free from political interference. The Government shall be publicly committed to freedom of expression but also to prevention of the spread of misinformation and hate speech in order for the citizens to be accurately and promptly informed and to actively participate in the social changes.

The novelties of the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services will be promoted, that will reform the National Radio and Television and there will be transparent reporting about the system solutions for support of the media and the media workers.





The public will be informed of all novelties derived from the horizontal functional analysis of the administration.



The Government will publicly stand for the freedom of expression, but also for stopping the spread of disinformation and hate speech, so the citizens are precisely and timely informed and can actively participate in the societal reforms

## THE GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM – WHAT ARE OUR OBJECTIVES, FUNCTIONS AND HOW ARE WE ORGANIZED?

### VISION

North Macedonia is a society in which the communications of the institutions are completely dedicated to the public interest and in which there is a high level of trust between the citizens and the institutions.

### MISSION

Accurate, clear and timely informing of all citizens using various communication channels about the services and policies of the Government, including establishment of mechanisms for two-way communication between the citizens and institutions.

### CORE FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE:

- To ensure continuous proactive and reactive communication with the media
- To bring the priorities and policies of the Government to the citizens
- To inform the citizens about the services the institutions provide for them
- To deliver campaigns for public good and in public interest, promoting values, measures and services aimed at better quality life for the citizens
- To inform the population in case of crises, accidents and catastrophes
- To provide active transparency and accountability regarding the work of the institutions
- To continuously improve the image of the country in international frames
- To ensure internal communication of the institutions with the civil servants
- To ensure contact with the citizens on a regular basis (electronic, written and verbal communication)

There are smaller units in the Sector performing the above-mentioned functions, including the following: Office of the spokesperson for communication with the media, responses to questions of public interest and organizing and moderating press events; press service that writes announcements, proposals, draft announcements and speeches; Unit for digital communications that ensures active transparency of the Government through online communication and manages the Government website and the profiles on the social media; team for production providing technical support in organizing activities and production of photos and videos; Unit for monitoring of traditional and new media, team for research and analyses, persons in charge of organizing events and processes including persons for administrative and logistical support. These teams have coordinators that make up the Coordinative Body for Strategic Planning of the Proactive and Reactive Communications of the Government.



# ЗБОРОТ е ЗБОР!

100 дена  
ВЛАДА ЗА ГРАЃАНИТЕ

## Враќање на евтината тарифа на електрична енергија

Започнавме процедура на враќање на евтината дневна тарифа на електричната енергија за сите граѓани



## Минимална плата од 12.000 денари

Усвоивме закон за минимална плата од 12.000 денари и рамноправност на работниците во текстилно-кожарската индустрија

## 1 ГОДИНА ПРОМЕНИ МАКЕДОНИЈА ЗА СИТЕ



## ОДГОВОРНО ПРЕД ГРАЃАНИТЕ ДВЕ ГОДИНИ ВЛАДА



## MATRIX OF PLANNING THE GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS

The central Sector for Public Relations of the Government is in continuous coordination with the Cabinet of the President of the Government, with the cabinets of the Deputy Presidents of the Government, with the Units for public relations of the Ministries and institutions within the government, using the Grid system for strategic planning of the proactive communications of the Government (short: GRID) – a model used by the British Government Communications system.



The Grid is a strategic tool for planning weekly proactive communications with the public, for the Government and the Ministries



The grid is a document used twice a week for reconciliation of all news produced by the Government institutions, in order to achieve maximum effect



Enables the Government to set the agenda for its activities and to communicate in a planned manner

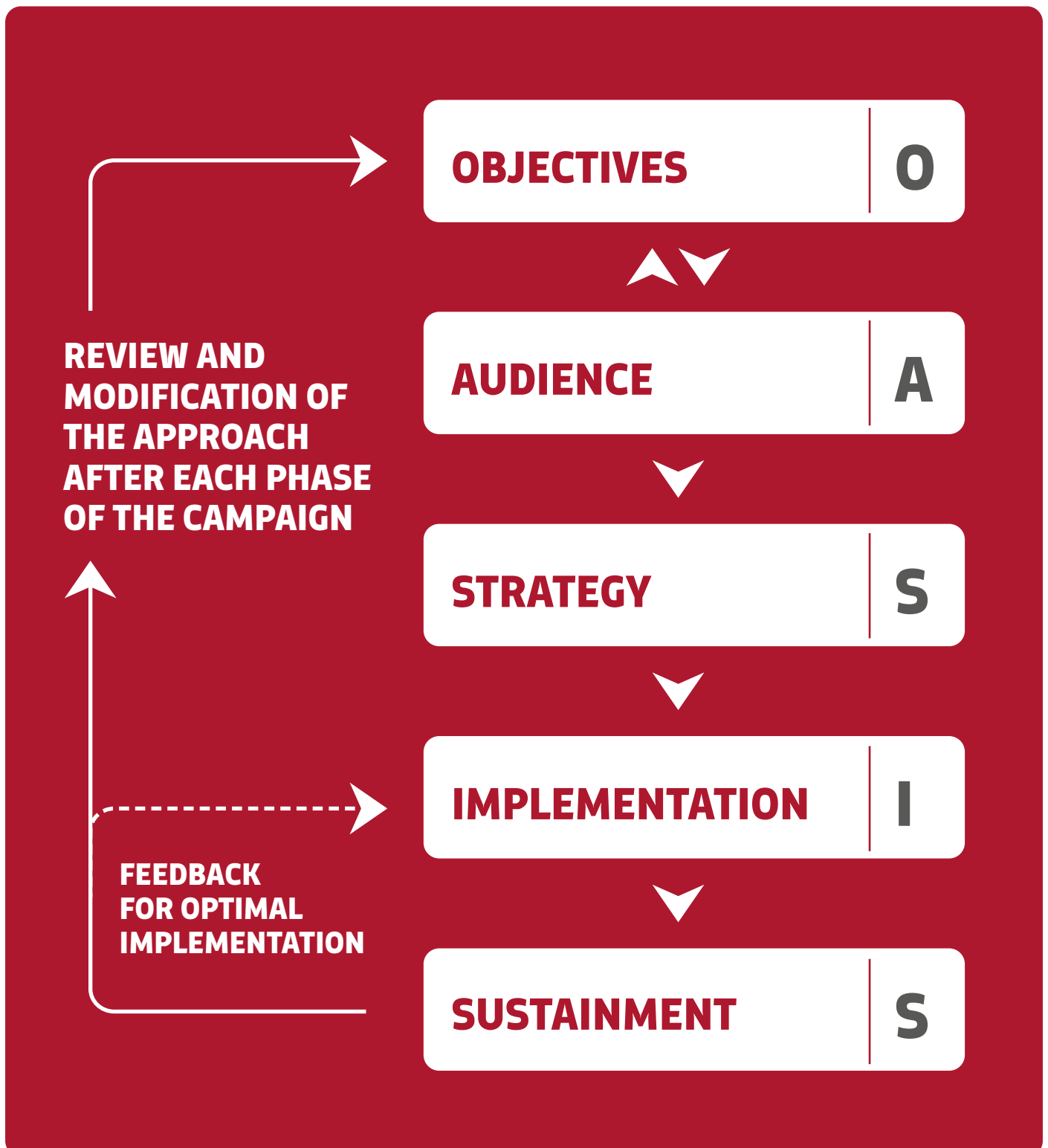


The Ministers are informed beforehand about the activities of the entire Government and of other relevant entities in the society



## COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING USING THE OASIS MODEL

OASIS is a series of steps that can help bring order and clarity to planning communications. The aim is to help make the planning process rigorous and consistent and to ensure that all government communications are effective, efficient and evaluated.





**OASIS - series of steps that can help bring order and clarity to planning communications**

## OBJECTIVE

*Outline what the communications activity is trying to achieve*

Start with the policy aim and set out the role that communications will play in helping to achieve this. Objectives should be achievable, measurable and focused on outcomes, not outputs.

## AUDIENCE INSIGHT

*Who is the communication aimed at?*

Understanding your audience is critical to effective communications. Use insight to create a full picture of who your audience is and what influences and motivates them.

## STRATEGY/ IDEA

*What is your approach?*

Use your audience insight to set out your approach to the communications activity. What will be your key messages? What channels will you use to reach your audience most effectively?

## IMPLEMENTATION

*How will you deliver the communications?*

Set out your detailed plan for how you will deliver the communications activity, including the resources you have allocated and timescales for delivery.

## SCORING/ EVALUATION

*How will you know your communications have been successful?*

You should monitor outputs and outcomes throughout your communications activity, so you can make changes to ensure it is performing effectively and contributing to achieving your initial objectives.





## PROFESSIONALIZATION OF THE GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS IN 2019-2020

Government communicators currently play an important role in informing the public about the work and priorities of the Government of North Macedonia. With the right skills and resources, government communications can do much more - it can save lives, build the economy, protect the vulnerable and promote North Macedonia overseas.

We are committed to making this vision a reality, to achieve high level of trust between the citizens and the institutions and we are doing that through building a community of skilled, informed and knowledgeable government communications professionals.

### IN THE YEAR AHEAD OF US, WE SHALL ALSO PUT EMPHASIS ON THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT COMPONENTS:

- ▶ Increase of the level of professional competencies the persons employed as government communicators have, through relevant trainings for introduction of common levels of communication know-how and experience among all government communicators
- ▶ Update of the communication structures and processes on both Government and Ministerial levels, in order to guarantee sustainability, objectivity and efficiency of the communication functions, as well as to introduce consistency among the teams.
- ▶ Improvement of the “crisis communications” Protocol that will ensure that the Government of North Macedonia is able to communicate with its citizens in efficiency, effective and transparent manner in times of crisis
- ▶ Building of our capacities for identification of, and dealing with, fake news and misinformation
- ▶ Development of a system for internal communication throughout the state administration in order to have a common understanding and promotion of the Government policies





# THE PUBLIC INTEREST AND GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS

## WHAT IS PUBLIC INTEREST?

Although the public interest is not precisely described by definition, nor is its overall scope determined, it appears as a very important criterion throughout the legislation and public policies in the country.

The public interest can be understood as a set of rights and obligations that affect the entire population of a country. The scope of the public interest is determined by the country with the law. It encompasses a range of areas that tackle different areas of society and human life, such as: human rights and security, economic growth, living standard, cultural and religious values, and others.

The public interest is the interest of the wider community as a whole, which has priority over the individual needs and rights. This is usually reflected in the obligations that citizens have towards the state, such as paying taxes or complying with traffic regulations, because it is considered that the compliance to these rules and obligations is in the best interests of all citizens. Hence, the public interest can be seen as a set of rights and obligations of the individuals and the community towards the state, as well as the obligations of the state institutions for protection and promotion of certain rights stipulated in the legal regulations.

## PRINCIPLES FOR GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGNS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

***Relevancy – in accordance with the government responsibilities, priority policies and responsibilities:***

The specific matters dealt with by Government publicity should be ones in which the Government has direct and substantial responsibilities. It is proper and necessary that the Government should explain and justify its policies and decisions, and, when necessary, inform, advice, alert or warn the public. The government has a responsibility and a right to use publicity to encourage behaviour that is in the 'public interest'



## **OBJECTIVE AND EXPLANATORY COMMUNICATION, NOT BIASED OR POLEMICAL:**

The treatment of information should be as objective as possible. The Government information or publicity activities should always be directed at informing the public, even where it also has the objective of influencing the behaviour of individuals or particular groups (for example, health and safety messages). It is necessary to avoid personalization of the matters or building a personal image.

## **NON-POLITICAL COMMUNICATION:**

It is not proper to justify or defend those policies in party political terms, expressly to advocate policies as those of a particular political party or directly attack policies and opinions of opposition parties and groups (though it may be necessary to respond to them in specific terms). Having in mind the multi-party political system in the Republic of North Macedonia, it is possible that a well established public campaign can create political credit for the party in Government or in the opposition. But this must not be the direct or indirect purpose of the Government information or publicity activities paid for from public funds.



## **COST-EFFICIENCY, PROPORTIONALITY AND RATIONALITY:**

The sharing of information with the public should be organized in a cost-efficient and relevant manner, while the spending of the public funds should be reported in a transparent manner. The Government is accountable to Parliament for the use it makes of Civil Service staff or other public resources or expenditure. Government public campaigns have to compete for public attention with other publicity or other public campaigns in the society. To be effective, they need to be professionally presented in such a way as to register a clear message with the public. However, a poor presentation can be as much a waste of public funds as the extravagant use of resources. It would be counterproductive if the level of spending on a publicity campaign impeded the communication of the message it was intended to convey. It is necessary to plan precise communication objectives, measures and system for evaluation of each communication, which involves costs of resources in order to ensure effectiveness and results in the implementation.



## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE GOVERNMENT PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICERS

The core duty of the government communicators is to communicate with the public the official standpoints and policies of the government using various channels, which is one of the key elements for showing openness, transparency and accountability in the work of the government. Additionally, in the course of their work, the government communicators have access to confidential and sensitive information that needs to be handled in an appropriate manner.

When communicating with the public, the Government communicators need to adhere to values and rules that ensure professional, objective, efficient and open communication with the public.

Therefore, we developed a Code of Conduct for the Government communicators that includes the standards expected from the civil servants working with communications.

This Code of Conduct for the Government communicators sets the principles, standards, rules and practices of appropriate communication with the public, through the official communication channels, including through the official and private channels on the social media.

This Code of Conduct has been prepared in accordance with the existing legal framework in the Republic of North Macedonia, which includes the ethical behavior expected (for public servants and cabinet officers).

### CORE PRINCIPLES

**The public servants and the cabinet officers or servants working on public relations need to adhere to the following principles in the course of their work:**

- Tell the truth
- Be impartial
- Be careful in their approach
- Maintain the objectivity
- Make decisions solely on the basis of prior analysis of facts
- Put their official obligations before their personal interests
- To be aware of conflict of interests
- To separate the private from professional actions

**For this purpose, the following questions need to be asked:**

- Is my behavior appropriate?
- Would my activities eventually raise questions regarding my professionalism, political neutrality and impartiality as a public servant or cabinet servant?

**In case of dilemma in responding to these questions, consultation with a superior is required.**



#### COMBATING FAKE NEWS

### Robert Popovski

MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA IN CHARGE OF COMMUNICATIONS, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND TRANSPARENCY

**Truth defies lies. Truth is a weapon, and fact checking is the tool. Veles has become a synonym for Fake News, let's make it a symbol to combat them.**

Western Balkans  
Digital Summit  
Skopje 2018





## MANAGING THE OFFICIAL SOCIAL PROFILES AS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

### INTRODUCTION

The rise of the social and digital media also enables direct and two-way communication between the Government and the citizens. The Government is able to receive information about their interests and to consider their opinion in creating and delivering Government policies. More and more citizens are using social media as a source of information, hence the need for increased communication with the public using the official social media profiles of the institutions. The Government aims to attract and retain the attention of the citizens via social media.



### RULES

- 1.** No content is published or shared that could be considered offensive towards individuals or towards a particular group of citizens
- 2.** No information or content is shared that could violate someone's property rights
- 3.** No information or content is shared that could selectively promote or favor a particular legal or private entity, that could have an impact on creating unfair competition
- 4.** No information or content is shared that is classified or have a similar status, or information that could expose to risk yourself or your colleagues, regardless of whether it is crime, terrorism or espionage. Information related to criminal, terrorism or espionage is reported at the relevant body/institution, or at the superior officer/ manager
- 5.** No photos are published or shared that could disclose the identity of a juvenile person, without obtaining prior written consent from their parents/ custodians, except in cases when the event is public and out in the open
- 6.** No content is published or shared for which you are not sure whether it is intended for the public or not. In such case it is necessary to consult with a colleague or superior
- 7.** New information that is published for the first time needs to be disclosed first at the official Government channels by at the highest representatives of the institutions
- 8.** No incorrect information or speculations is published that could easily fool the citizens

## GUIDE ON USING THE GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATOR PRIVATE CHANNELS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Specific guidelines need to be followed when the government communicators use their private channels on social media. These guidelines are not based on prohibitions but rather on rules and recommendations. It is not prohibited to the employees to use social media channels, rather there are some rules related to that.



### RULES

- 1.** Posting of content in personal name could be related to the position and institution of that government communicator, that is his/her job position as government communicator and his/her privacy are difficult to distinguish. Hence, every content published on a personal profile could be treated and perceived as a standpoint of the institution, even in situations when that standpoint or announcement has been clearly labeled as personal opinion. It is necessary to consider whether the shared content could have negative publicity and disruption of the reputation of the institution of the government communicator.
- 2.** The content shared on the private social media channels can become public, even if such has been shared solely in private and closed channels. The participation in eventual political or public discussions and activities that could compromise the impartiality of the government communicator should be fully avoided.
- 3.** The government communicator activities, as representative of the government, are under special monitoring by the civil society, the political entities and the media, since they measure the behavior of the government. Inappropriate communications that include discriminatory, insulting, threatening content or hate speech elements could be seen as characteristics of the institution the government communicators represent. Such announcements should always be avoided.



**4.** The content shared via social media has equal relevancy with the content shared through any other traditional or electronic medium. Therefore, we should be avoiding the following when using social media:

- ♦ Promotion of political partiality
- ♦ Activities causing negative reputation for the institution of the government communicator, or for other institution
- ♦ Unclear information leaving space for various interpretation or altered context
- ♦ Insults, hate speech and discrimination, or that can be interpreted as such
- ♦ Publishing classified information or official content that have not yet been disclosed to the public
- ♦ Involvement in illegal activities or inappropriate behavior
- ♦ Violation of the conditions pertaining to the job description of the government communicator, in any manner

**5.** Posting during business hours is inappropriate. Same as all other public servants and media representatives, the government communicators also have publically available job positions and business hours. Every announcement on the social media during the business hours can be treated as avoidance of the job tasks and could result in a negative reputation for the institution in which the government communicator works.



# АПОСТОЛСКА ПОСЕТА НА ПАПАТА ФРАНЦИСК ВО РЕПУБЛИКА СЕВЕРНА МАКЕДОНИЈА

СКОПЈЕ  
7 МАЈ 2019











Republic of North Macedonia

Government of the Republic of North Macedonia



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communication studies



Government  
Communication  
Service

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