

# LIFE AND NUMBERS

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Equitable Ethnic Representation and Integration at the Workplace

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## Introduction

One of the first project ideas of the European Policy Institute – Skopje was exactly the one that led to this publication. We are pleased it is materialised - 5 years later, on the 5-th anniversary of the establishment of our Institute. The idea was born from our work experiences – both in the public and in the civil sector. Being part of the implementation of the principle of equitable representation as civil servants, since its launching – both as a vital part of the EU integration path (“the road to Brussels leads through Ohrid”) and in our own working environment - it was a new experience. Definitely a better one.

The public administration was rapidly changing, becoming more diverse and definitely different. Despite the heavy (open or tacit) resistance at the beginning, the principle of equitable representation was accepted by the majority in the public administration – as evidence in the presented research shows. At least at normative level, it is largely perceived as just.

It was maybe natural that numbers/percentages were to the forefront of the implementation of the equitable representation principle at the beginning. However, 15 years later, the focus is still on numbers and percentages. Furthermore, as the evidence from our research shows, the implementation of the principle of equitable representation is seriously damaged by the malaise of the Macedonian public administration – heavy politicisation.

Our basic motive with this research was to move a step forward. We posed ourselves some basic questions: To what extent we have explored the potential of the principle of equitable representation? Has it served to the best aims of the Ohrid Framework Agreement? Is there anything we can learn from others in order to understand each other better and work together better? How can the tools for diversity management and integration at the workplace assist us in this endeavour?

We explored the theoretical framework for diversity management and integration at the workplace. In our desk research we explored the best practices – in the EU and wider. The key part of our research was the field research – survey of 400 civil servants, focus groups and interviews. While at general level, we could be satisfied with the result of our research as to the acceptance of the principle of equitable representation and especially the perceptions of the respondents to the survey, we should also be very cautious. The variances in perceptions also indicate significant risks in the implementation of the equitable representation principle, which are elaborated in this publication.

Finally, we came up with a pivot model for diversity management and integration at the workplace. We do hope that the institutions in the Republic of Macedonia will seriously consider this model when developing and implementing the new Strategy for public administration and other relevant strategic and implementing documents.

Malinka Ristevska Jordanova

## 1. Research background

The number of employees in the public administration in the Republic of Macedonia from non-majority communities increased due to the implementation of equitable representation. This contributed to the achievement of one of the objectives in the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA) - promotion of equality of the members of the communities and increased sense of belonging, or as defined in the OFA: loyalty of the communities to the state and its institutions. However, the dominant perception is that OFA's implementation in this segment is mainly concentrated on numbers, which has coincided with the focus of most of the research on the implementation of the principle so far. Since submitting the application for membership in the European Union, the EU officials have noted that OFA's implementation is a central segment in fulfilling political criteria for EU membership. This argument is still valid.

To date, numerous studies have been conducted on the implementation of OFA and the access to public service by NGOs,<sup>1</sup> academia<sup>2</sup> and government agencies.<sup>3</sup> The Secretariat for Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (SIOFA), the Ombudsman and the Agency for Exercising the Rights of Communities (ARRC) are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the principle of equitable representation. The main focus of the existing research is the implementation of the principle through the prism of numbers.

Nevertheless, this is where the research ends. There are no studies on what should follow, namely the integration of new employees in the workplace, diversity management, addressing the challenges new employees from non-majority (and majority) community-ies face, and the problems they encounter for integration in the administration. These aspects have not been taken into consideration in the human resources management policies. There are no tools for managing diversity in the public administration. This raises the questions regarding existing practices, how they were established, along with questions related to what kind of information an inter-institutional analysis could yield about the similarities and differences in practices in different institutions.

It is certain that informal mechanisms lead to increased interaction of employees from different ethnic backgrounds. However, the scope of the changes related to the implementation of the principle of equitable representation does not permit tackling integration solely by informal mechanisms. The challenges are even greater if we consider that many of the newly hired employees are entering the public administration for the first time, and the public administration reforms still remain a challenge for existing employees mostly belonging to the majority ethnic group. This is related to the question of consequences on the functioning and efficiency of institutions as a whole because of the absence of a framework for integration and diversity management.

It is necessary to generate data based on evidence of this under-researched question and to generate recommendations for developing strategies and policies that would enable promotion of integration in the workplace. Given that the principle of equitable representation is implemented in the public administration, the development of such policies would contribute to the improvement of the functioning of the institutions in general, and for achieving one of the primary objectives of the Framework Agreement - belonging and equality. Nonetheless, the policies are also applicable to the civil and private sector.

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<sup>1</sup> See Risteska, M. and Daskalovski, Z. (2011). One decade after the Ohrid framework agreement. Skopje: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and Center for Research and Policy Making; Kotevska, B. and Novakova, K. (2011). Effective political participation of the small(er) ethnic communities in local self-government in Macedonia after the Ohrid framework agreement. Skopje: Centre for Regional Policy Research and Cooperation "Studiorum"; Klekovski S. (2011). Ohrid Framework Agreement: Case Studies. Skopje: Macedonian Center for International Cooperation; Mijalova, E. and Danilov, V. (2012). Improving political participation of communities below 20%. Skopje: Helsinki Committee of The Republic of Macedonia; Tomovska, I. and Neziri, D. (2011). Policy analysis: Committees on interethnic relations. Tetovo: Institute for Development of the Community.

<sup>2</sup> See Aziri, E. and Emurllai, E. (2014). The Ohrid Framework Agreement and the Multiethnic Future of the Republic of Macedonia. AJS; Andreeva, E. (2013). Protection of Minorities and the Prohibition of Discrimination: The Ohrid Framework Agreement. American International Journal of Contemporary Research; Bieber, F. (2008). Power Sharing and the Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. Skopje: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

<sup>3</sup> See SIOFA's report on implementation of policies stemming from OFA; Ombudsperson's reports on monitoring implementation of equitable representation; MISA's Annual Reports on information from the civil servants registry.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

This section provides an overview of the analytical framework adopted for this research. It refers to dominant discussions on managing diversity, including the starting points for this research and the framework in which it was developed. It is followed by a consideration of five models of diversity management, namely the following: USA, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and Northern Ireland.

### 2.1 Diversity Management and Workforce Integration

At the base of group processes that determine inclusion or exclusion, lies social categorization and stereotyping. Tajfel and Turner (1979) coined these concepts in their development of the Social Identity Theory to explain intergroup conflict. According to the Social Identity Theory, social categorization is the process of classifying people on the basis of characteristics. It is means of attributing meaning to the social world. Placing persons in social categories reduces cognitive load because it creates standardized rules by which people are able to identify others; instead of assessing each individual on a broad composition of unique characteristics. Another important function of social categorization is that it defines the own group and identity of the individual. Therefore, it provides a category in which the individual can place him- or herself and seek out other individuals that are similar or like-minded. This caters to the very important 'need to belong'; an intrinsic motivation to affiliate with other people and be accepted.

A consequence of this process is that people sometimes tend to oversimplify these categorizations. People that have characteristics that match certain characteristics of a particular group are then also attributed other characteristics of that group. This is labelled as stereotyping; a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing. Stereotyping can lead to intergroup bias and hinder group collaboration.

In situations of lasting conflict, such as the situation in the Republic of Macedonia, these processes can be very important in understanding group behaviour. The history between Macedonians, Albanians and members of other minority groups provides for destructive in- versus out-group processes whereby stereotyping and intergroup threat play a vital role. When group characteristics and identity between two or more groups are perceived as different to the extent that exclusion occurs, interventions that target stereotyping and intergroup bias can help to support functional group collaboration.

In order to challenge stereotyping and intergroup bias Allport (1954) theorized which preconditions are necessary for optimal intergroup contact. Allport was also a great advocate of the law as a very useful tool in combatting prejudice and negative bias. His point is thoroughly illustrated by the regulatory measures striving for equitable representation created on the basis of the constitutional amendments adopted on grounds of the OFA. *These regulatory measures might have resulted in a diverse workforce but not per se in an inclusive workforce.* The law is not enough, as Allport has underlined in his contact hypothesis. His contact hypothesis states that bias between groups will reduce if; groups are granted equal status, group members have sufficient opportunity to make personal contact, groups are working towards a common goal in a cooperative manner and intergroup contact is endorsed and facilitated by institutions and authorities. Although there is some debate on the validity of the hypothesis, its preconditions are still recognizable in various successful practices and recommendations for diversity management.

In academic discussions, diversity is considered through the prism of gender, "race"/ethnicity,<sup>4</sup> sexual orientation, disability, age and religion. Religion may or may not overlap with "race"/ethnicity, as well as with language. Loden and Rozener (1991) define diversity as differences between groups in

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<sup>4</sup> On the content and establishing the boundaries of personal characteristics and statuses (between race, ethnicity, language, culture) in advancing equality and protection of discrimination see Biljana Kotevska, Guide on discrimination grounds (OSCE and CPD, 2013).

accordance with primary and secondary dimensions, and discuss the first theory of diversity. Primary dimensions have primary impact on identity such as gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age and disability. Secondary dimensions are less visible, have lesser impact on personal identity and are generally added to the richness of the primary features. They include religion, language, marital status, education, geographical location, work style, work experience, military experience, organizational role and level, income and style of communication (Rijamampianina and Carmichael, 2005).

In the context of diversity management dynamics, Acker talked about inequality regimes, which she defined as “interrelated practices, processes, actions and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender and racial inequalities” (Acker, 2006, p.441-443). She found these to be embedded in all organizations and to be composed of six components: 1) basis of inequality; 2) form and level of inequality; 3) organizational processes that generate inequality; 4) visibility of inequalities; 5) legitimizing inequalities; 6) establishment of control and acquiescence (Acker, 2006, p. 444-445). Diversity management policies are the product of efforts to promote equality and fight discrimination. They can be part of positive action measures and / or affirmative measures. However, due to resistance in certain contexts towards positive action measures and/or affirmative action, some theorists are shifting the basis for the need of diversity management from equality promotion to advancement of business (Acker, 2006).

In the context of Macedonia and the focus of this study - the promotion of equality of the communities as one of the goals of the OFA, it is important to consider diversity through the prism of ethnicity that would include language and religion. This corresponds to the definition of race recognized in international treaties that Macedonia has ratified, as well as the national context, which has frequently witnessed overlapping of these three characteristics. This approach will avoid neglecting religion and/or language as a possible indicator of indirect discrimination and/or community exclusion, as well as a dimension of identity building that is important for integration and diversity.

Recognizing the importance of different perspectives and valuing the ideas and efforts of each individual are key characteristics of a diverse and inclusive workforce, according to Thiederman (2012). Diversity management should be part of policies developed to achieve the aim of OFA, namely promoting equality of communities. The same applies if this research shows that there is resistance towards the positive action measure - the principle of equitable representation because this will justify and reinforce the need to introduce diversity management with the aim to improve working in the public service.

According Boxall et al (2007), Human Resources Management (HRM) as a scientific field consists of three sub-fields: Micro HRM, strategic HRM and international HRM. Micro HRM deals with the policies and practices of HRM, and dividing the management of individuals or small groups and managing entire organizations. Strategic HRM focuses on systemic issues and how individual aspects of micro HRM could be treated as a whole, why and for what purposes. International HRM deals with human resources in trans-national companies (Boxall, 2007).

Rijamampianina's work stands out as important for the case of Macedonia, especially because he grounds his theory for a holistic approach to diversity management, inter alia, in the claim that “employment equity, affirmative action and diversity management complement each other and it is a strategic necessity for organisations to integrate all three if they wish to succeed in making diversity an asset” (Rijamampianina and Carmichael, 2005, p.111). Rijamampianina considers that a good model of diversity management both anticipates and responds to the changes. He identifies the principle of sharing as a prerequisite for an effective integration and synergy of diversity within groups or organisations. He considers that this principle needs to govern the key organizational processes through a management focus on sharing outcomes, sharing mental models, sharing vision and sharing competence (Rijamampianina and Carmichael, 2005, p.116).

For Rijamampianina, to **share the outcomes** means both to share the success and the failures. This is why he claims the link from an obligation, via belonging, to ownership. In order for effective



implementation of outcome to be secured, Rijamampianina suggests that the following pre-conditions need to be established:

- “- Establishment of an open and equal opportunity environment for learning, growth and success through strategic human resource development programmes, career development and succession planning;
- Transparency (that is, having everyone on the same page, seeing the same words and pictures) in the implementation of the policies (Rijamampianina & Maxwell, 2002); and
- Willingness to delegate responsibilities down the hierarchy and to encourage accountabilities upward in the organisational structure (Rijamampianina and Carmichael, 2005).”

A successful implementation of outcome sharing carries specific benefits for the four main organisational processes – motivational, interaction, visioning and learning processes. For the motivational process, implementation of the outcome sharing would mean that the existence of mutual benefits is evident to all parties and likely to influence the interaction process (for example, employees would value healthy “competition” (since the workplace reality is made up of both competition and cooperation) in order to create a high performance work environment), the visioning process (for example, employees would be willing to make the organizational vision their own); and the learning process (for example, employees would be incentivised to share and exchange information, knowledge, skills and competencies in order to attain or go beyond common goals).

In **sharing a mental model**, the benefit of thinking alike but not falling into assimilation is achieved. This is expected to positively impact the motivational process; because everyone would view the importance of an open and equal opportunity environment more or less similarly and, as a result, would be likely to work together to create and sustain such environment. An expected outcome facilitated by the sharing of a mental model is co-creation of a shared vision in the visioning process, whereas the learning process occurs because everyone would be willing to manage the quality of conflict in the workplace to generate a higher level of information, knowledge, skills and competence.

The benefits of **sharing a vision** would come in the motivational process (increase the commitment level of each individual employee), the interaction process (improve the synergy within and between groups) and the learning process (create alignment between group/organizational learning activities and the vision).

The final sharing occurs as a **competence sharing**. According to Rijamampianina, should this sharing be genuine and continuous within a group or organization it will result in several benefits: a) contribute to creation of an open and equal opportunity environment (motivational process); b) improve mutual trust and respect within the group (interaction process); and c) reinforce the ownership of the shared vision (visioning process), (Rijamampianina and Carmichael, 2005).

This study adopts one of the postulates of the analytical approach to HRM that assumes the riskiness of the use of best practices and solutions of other countries and requires certain level of scepticism. It further points to the limited power of universal solutions (Boxall, 2005). This study embraces the scepticism of the analytical approach. Therefore, a review on other countries’ practices with a significant emphasis on the context has been completed coupled with their impact on the HRM development and integration in the workplace. This approach was selected to provide for extract the lessons learned from other places, but not out of context and generalized to the point to become inapplicable elsewhere (in the case of this research, in Macedonia) or to be presented lacking contextual analysis, which can result in incorrect or incomplete lessons learned.

In addition, the analytical approach was used because it requires consideration of the objectives of HRM in the analysis. Having in mind the importance of the objective leading to this analysis, namely generating management policy integration and diversity in the workplace, this approach allows preservation of the centrality of purpose in making the analysis and the specific model that could be in

used in Macedonia. The latter is an additional reason for opting for this approach because as a final outcome it presumes models on how the policy would work for HRM in the wider context.

## 2.2 Models for Diversity Management and Workforce Integration: International Best Practices

In recent years the debate on diversity has expanded. Due to globalization and increased emphasis on equal rights, more and more institutions realise the need to implement diversity policies. The common belief is that diversity is now, for most countries, a reality that organizations (i.e. organization in this report can refer to all types of institutions, public or private) should embrace and respond to so as not to exclude large groups of prospect employees or target consumer groups. Also, there is a growing body of literature and research into the effects and benefits that diversity may bring to organizations.

Especially for the Republic of Macedonia, some steps are being taken to create equality and inclusion among citizens of the Republic of Macedonia. After the erupted conflict between Macedonians and Albanians, the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA) was implemented in 2001 to "promote the peaceful and harmonious development of civil society while respecting the ethnic identity and the interests of all Macedonian citizens" (Framework Agreement, 2001).

Implementation of the agreement has been challenging at times and currently the policymakers in the Republic of Macedonia are seeking ways to ensure equal rights for the population. One of the intentions is to ensure equitable representation in the state administration (Brunnbauer, 2002). In agreement with the amended Constitution, the state administration has employed more members of non-majority communities. It is, however, not clear how to manage this increase in diversity within the state administration. Managing diversity well is key in creating an enduring stable efficient work sphere within organizations and companies. This section aims to summarize important findings on best practices in recent years worldwide.

### Why should we promote diversity?

Creating and managing diversity in various organizations can lead to various benefits. Globalization, migration and female emancipation have altered the composition of both the target group for employment and the target group for consumer products and services. In order for organizations to remain staffed and recruit the best suitable candidates it is useful to broaden the scope in the recruitment and selection procedure. At the same time, the populace that makes use of the offered products and services is also changing due to the same developments. Organizations in which the employees mirror the target populace provide services for that, will have a strategic advantage because their employees have a better sense of the effectiveness of their product or service (Rinnooy Kan & Timmerhuis, 2009). Besides these business case advantages, relevant to many companies, the public sector will also see benefits of effective diversity management in their organization on a societal level. In the Netherlands, diversity integration in organizations leads to national identification, social trust and well-being amongst non-majority group members. Results do not indicate any negative effects for majority group members (Otten, Jansen en De Vroome, 2013).

### General trends

Regarding the debate on diversity, recent years have seen a shift in the objectives organizations set. Trivisi (2002) states that in managing diversity it is no longer desirable to passively tolerate diversity, instead, organizations should actively support and stimulate heterogeneity throughout the entire company policy. The Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER) also recognizes the benefits of active management of diversity. They recommend an integral approach that addresses different aspects of the organization (Rinnooy Kan & Timmerhuis, 2009). The current view

of an effective diverse organization is that this should be an organization that facilitates more than access to employment only. As is the case in the Republic of Macedonia, policy makers recognize that an organizational strategy is necessary to ensure effective collaboration between groups. Attracting non-majority members towards the organization through affirmative action and legislation can create a solid base for diversity from which organizational change can take form. Affirmative action and legislation can boost organizational change by exercising pressure on key stakeholders but it is in itself not an effective method to create intrinsic cohesion, collaboration and growth. For this active diversity management is necessary (Louvrier, 2013).

What has become clear through diversity research is that an organizational culture that is characterized by an integration-and-learning perspective is most receptive to change. In this perspective cultural identities are central in the way people experience and understand the world and this should be integrated in the work methods. Other main perspectives are those of access-and-legitimacy and discrimination-and-fairness. However, these perspectives tend to either ignore differences or reduce individual abilities to specific culturally bound tasks and have not been found effective perspectives on diversity management (Louvrier, 2013).

When it comes to choosing a manner of addressing a diverse group, the current debate focuses more on an 'inclusive' approach, in which diversity in a broader sense is recognized. Following this approach, organizations should expand their vision towards different kinds of diversity and identity such as; ethnicity, gender, disability and age. Research by Hunt, Layton and Prince (2015) found that training with a limited focus toward the target group and excluding the broader group is barrier for effectiveness. There are also choices to be made regarding what kind of inclusive strategy is best applied. Research by Otten, Jansen and De Vroome (2013) shows that organizations that adopt a 'colorblind' perspective (focusing on equal individuals and presuming that ethnic differences are of no influence) run the risk of alienating non-majority group members. However, adopting a 'multicultural' perspective (recognizing and valuing) cultural differences diminishes the sense of inclusion for majority members. Therefore, an 'all-inclusive multicultural' approach is suggested by Stevens, Plaut, and Sanchez-Burks (2008). This approach broadens its focus to include and value every member of the organization with his or her own contribution.

## **Best practices**

In order to find relevant suggestions for effective diversity management in the state administration of the Republic of Macedonia, a study of international best practices was conducted. To limit the scope of the study, the focus was directed towards countries that have a history of migration and diversity and can therefore be expected to possess more expertise on the subject of diversity management. The United States and Western European countries best fit in this description. In this chapter a global perspective on the effectiveness of diverse organizations is given, followed by more specific best practices from the United States, Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium and Northern Ireland.

### **A global perspective**

Research by the global management consulting firm McKinsey revealed that diverse companies perform better financially. Their study comprised 366 companies located in the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, and Latin America. Companies in the top quartile of ethnic diversity were 35% more likely to have financial returns above the median of their national industry. The report warns that this does not prove the indicated results are based on causal correlation, in other words that ethnic diversity directly leads to more success and profit. But it does indicate that companies that have committed themselves to diverse leadership seem more successful. Not only does the top quartile seem more successful, this study indicates that companies in the bottom quartile were lagging compared to average companies in the dataset. In conclusion, according to Mc Kinsey the link between diverse leadership and

commercial success seems statistically significant and clearly consistent in the data. Practices recommended by this study that contribute to performance through diversity are.

### **Practices that contribute to performance**

<b>Define a clear value proposition</b>	Create a clear value proposition for having a diverse and inclusive culture. Set a few clear targets (not quotas) that balance complexity with cohesiveness.
<b>Establish a fact base</b>	Understand the current situation in terms of statistics and mind-sets and learn from external best practices. Understand root causes and underlying mind-sets.
<b>Create targeted initiatives</b>	Differentiate initiatives by diversity group, for example, gender initiatives do not always resonate with other minorities. Lead from the top.
<b>Define the governance model</b>	Define the rollout strategy for all initiatives. Launch one or two highly visible flagship projects at the beginning of the effort. Monitor rigorously.
<b>Build inclusion</b>	Continuously address potential mind-set barriers through systematic change management. Link diversity to other change management efforts.

(Hunt, Layton & Prince, 2015)

In the context of the Republic of Macedonia, there are certain elements that should be taken into account when reviewing these recommendations. Firstly, this study shows how an organization benefits from heightened performance when actively managing diversity.

The recommendations by Hunt, Layton and Prince (2015) stress the importance of going beyond quotas to generate the true benefits of diversity. This is not to say, that quota's or affirmative action procedures do not contribute to equality and diversity (as will be evidenced in the next paragraph). Secondly, these recommendations emphasize that a clear vision and strategy is essential. The state administration has a solid motivation to create equality and inclusion. It would be interesting to analyse whether targets are measured and understanding of these targets is widespread and accepted throughout the organization. If this is the case the continuous building of inclusion can start to bear its effect.

### **The United States**

With a long history of migration, as well as a leading position in organizational development, the United States is an obvious first point of focus when it comes to diversity management practices. Starting in the early 90's the United States were leading in recognizing a changing workforce due to the emancipation of women, Afro-American citizens and other citizens of non-Caucasian background. In the Fortune 500 list, 90% of all listed companies had implemented diversity management in 1998, in contrast to 61% of companies in the Netherlands in 1999 and only 43% of Belgian companies in 2005 (Sup & Kleiner, 2007). In 2005, the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) conducted a research into the current leading practices on diversity in organizations. They identified the following nine practices:

Expert identified leading practices and agency examples (USA)

<b>Top leadership commitment</b>	a vision of diversity demonstrated and communicated throughout an organization by top-level management.
<b>Diversity as part of an organization's strategic plan</b>	a diversity strategy and plan that are developed and aligned with the organization's strategic plan.
<b>Diversity linked to performance</b>	the understanding that a more diverse and inclusive work environment can yield greater productivity and help improve individual and organizational performance.
<b>Measurement</b>	a set of quantitative and qualitative measures of the impact of various aspects of an overall diversity program.
<b>Accountability</b>	the means to ensure that leaders are responsible for diversity by linking their performance assessment and compensation to the progress of diversity initiatives.
<b>Succession planning</b>	an ongoing, strategic process for identifying and developing a diverse pool of talent for an organization's potential future leaders.
<b>Recruitment</b>	the process of attracting a supply of qualified, diverse applicants for employment.
<b>Employee involvement</b>	the contribution of employees in driving diversity throughout an organization.
<b>Diversity training</b>	organizational efforts to inform and educate management and staff about diversity.

(GOA, 2005)

Put into practice, in the United States, several states or cities can be identified as being effective in their diversity management. In 1998 and 2000 a benchmarking project was started by the International Personnel Management Association (IPMA) and the National Association of State Personnel Executives (NASPE) looking into the practices in the public service. Reichenberg (2001) found the states Oklahoma, Washington, Wisconsin and the City of St. Petersburg, Florida to be most effective in the application of best practices.

The state of Oklahoma uses affirmative action regulation, commitment to diversity from top management accountability and control. Decentralization of policy facilitates goals to be customized, while at the same time the goals are centrally controlled. In 2000, the state workforce employment of non-majority groups was 19.2% versus 16.7% in the civilian labour force. The state workforce was higher for almost all job categories.

The state of Washington provides top management commitment, strategic planning, affirmative action, accountability and inclusiveness. Between 1986 and 2000 the states diversity increased with 40%.

The state of Wisconsin applies affirmative action, accountability, decentralization measurement and evaluation and strategic planning. These interventions resulted in non- majorities being hired twice as often as their state wide availability in 1998.

The city of St. Petersburg, Florida uses decentralization of affirmative action, measurement, top management commitment and training. Between 1990 and 2000 the representation of non-majority members has increased from 26.4% to 28.6%, the growth amongst female employees was stronger.

This study exposes a practical focus on formal regulation, with affirmative action legislation and decentralization approaches being applied in all of the above-mentioned areas of the United States. Although, formal regulation is outside the scope of diversity management as recommended by GOA, in practice this appears to be an important foundation for further actions. The above-mentioned states have been very successful in increasing employment opportunity for minorities as it is evidenced by the statistics. 'Softer' measures such as training and employee involvement are not reported as effective practices in this study. Kalev, Dobbin and Kelly (2006) researched strategies of diversity management in the United States private sector in a longitudinal study of 708 private sector organizations in the period of 1971 to 2002. Their findings were in line with the practices described above. They found that creating responsibility and affirmative action were most effective in creating diversity. Diversity training was least effective as a diversity strategy, whereas mentoring showed more promising results.

However, for the situation in the Republic of Macedonia, it appears that creating diversity, as in increasing the number of employees from non-majority groups, is not the issue at hand. Quotas are being met but integration and inclusion stays behind. Having this in mind the findings of Kalev, Dobbin and Kelly shed new light. Their study also shows that once responsibility is created and affirmative action legislation is applied, these initiatives facilitate the effect of 'softer' measures such as training, mentoring and diversity evaluations of management. This interaction of practices illustrates how single-method approaches can be wide of the mark but when they are integrated in a multi-faceted approach they can be more effective.

It should be taken into account that the study by Kalev, Dobbin and Kelly encompasses the private sector, while the case of the Republic of Macedonia is focused on the public sector.

There are significant differences in the characteristics of these sectors that should be taken into account. The public sector is formed under both strong conservative and strong liberal forces in the society. This makes it more difficult to reduce prejudice in the public sector than in the private sector. Still, the study is considered relevant because even if there are clear differences between the public and private sector, especially within the Macedonian context, this analysis on the private sector is, in part, relevant to the analysis of efficacy in the public sector. Alas, it seems that such studies on the efficacy in the public administration are still scarce.

### **Application in Europe**

With the United States in a leading position, many European countries have followed suit in applying diversity management. As Sup and Kleiner noted in their 2007 research in Germany; most private companies with a clear diversity strategy seem to be internationally oriented and have adopted a model from the United States. In line with their research a parallel is visible between diversity practices in the United States and in Europe. The following paragraphs describe a selection of practices from European countries.

## Germany

In Germany the focus of the diversity debate has been more towards gender diversity. Recently, there has been a large increase in organizations adopting diversity policies but there is a limited amount of research literature on diversity management in organizations.

Sup and Kleiner (2007) explored the implementation of diversity management among 210 organizations in Germany. Driven by a lack of steady definitions as to what diversity practices should entail, the researchers distributed an open questionnaire among 17 experts on the subject. They were asked to name diversity management actions that they considered most relevant. Based on these results they composed a list of 13 actions, which were indeed implemented by the 210 organizations that took part in the research:

### German experts: Practice in diversity management

<b>Flexible working time agreements</b>
<b>Mixed teams</b>
<b>Determining the requirement for diversity management</b>
<b>Mentoring programs</b>
<b>Integrating diversity management into corporate culture</b>
<b>Consulting service for diversity groups</b>
<b>Diversity oriented company agreements</b>
<b>Communicating diversity management</b>
<b>Diversity trainings</b>
<b>Institutionalizing diversity management</b>
<b>Diversity-oriented facilities</b>
<b>Diversity oriented design of human resource management</b>

(Su<sup>β</sup> & Kleiner, 2007)

In their study, Sup and Kleiner performed a factor analysis that categorizes these 13 actions into four factors. These are: consulting and support, institutionalization, commitment to diversity management and diversity oriented work organization.

All of the above mentioned actions can be relevant for the Macedonian state administration, since they all address what is necessary in organizations beyond creating equitable representation. Since some measures can be costly and time consuming a thorough assessment of the needs and resources of the organization is recommended. For example, diversity training can be costly but its effect is not necessarily guaranteed. Kalev, Dobbin and Kelly (2006) found that training is only effective when implemented in addition to creating responsibility. The most important general finding in relation to effective diversity management is that it should be integrated and aligned throughout the organization (Rinnooy Kan & Timmerhuis, 2009; Trivisi, 2002). The 13 actions recommended in this paragraph are all useful but it should be taken into account that a single-strategy approach is not effective in creating lasting inclusion when it comes to diversity management. After defining a strategy, the state administration in the Republic of Macedonia can use these actions to create an approach that targets all aspects of the organization.

## The Netherlands

The Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER) advised the Dutch government in 2009 on the benefits and utilization of diversity in the workforce. Their report was a broad description of the benefits and perspectives on diversity. Based on scientific insights the report also gives recommendations for effective diversity management, but stresses that this process is situational and should always be based on context. Certain key recommendations can be distilled from the report:

### Key recommendations on effective diversity management of the SER, Netherlands

<b>Formulate a vision</b>
<b>Top level commitment</b>
<b>Institutionalization and evaluation of diversity policies</b>
<b>Insight in composition of staffing (statistics)</b>
<b>Creating responsibility and support</b>
<b>Reorganizing work agreements (flexibility)</b>
<b>Tolerant and respectful culture (inclusiveness)</b>

(Rinnooy Kan & Timmerhuis, 2009)

The SER recommendations seem to overlap to some extent with the recommendations from the McKinsey report (Hunt, Layton & Prince, 2015). A very valuable addition here is the importance of creating responsibility and top level commitment. This aspect is mentioned in various other studies as crucial to creating cohesiveness (Allport, 1954; Glastra & Meerman, 2012; GOA, 2005). In some studies, this aspect is implied, for example by stressing the importance of 'diversity oriented company agreements' (Sup & Kleiner, 2007). The Republic of Macedonia seems to be in a situation where it could be useful to first assess the first five recommendations above. Is there a clear vision that is supported throughout the organization?

Do leaders in the organization commit to diversity, explicitly, but also implicitly? Is it possible to create policies that are ingrained in the fabric of the organization? Can these policies be monitored and evaluated? Are there statistics available on the current status of the diversity situation? Who is responsible for the implementation of policies and is there support?

Diversity can only be actively managed when there is an answer to similar questions. From here, the organization can work on the reorganization of working agreements (without these being undermined due to lack of support) and build an inclusive culture.



## Belgium

The Belgian government conducted research into diversity practices through its project for sustainable business development; Trivisi. Their research paper (2002) identifies ten 'critical factors for success' when it comes to policy making for diversity.

<b>Matching organizational objectives to diversity</b>
<b>Mission statement as guidance for everyday practice</b>
<b>Creating support for policy</b>
<b>Recruitment and creating commitment</b>
<b>Culture of respect</b>
<b>Participation dynamic</b>
<b>Flexible agreements</b>
<b>Relational coaching</b>
<b>Intercultural education</b>
<b>Utilization of organizational network</b>

(Trivisi, 2002)

In their report Trivisi gives case study examples from various organizations that have integrated these practices in their company policies. These qualitative reports come from various sectors and organizations such as: the municipality of Antwerp, Doctors without Borders, KMO (construction company), STC (project developers) and Sint Vincentius Hospital Antwerp. Trivisi recognizes that organizations have different reasons for implementing diversity management and therefore, their strategies will also differ.

As Trivisi rightly notes, organizations and contexts can differ to a great extent. For the Republic of Macedonia these factors can underpin the direction of the chosen strategy. Applications should be based on a good understanding of the need of the organization. As mentioned earlier, in relation to the study by Sup and Kleiner (2007), a single-strategy approach is not effective in creating sustainable inclusion. These factors should be used as a blueprint upon which to build concrete actions that are actively managed and maintained.

Culture of respect: A case example by a head of department in a Belgian integration centre

***Creating a culture of respect is, in my opinion, something that is done through small, practical actions instead of large theories. I try to bring teams together and actively encourage consultation. Before the start of each project I bring together a diverse team for a brainstorm. That way, we discuss the project and have the opportunity to put forward different perspectives. I find it important that people don't just stick to their own jobs without letting others in. Through working together, people get to know each other, learn how others think and learn to appreciate each other. (Trivisi, 2002, p. 26)***

## Northern Ireland

A study by Hargie, Dickson and Nelson (2003) in Northern Ireland provides good examples of practices in a country in which the situation is more similar to that in the Republic of Macedonia. When this study was conducted, Northern Ireland had been the scene of violence, mistrust and hostility between Protestants and Catholics for approximately 30 years. Although the most extreme acts of violence had subsided by 2003, Northern Ireland remained a very segregated society where religious background played a vital role in social categorizations between individuals and groups. In this context Hargie, Dickson and Nelson researched intergroup communication in four large

organizations (two public and two private, each with over 400 employees). The conclusion of their research summarized the following recommended practices by employees:

#### Recommended practices by employees

<b>Neutral work environment</b>	The organizational policy should provide clear rules and boundaries on expressions of group-belonging.
<b>Face-to-face training</b>	Employees should learn about intergroup relations, appropriate behaviour and make recommendations for policymaking.
<b>Outside agency mediation</b>	Participants in this study welcomed the introduction of outside agencies to ease workplace problems.
<b>Monitoring and penalties</b>	Organizations should be strict when it comes to harassment and anti-out-group behaviour.
<b>Dialogue on group uniqueness</b>	Confronting differences and sharing group characteristics can help employees form more favourable images of other groups.
<b>Cross-community social events</b>	The organization should provide opportunities to have positive social interaction outside of the workplace in neutral areas. Events where all groups invested and enjoyed the benefits were rated as most enjoyable.

(Hargie, Dickson & Nelson, 2003)

Looking back at Allport's contact hypothesis (1954), these recommendations fit the suggested preconditions for constructive intergroup contact quite clearly. Allport hypothesized that group members should have sufficient opportunity to make personal contact. This reflects the need for Northern Irish employees for face-to-face training, dialogue on group uniqueness and cross community social events. Further the contact hypothesis states that intergroup contact should be endorsed and facilitated by institutions and authorities. This precondition is reflected in the need for outside agency mediation and monitoring and penalties for anti-out-group behaviour. Allport then states that groups should be granted equal status. This precondition is partly reflected by a need for a neutral work environment. Allport's precondition of working towards a common goal in a cooperative manner is not easily detected in the recommendation from Northern Irish employees. However, this precondition naturally applies in this study where the focus was on employees and their work environment. But even so, managers could still benefit from putting more emphasis on common goals and cooperation.

This study stands out compared to previously mentioned recommendations from the United States, Germany, The Netherlands and Belgium because a strong focus on intergroup contact can be detected. With the societal situation in Northern Ireland being more comparable to that of the Republic of Macedonia, this study may be all the more interesting. In countries that are characterized by lasting conflict, restoring intergroup contact may deserve more attention in the diversity management strategy.

## Evidence base

Because the field of diversity management lacks standardization it remains a field in which organizations have the liberty to define their practices in their own way. Various researchers have raised this issue and call for more evidence based norms and guidelines (Sup & Kleiner, 2007; Tatli, 2010). The current situation is that various countries and institutions all have their own take on what it takes to effectively manage diversity. Although there is increased interest and application of diversity management, the positive result of diversity management is difficult to ascertain due to measurement problems. In their study of 210 German-based businesses Sup and Kleiner encountered this problem first hand; their survey showed that 58% of the companies ascribed their benefit, strategic relevance or economic efficiency to diversity management, but only 24% systematically monitor their procedures. This implies a belief of the effectiveness of diversity management, which cannot easily be substantiated.

## Theory versus empirical data

Diversity management is not a guarantee for positive results. As stated above, there are many theoretical models that prescribe what is necessary for effective diversity management. Meanwhile, there is little empirical research and therefore empirical evidence on important conditions for diversity management to be effective. An interesting case study that provides relevant data on diversity management has been the study of specific intervention pertaining to ethnically diverse talent within the Dutch national tax administration (Glastra & Meerman, 2012).

This case study reveals that the two variables that are seen as most important; strategic integration of initiatives concerning diversity management and commitment of top management, are indeed quite important but for truly effective diversity management more is needed. The study proposes that diversity management based on existing organizational practices and policy might lead to unintentional incoherence. When an organisation or company leans strongly toward social conformism and tends to avoid risks, having top level commitment is not sufficient. The willingness to question existing routines and the ability to manage conflicts on all levels within diverse organisations might be more important. Many models concerning diversity management seem to underscore the rational alignment and ordering of means and goals, without the clear nuance that all organizations have their own organizational culture. This specific organizational culture should always be analysed before taking measures pertaining to diversity management. If this is not the case, existing routines and attitudes might dominate and taint both the interventions deployed with a view to promoting diversity as well as the employees involved. This was certainly the case in the case study within the Dutch tax administration. The cultural codes within this organization proved to be very influential: risk avoidance, slow careers, social conformity and respecting bureaucratic division of labour all worked against the initiative geared toward diversity management.

**In this case study the researchers analysed the initial diversity initiative, namely the training program “Talent on the Move” (TM), and its outcomes. TM is a program within the Dutch tax administration geared toward higher professional and lower management employees with academic qualifications who have the ambition to achieve higher managerial positions.**

**A senior manager with minority background observes: TM is always good except this time. It had to be done quickly, the top decided. The whole group was wrong. They had to deliver, but there was no time. If you send someone to TM, then you want him to obtain a management position. It occurs to me that this was not the case with this TM. (Glastra & Meerman, 2012, p. 115)**

The aforementioned case study also proved the importance of managing expectations with regard to diversity management. Many of the candidates of diverse ethnic backgrounds that were trained within this training program (TM), which was the object of this case study, were not managed well as far as their expectations was concerned. Their expectations were high, namely that taking part in this program would lead to concrete career options and promotions as stated in the above mentioned citation and when this was not the end result it led to disappointment, lower morale among ethnically diverse employees and a higher number in resignations. Therefore, this study also underlines the practical importance of managing expectations. Implementing measures striving for diversity management should not be noncommittal. As organizations might run the risk of being perceived to break their promises when expectations of career advancements are not realized, and they may lose precisely the group, which they wanted to hold on to.

### 3. Methodology

This study adopts mixed-method approach. 400 administrative servants took part in a survey<sup>5</sup> and provided their views and opinions on equitable representation, integration and diversity management. EPI's team conducted 15 in-depth interviews with managing staff on local and central level. This data was gathered and analysed in the period of May-November, 2015. Two focus groups were held. A round table discussion with relevant stakeholders was organized in order to discuss preliminary research findings. In addition, the best international practices on integration and diversity management were outlined by Naima Azough and Amy Mante-Adu.

The methods employed in the study are elaborated in greater detail in the sections that follow.

#### Objectives of the research

**General objective:** Generation of measures and actions in order to promote equality of the communities as one of the objectives in the Ohrid Framework Agreement by introducing measures for integration in the workplace and improving diversity management.

#### Specific objectives:

- Mapping the current situation regarding the implementation of the principle of equitable representation (respecting the principle of equality and non-discrimination of all persons in relation to the employment in the public sector);
- Exploring the possibilities and modalities for introducing measures for diversity management and integration of the members of the communities in the workplace in the public sector;
- Generating measures and actions to promote the equality of the communities.

#### Research questions

##### Main research question:

What measures and actions concerning the integration in the workplace and diversity management should be introduced in Macedonia in order to achieve progress towards the promotion of equality of the communities as one of the objectives of the Ohrid Framework Agreement?

##### Specific research questions:

- How is the principle of equitable representation implemented and what are the experiences and views of public sector employees and those of managerial positions about the obstacles and success factors for implementation of the principle?
- In the context of implementation of the principle of equitable representation, how is diversity in the workplace managed and how this management can be improved, taking into account the opinion/views of the public sector employees (non-managerial) and those in managerial positions?
- What policies of integration in the workplace are needed to achieve the objective of the Ohrid Framework Agreement for the promotion of equality of all the communities, also what specific measures and activities can be introduced according to the opinion/views of the public sector employees and those of managerial positions?
- What comparative practices for diversity management and integration in the workplace in the public sector in relation to ethnic affiliation can be used and applied in Macedonia, and

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<sup>5</sup> The survey was conducted by the research agency M- Prospect Skopje in the period from 15 June to 31 July 2015 in cooperation with the European Policy Institute (EPI).

- how should they be adjusted to minimize the risk of unsuccessful transmission of policy?
- What model of integration in the workplace can be built in Macedonia, what are the challenges that would appear during its implementation in practice and how to overcome them?

### Methods for data collection and analysis

This part provides an overview of the methods for collecting and analysing gathered data in order to answer the following research questions.

#### Data collection methods

For the purposes of data collection, the research team has carried out the following activities:

- **Overview of the existing literature:** First, the research team reviewed the existing literature in order to collect existing data, to develop the research framework and to determine the exact focus and scope of the data that needs to be collected. This phase also helped the development of data collection tools. The following literature was reviewed:
  - Domestic legal and policy framework
  - European practices and experiences
- **Field research:** To collect new data, field research was conducted. It included:
  - **Survey:** Aiming to examine perceptions and challenges for integration in the workplace, a survey was conducted with employees from different ethnic backgrounds working in the state administration. The survey was conducted with 400 respondents<sup>6</sup>.
  - **Interviews:** To assess experiences, attitudes, expectations and recommendations for integration in the workplace of employees from different ethnic background, interviews were conducted with 15 key policy makers and creators of the human resources policies in the administration on local and central level. Senior civil servants from the Secretariat for Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, the Secretariat for European Affairs, and human resources units in several ministries and municipal administration participated.
- **Focus groups:** The first focus group discussion included civil society representatives and assessed their views on equitable representation, diversity management and workforce integration. The second focus group discussion examined observations of human resources management staff on central and local level regarding the proposed pivot case.

#### Methods for data analysis

The collected data were analysed using mixed methods, including:

- **Comparative method:** Data collected from existing literature on EU best practices and tools for diversity management and integration in the workplace was analysed using comparative method. These findings were combined with the findings from the analysis of data collected through the survey and interviews, which investigated and tested the applicability of international tools applied in the Macedonian context, taking

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<sup>6</sup> The survey was conducted in the field by using a computer assisted personal interview (CAPI methodology) and computer assisted web interview (CAWI) on a random sample of 400 persons employed in the public administration divided in 5 employees by a sample unit. For larger institutions more sample units were involved. Appropriate regional representation was obtained by randomly calling offices in the institutions where the respondents were selected.

into account the specificities of the model of affirmative measures for participation of non-majority communities.

- **Qualitative analysis:** This method was applied for the review of existing literature and the analysis of the interviews. It provided a broad contextual analysis of experiences, practices and knowledge about integration and management of diversity in the workplace. First, common topics and questions were identified. These topics were examined and compared to the rest of the data aiming to formulate greater number of consistent and logical findings to be further used for drawing final conclusions and recommendations.
- **Quantitative analysis:** The survey findings were analysed using quantitative data analysis. It enabled monitoring of dominant perceptions and opinions about challenges. This method was combined with the method of qualitative analysis as described above in order to take into consideration the experiences of respondents.

## 4. Equitable representation, integration and diversity management in the state administration in the Republic of Macedonia

### 4.1 Overview of the legal and policy framework

Equitable representation is one of the key cornerstones of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA). Although the principle is not explicitly defined in the OFA, it primarily refers to promoting the participation of members of all ethnic communities in the public domain. It specifically aims to increase employment of under-represented ethnic communities in the “public administration and public enterprises, and access to public financing for business development”, on both central and local level and at all levels of employment (Ohrid Framework Agreement, 2001).

To comply with OFA’s stipulations, a process of reforms was instigated, including transposition of the equitable representation principle in the Constitution<sup>7</sup> and relevant laws<sup>8</sup> coupled with establishment of Government bodies such as the Secretariat for Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (SIOFA) and the Agency for community rights realization, the Parliament’s Committee for Inter-Community Relations, along with municipal bodies such as the Committees for Inter-Community Relations.

### Strategy for Equitable Representation of the Persons Belonging to Non- Majority Communities

SIOFA is the main body responsible for implementation of the OFA, and for ensuring equitable representation in particular. Prior to its establishment, the Government adopted the Basics for Preparing the Programme of Improving the Equitable Representation of the Communities in the Public Service and Public Enterprises in 2003 (SIOFA, 2012). Subsequently, SIOFA<sup>9</sup> prepared the Strategy for Equitable Representation of the Persons Belonging to Non- Majority Communities in the Republic of Macedonia, adopted in 2007.

The Strategy for Equitable Representation of the Persons Belonging to Non- Majority Communities in the Republic of Macedonia (2007) contains measures and activities aiming to improve equitable representation of all ethnic communities in Macedonia. According to the Strategy the increased

<sup>7</sup> Constitutional Amendments VI, XII, XV.

<sup>8</sup> A total of 52 laws were amended, among them the Law on Labour Relations, Law on Public Enterprises, Law on Protection and Prevention from Discrimination, Law on Promotion of the Rights of Communities Represented by less than 20%, Law on Organization of the Work of the State Administration Bodies.

<sup>9</sup> At the time of adoption, SIOFA functioned as a Sector for Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement within the General Secretariat of the Government. The Strategy itself contains a proposal for restructuring the Sector into Secretariat and granting increased responsibilities.

number of non-majority communities in the public administration will contribute to strengthening the multi-ethnic society and utilization of all its potential coupled with improved services for all citizens. The Strategy envisions signing a Declaration on behalf of top managers to ensure ownership and commitment for full implementation of equitable representation.

The basis of diversity management, formulated as “work culture”, is laid in the Strategy itself by incorporating it as one of its main objectives. It further explains that the development of the work culture in the public administration and public enterprises should be aimed at respecting and supporting the diversity and representation of non-majority communities. This is stated as the sole qualitative indicator of success in the implementation of equitable representation (SIOFA, 2012).

The activities and measures proposed in the Strategy are organized in sections referring to the implementation of equitable representation in the civil service, in the public sector, public enterprises, and local self-government units, respectively.<sup>10</sup> Several positive action measures are introduced, such as preferential treatment in case of equal qualifications, adjusting systematization acts and entry conditions in line with non-majority educational qualifications, and preparation of interview guidelines to avoid discriminatory practices.

Most notably, the Strategy singles out opening bi-lingual job positions as one of the most important measures for improving equitable representation. Bi-lingual job positions are introduced as part of the broader Government’s policy on the use of the Albanian language (“language of the non-majority community spoken by at least 20 % of the population”). One of the requirements is knowledge of a language of the non-majority communities for posts that involve direct provision of services to citizens.

Furthermore, the role of the Ombudsperson to safeguard the principle of non-discrimination and equitable representation is discussed in the Strategy. Namely, the Ombudsperson may initiate procedures, put forward opinions and recommendations, initiate disciplinary measures, and submit requests to the Public Prosecutor to initiate procedure. The strategy also provides for ensuring legitimacy of NGOs to start a procedure in front of the Ombudsperson in case of discrimination in state and public bodies, and shifting the burden of proof from the complainant to the respondent.

### **National Annual Plans**

The previous Law on Civil Servants provided a responsibility for submission of annual plans for equitable representation. It was first introduced for state bodies, and subsequently expanded to include the public sector as well. The Annual Plans contained numerical data regarding employment of non-majority communities, along with assessment of the effects of implemented measures in the previous years, workforce planning for non-majority communities for the upcoming year, professional development measures and fiscal implications.

Considering that this obligation was introduced in 2004, the Strategy itself identified several problems, such as incomplete and irregular submission on by some institutions. Following the adoption of the new Law on administrative servants (2014) and the Law on public sector employees (2014), the obligation to submit Annual Plans ceased to exist and was replaced with the Workforce Planning Methodology.

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<sup>10</sup> The terminology used in the Strategy is in line with the previous Law on Civil Servants and the Law on Public Servants. The new laws adopted in February 2014, make distinction between administrative servants and public sector employees.



## Workforce Planning Methodology

The Law on public sector employees (2014), which entered in force in February 2015, introduced an obligation for the institutions to plan future recruitment via Annual Plans and according to their needs based on the Workforce Planning Methodology, applying the principle of equitable representation. The recruitment in the public sector is regulated in the section IV – a of the Law and according to the latter, the Methodology should include the form, the content and the template of the Annual Plan and the Report on the implementation of the annual plan for recruitment. The Methodology, through the “Balancer” calculates the need for new employments of members of non-majority communities on the basis of the difference between the current state of affairs of the institution in terms of community belonging, expressed in percentage and the representation to be achieved according to data from the last census (2002).

However, the Methodology has still not been adopted, as there are differences within the Government coalition. The reasons for this are that there are certain exceptions to the application of the new law. Namely, the whole section IV-a of law and provisions relating to annual plans do not apply to the military and civilian personnel in the service of the Army of Republic of Macedonia for the authorized officials in the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior and the administrative bodies of the Ministry of Interior works as well as the Intelligence Agency. According to the OFA Review on Social Cohesion (OFA Review, 2015)<sup>11</sup> this is contrary to the Amendment VI of the Constitution where equitable representation is established as one of the fundamental values of the constitutional arrangement whereby equitable representation of citizens belonging to all communities in the state should be ensured in all government and other public institutions at all levels. The other reason is that the Methodology does not differentiate the need for employment (presented in percentage) of different categories of positions (managerial and non-managerial) but relies on the overall number of employees per institution<sup>12</sup>.

## Human Resource Management Standards

First introduced in the public administration in 2010 and revised in 2014, the Human Resource Management (HRM) Standards contain best practices in human resources management designed for promoting efficient, professional and service-oriented administration. The HRM Standards serve as guidelines for strengthening the human resource management in the administration and improving the work of HRM units (Shikova and Bochvarska, 2014, p.5). Variety of issues are addressed in the HRM Standards such as work competencies, strategic planning, selection and recruitment, performance appraisal, mentoring, communication, induction, training and professional development.

In the context of equitable representation, diversity management and workforce integration, creating and promoting work environment in which differences are respected, is envisioned as part of the advanced level competencies, within the framework of competencies (Shikova and Bochvarska, 2014, p.28). Selection and promotion procedures should be tailored in line with existing positive action measures targeting non-majority communities, among other groups (Shikova and Bochvarska, 2014, p.52). Some of the good practices for communication include organizing weekly and monthly staff meetings, along with encouraging informal communication among employees through joint celebrations. Mentoring and induction training are exemplified as crucial processes for the newly employed persons in the administration, along with training and professional development as one of the main HRM functions. In addition, the HRM Standards contain Equal Opportunities Policy striving to align existing legal obligations related to equality and

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<sup>11</sup> Available at: <http://eip.org/sites/default/files/OFA%20Review%20on%20Social%20Cohesion.pdf>  
<sup>12</sup> Interview with a central government employee.

non-discrimination with organization practices in the organization (Shikova and Bochvarska, 2014).

## 4.2 Research findings

In this section, we present key findings from the qualitative and quantitative analysis of views and attitudes of administrative servants on the implementation of the equitable representation, integration in the workplace and diversity management. To examine opinions of administrative servants on central level, a survey with 400 respondents was conducted. We do have to note that the Secretariat for the Implementation of the Ohrid Framework agreement initially supported the survey. However, the Secretariat withdrew its support during the implementation of the survey.<sup>13</sup>

To explore perspectives of managing staff and to supplement survey data, 15 persons in managing positions both in local self-government units and in central government were interviewed. In addition, to complement this data, we discussed the same issues with civil society representatives during a focus group discussion. The preliminary findings were discussed at a round table held with 50 stakeholders representing both of the public service and the civil society sector. Their feedback is also included in this summary of findings.

In line with the main focus of analysis, the first subsection focuses on equitable representation, while in the second subsection findings on integration in the workplace and diversity management are discussed. The final subsection tackles issues on equality and non-discrimination.

### Equitable representation

How is equitable representation implemented? What are the experiences and views of administrative servants and managing staff? What are the obstacles and success factors for implementation of the principle? Based on data collected via the research phases outlined above, this section seeks to answer these questions.

The dominant view among the research participants in this study is that **OFA's objectives on equitable representation have not been achieved**, even though 66.8% of survey respondents believe that equitable representation contributes towards implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement objectives. To this date, one of the country's major challenges is ensuring equality for all citizens. It has been stressed by research participants that equitable representation should be perceived as an instrument towards achieving equality, and not as an end in itself. Implementation does not only refer to numbers and statistics, as equitable representation aims at increasing representation and achieving balance of interests of all ethnic groups in the country, which will ultimately lead to improving ethnic cohesion and multicultural society.<sup>14</sup>

### Perceptions of equitable representation among public administration and benefits of implementation

How is equitable representation understood among the public administration? Our findings suggest that the principle of equitable association is primarily associated with **enhanced participation of non-majority community members in the public life**, and more specifically with improving their **employment in the public sector**. In addition, equitable representation has not only contributed to enhanced sense of belonging of all ethnic communities for 76 % of the

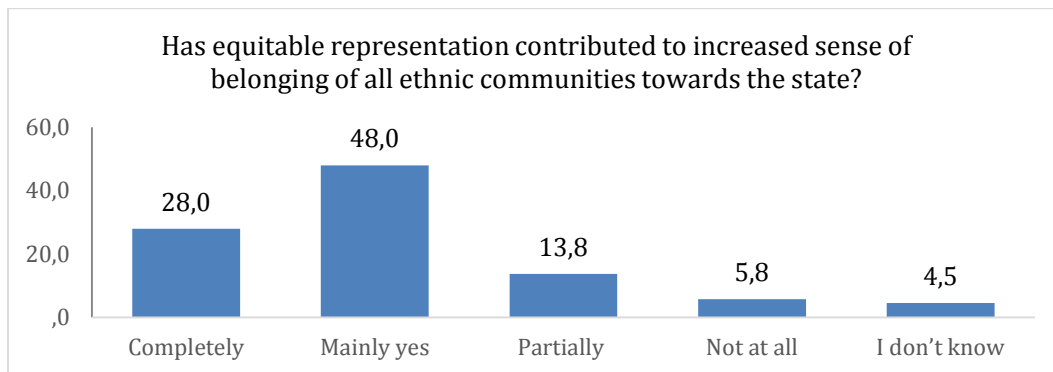
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<sup>13</sup> Officially, the withdrawal was due to the fact that SIOFA had already planned measures and activities for the same purpose within the Plan for implementation of Urgent Reform Priorities. Unofficially, the reason was due to the alleged Government reactions to the support.

<sup>14</sup> State Secretary of SIOFA, round table discussion.

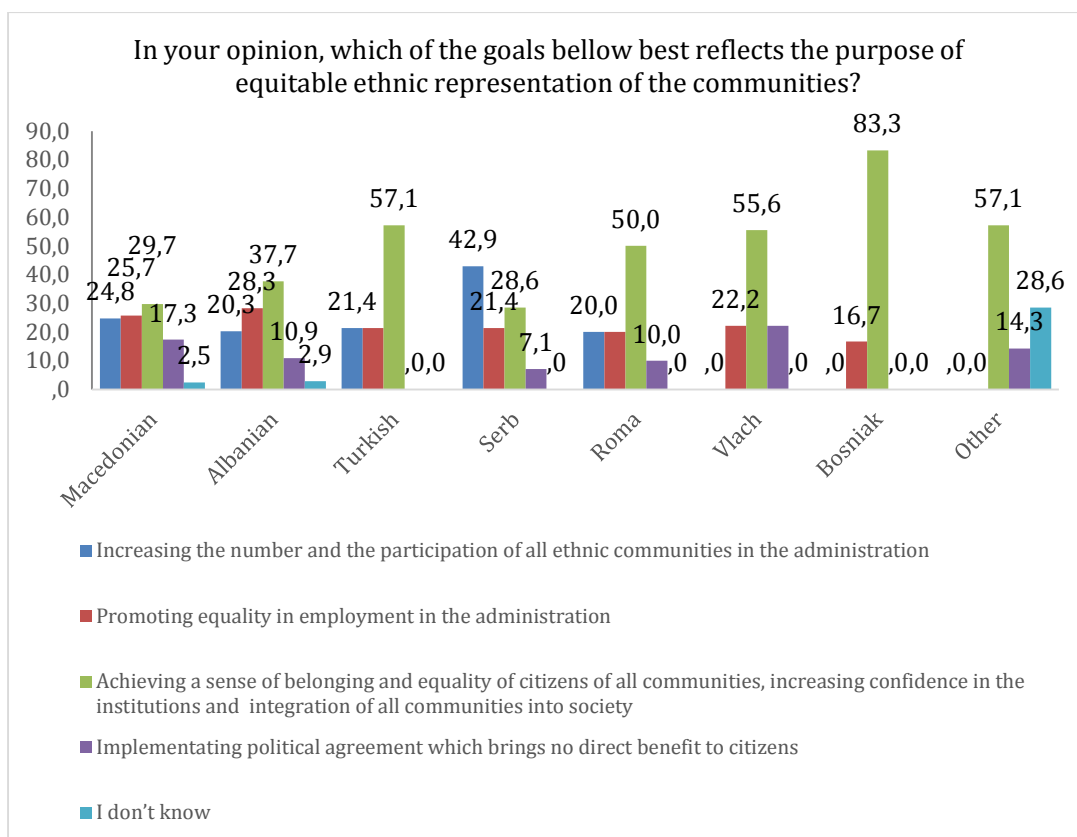
respondents, but it is also seen as the most important goal of the implementation of equitable representation (35.8%).

Figure 1. Equitable representation and sense of belonging



Non-majority survey respondents, primarily Albanian (40.6%), followed by Roma (40%) and Bosniak (33.3%) associate equitable representation with **sense of belonging, integration and equality of all citizens, along with increasing confidence in institutions.**

Figure 2. Views on the goals of equitable representation per ethnic affiliation

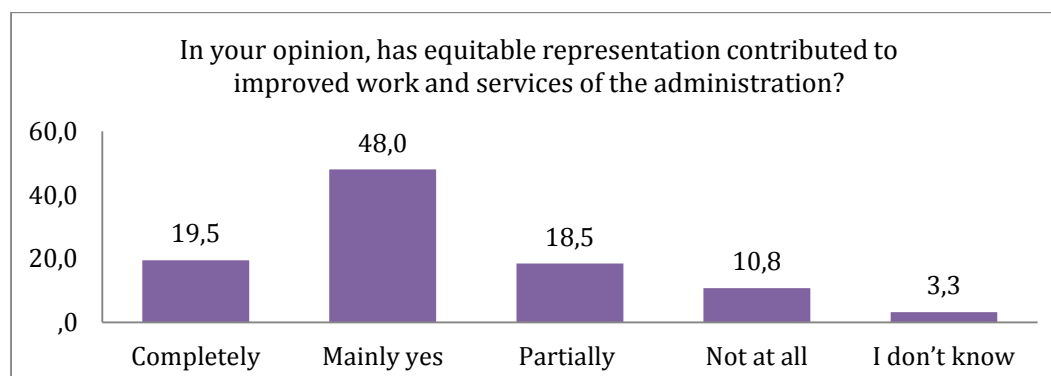


Other important goals are promotion of equality in public sector employment (25.5%), increasing numerical representation and securing participation of all communities in the public sphere (22.3%).

For many of the non-majority employees, equitable representation does not only provide employment in the public sector and opportunity for all communities to participate in decision making process at all levels, but it also means better services for citizens. In this respect, **better**

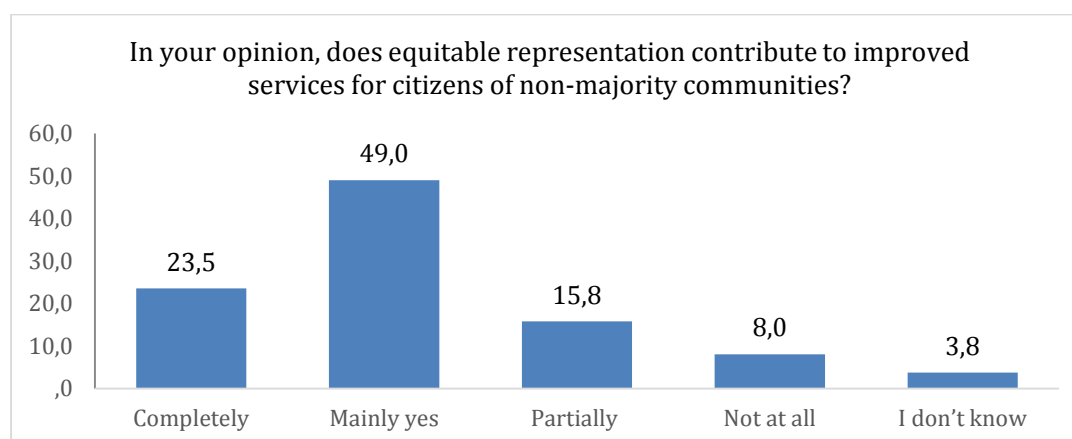
**services and improved work of the administration** are some of the direct benefits of the implementation of equitable representation for one third of the survey respondents.

Figure 3. Equitable representation and improved work and services



Moreover, **the delivery of services specifically for non-majority communities has improved** according to 72.5% of survey respondents (cumulatively completely and mainly yes).

Figure 4. Equitable representation and improved services for non-majority communities



The need of improved provision of services delivered by less represented groups, was particularly stressed on local level, as demonstrated in the excerpt bellow:

*“We work with citizens with different ethnic backgrounds. There are some that don't speak Macedonian well, so they only speak Albanian, or Turkish, or Romani. It is important for us as a municipality to have employees who speak their [the citizens'] language. It's important for all citizens to feel that there are employees in the municipality from their own ethnic group, so they feel a sense of ownership towards it, to feel that the municipal administration works for their needs.”<sup>15</sup>*

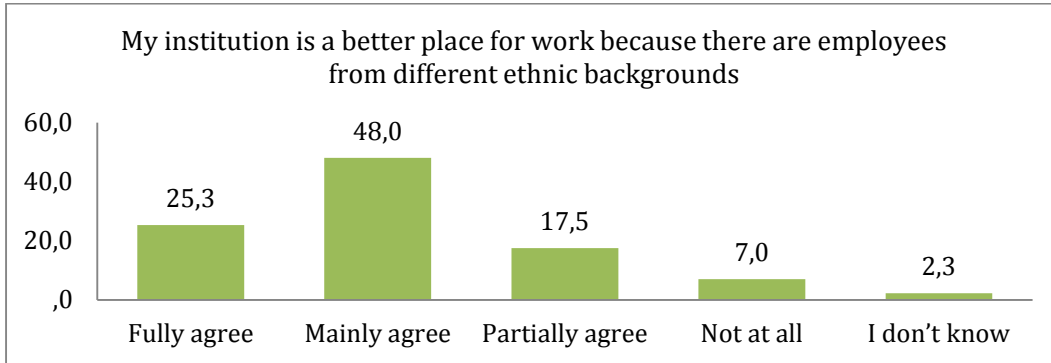
However, there are differences in views along ethnic lines. In contrast to all of the non-majority communities (Albanians 86.2%, Turks 92.9%, Serbs 85.7%, Roma 90%, Vlachs 66.7%, and Bosniaks 100%), Macedonian survey respondents (60.4%) are least likely to perceive the improvement of services for non-majority communities as a result of the implementation of the principle.

The other benefits of the implementation of equitable representation are its **positive effects on interpersonal relationships of employees from different ethnic groups**. One third of survey

<sup>15</sup> Interview with local government employee.

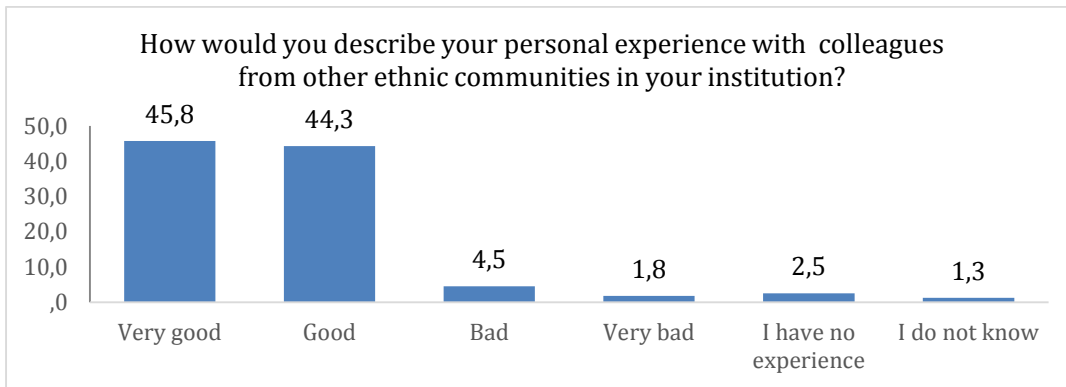
respondents have improved their opinion about people from other ethnic groups as result of equitable representation. For 73.3% of survey respondents, the institutions where they are employed are better places for work because there are employees with different ethnic backgrounds.

Figure 5. Ethnic diversity creating better place for work



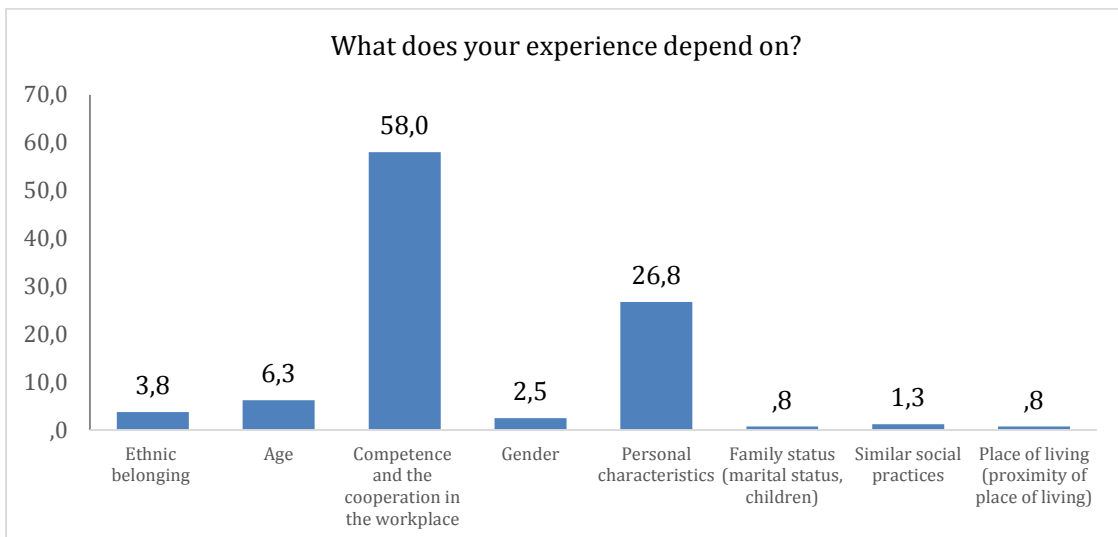
The experiences with colleagues from other communities are described as very good (45.8%) and good (44.3%).

Figure 6. Personal experiences with colleagues from other ethnic groups



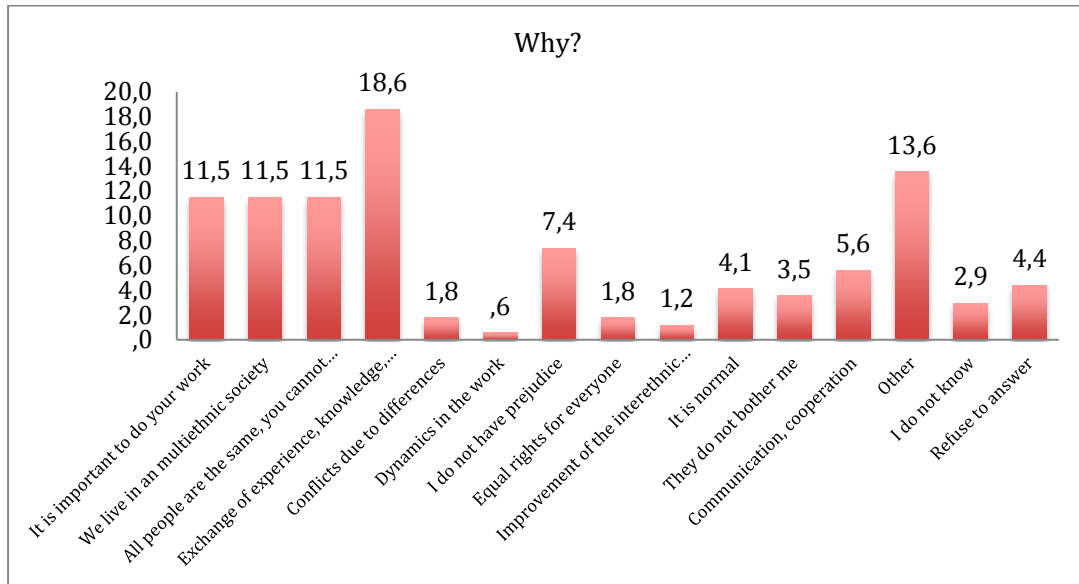
For more than a half of the respondents (58%) these experiences depend on competence of the person and cooperation in the workplace. For one fourth of respondents (26.8%), personal characteristics influence experiences.

Figure 7. Factors shaping experiences with colleagues from other ethnic groups



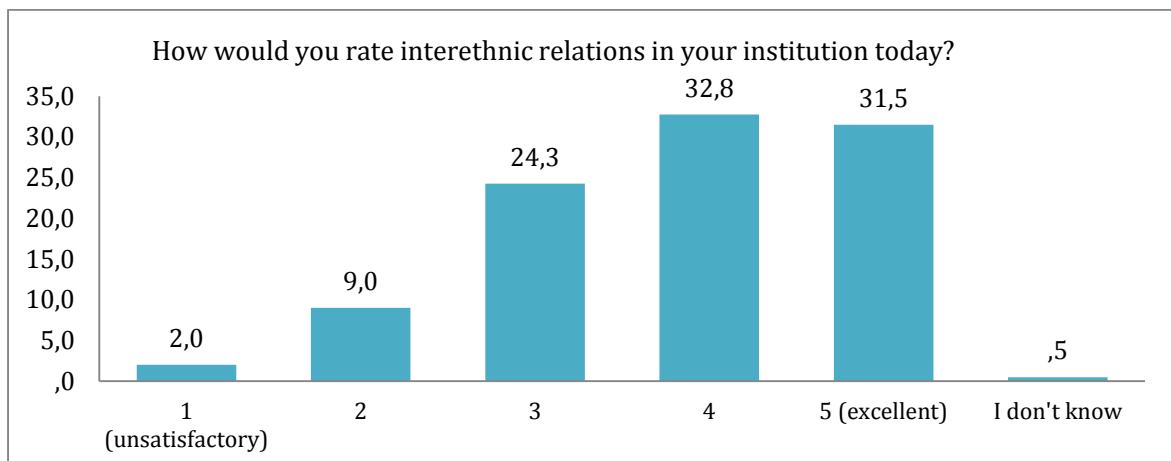
In addition, working in an ethnically mixed environment is acceptable for most of the respondents (89%). Those who feel that working in an ethnically mixed environment is acceptable, claim that this is due to the exchange of experiences, knowledge, and mutual getting to know each other. The importance of completing work tasks regardless of ethnicity, aiming to achieve equality of people and living in a multi-ethnic society, are reasons for accepting to work in an ethnically mixed environment.

Figure 8. Why is it acceptable to work in ethnically mixed environment?



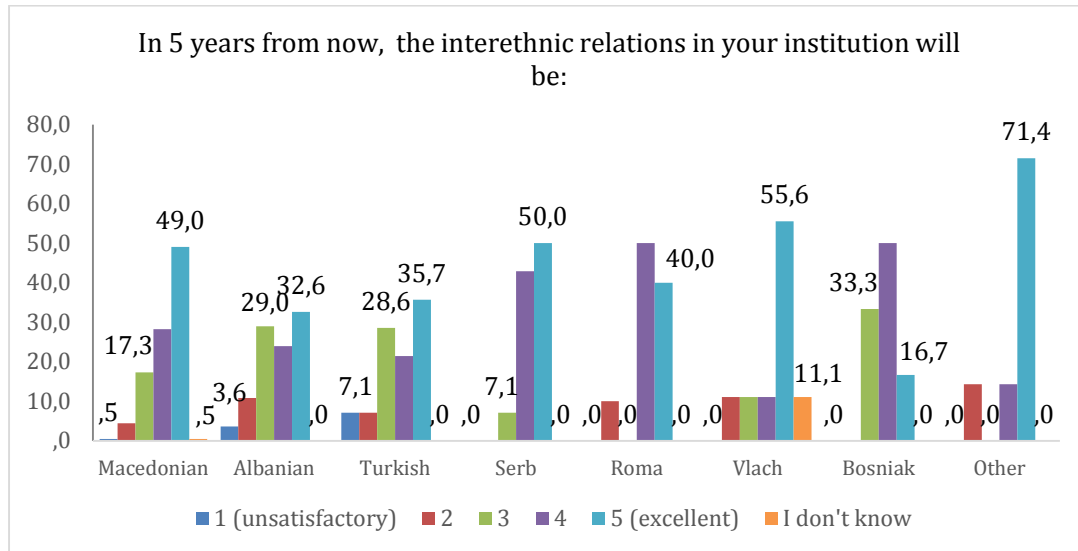
For the majority of the respondents (68%) the recognition for the completed work comes from all colleagues regardless of the ethnicity. When asked to describe interethnic relations in their institutions with 1-5 score, 31.5% of respondents graded the relations as excellent, 32.8% gave them a score of [4] four.

Figure 9. Interethnic relations today



Almost half of the respondents (42.8%) believe that 5 years from now, the interethnic relations will be excellent. The members of the Albanian and Turkish community projected smaller percentage of positive expectations. In terms of working positions, Secretaries show lowest expectations for improvement of interethnic relations.

Figure 10. Interethnic relations in 5 years



### Implementation challenges

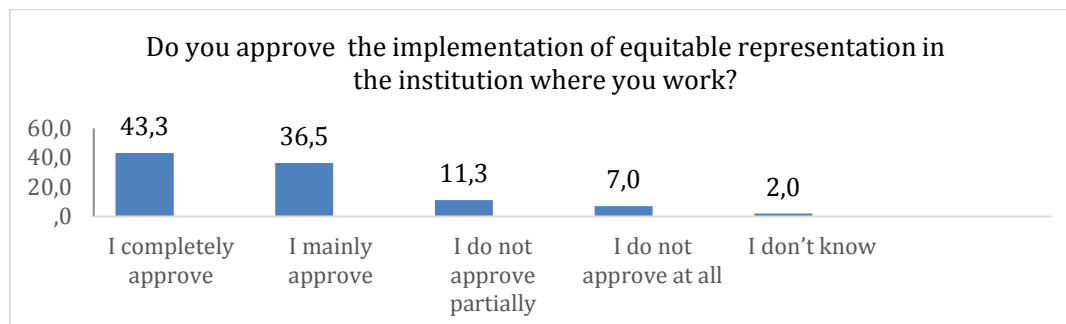
Despite the noted benefits of implementation of equitable representations, serious obstacles have also been identified. These primarily refer to the politicisation of the administration, commitment of managing staff, problematic recruitment and promotion procedures, along with inadequate monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms, lack basic working conditions and budgetary restrictions. The obstacles are elaborated in more detail in the following sections.

### Politicisation of the administration

*“The problem lies in the politicisation, and it affects us all. It’s a fact, and it affects Albanians, Macedonians etc. We need de-politicisation and that is the biggest problem in this country.”<sup>16</sup>*

The survey of administrative servants reveals that almost 80% of the respondents (either fully or mainly) approve the implementation of the equitable representation principle.

Figure 11. Overall approval rates of equitable representation



<sup>16</sup> Round table discussion.

There has been a **significant shift in opinion among administrative servants** in the past decade. Namely, the implementation of the principle is encountered with lesser resistance compared to the initial period when it was first introduced. Majority of interviewees and focus group participants state that nowadays equitable representation is mostly accepted in their respective institutions. Thus, the acceptance of non-majority employees in the workplace is greater. As noted by a speaker at the round table discussion:

*“From today’s perspective, it is really surprising why [before] we didn’t think that is unusual to have only 4-5% employees from non-majority groups... Now the situation is very different, there are really no divisions along ethnic lines in my institution, we all work together and get along perfectly.”<sup>17</sup>*

This testament of excellent interpersonal relations among employees of different ethnic background is frequently convoluted by the disruptive influence of political elites and employment based on political affiliation. Research participants identify **recruitment and promotion based on party affiliation as crucial obstacle in proper functioning of the administration**. If previously employees’ ethnicity and competences were questioned, today party affiliation comes to the fore as most problematic. Resistance toward persons from other ethnic backgrounds is now transformed into resistance towards the (ruling) party affiliation and employment based on party membership. In practice, there is a tacit understanding that party affiliation supersedes the merit-based system.

For these reasons, research participants unanimously and persistently call for **merit-based employment and greater transparency and accountability**. It is the main change identified for the purpose of improving equitable representation that the merit-based employment should replace employment based on party membership (20.4%). An excerpt of the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA)’s State Secretary illustrates this point:

*“It’s our common goal to have better administration, which will serve the needs of the citizens, and we should jointly build this administration. When a citizen asks for a service, I won’t ask who he is, or what he is, but I will focus on the service needed. The ethnic background is completely irrelevant. And this is the ideal situation, everyone to be treated equally.”<sup>18</sup>*

However, in the current state of affairs, the two largest ethnic groups and their respective political parties portray Macedonia as a **bi-ethnic state, resulting in exclusion of other ethnic communities**. The promotion of equality and multicultural values in the workplace is largely seen as absent.

Few of interviewees described equitable representation as an *“enigma”*,<sup>19</sup> *“legally imposed obligation”*,<sup>20</sup> and *“social experiment of the Western countries”*.<sup>21</sup> Some added that at the beginning of implementation, the objective of the principle was to achieve certain percentage of communities’ representation. This was perceived as more or less acceptable as it was linked with correcting historical disadvantages and removing obstacles for employment in the public sector for less represented ethnic groups. However, according to the latter, now equitable representation serves as a tool for Albanians whose objective is to continuously increase their numerical representation in the public administration, beyond reaching the required percentage.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Round table discussion.

<sup>18</sup> Round table discussion.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with central government employee.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with central government employee.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with local government employee.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with central government employee.

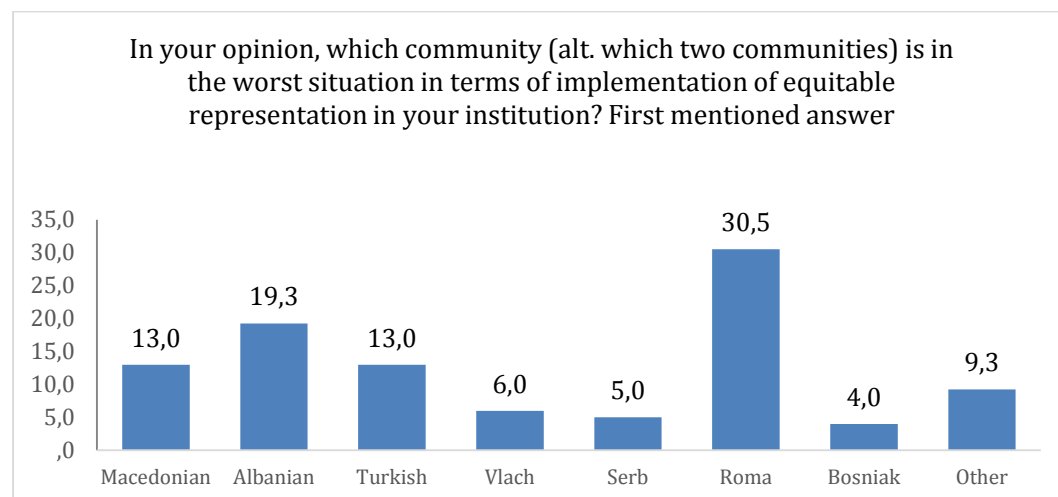


Moreover, besides the Albanian research participants, other respondents, and especially Macedonians, perceive equitable representation as a “*game between the political elites*”.<sup>23</sup> With the public sector as the main employer in the country, and the politicisation of the administration, equitable representation is used as an instrument contributing to the competition for employment. Both ruling parties recruit persons with their respective political affiliation and ethnic background. As a result, **the number of persons predominantly from the largest non-majority group has increased, and this is perhaps one of biggest achievements of equitable representation implementation.** However, Albanians have been perceived as having monopoly over employment opportunities in the public sector while other non-majority communities have been largely neglected in the process and are still under-represented.<sup>24</sup> As described by a focus group participant:

*In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs there is one Croat. There are no Turks serving abroad. No Roma in the embassies...*<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, the survey findings point out that the first choice of ethnic group in the worst position in terms of equitable representation in their respective institutions is Roma (37.6%). Nevertheless, the next one is Albanian (19.3%).

Figure 12. Views on community in the worst position in terms of equitable representation implementation in own institution per ethnic affiliation



Additionally, when asked to identify two ethnic groups that should be better represented in managing positions, the survey respondents identified Albanians (26.8 %) as their first choice. Turks (21,4%) are the second ethnic group that should occupy more managing positions. The following chapter identifies challenges related to appointing non-majority members to leadership positions and how this affects the implementation of equitable representation.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with central government employee.

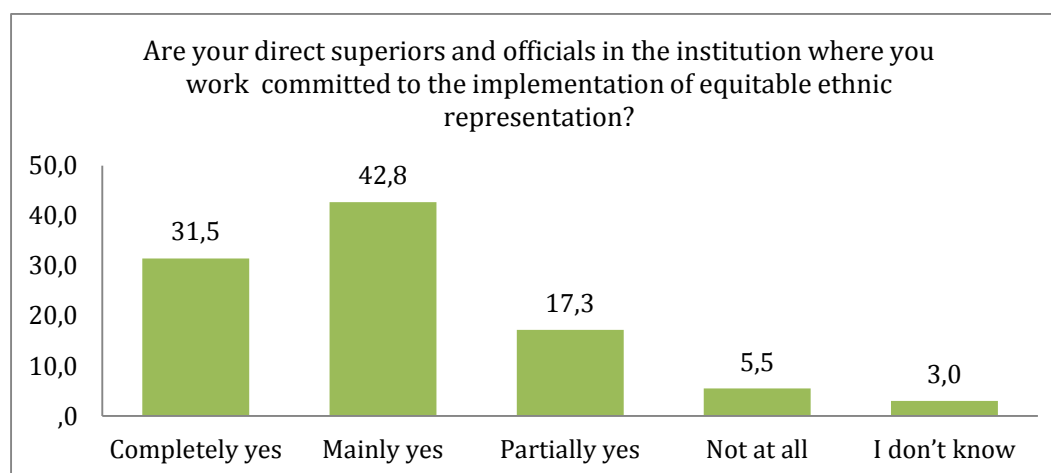
<sup>24</sup> Round table discussant.

<sup>25</sup> Focus group participant

### Leadership commitment to equitable representation

One third of the survey respondents see their immediate superiors as fully committed to implementation of equitable representation. Approximately 43% believe that their superiors are mainly committed to the implementation of the principle, while 22.8% believe that there is no commitment to this issue.

Figure 13. Views on commitment of superiors to the implementation of equitable representation



Through the prism of ethnicity, the views between Macedonians and Albanians differ for almost 20% in their belief that their immediate superiors are committed to the implementation of equitable representation (83.2% of the Macedonians respondents, in comparison to 64.5% of Albanian respondents). Therefore, Macedonians have a stronger belief in the commitment of their immediate superiors to the principle of equitable representation. At the same time, it should be noted that Albanians express less trust in leaders from other ethnic backgrounds.

The narratives of interviewed managing staff provide a deeper insight on this issue. It is a widely held belief among almost all interviewees regardless of ethnic belonging that the **implementation of the principle mostly depends on the ethnic background on the head of the institutions**. Both in central and in local government, the implementation of the principle has not been questioned in institutions headed by Albanians. Moreover, in these institutions satisfactory levels of representation has been achieved. However, many interviewees largely believe that institutions run by persons of Macedonian background still have to meet legally satisfying level of equitable representation. In addition, serious concerns have been raised as to the allocation of non-majority members in the institutions run by the Macedonian community, as well as the promotion/recruitment of members of the communities in managing position. According to respondents, if there is political will, the vacant posts could be filled by contracted yet unallocated SIOFA staff. Hence, the **lack of will** by the heads of the institutions, in particular of those run by ministries from Macedonian background, is perceived as a key problem.

*“It is up to the persons in main leadership roles in the institutions to manage interethnic relations. Unfortunately, I have to note that in the institutions, person with same ethnic background but different political affiliation may have problematic relationships.”<sup>26</sup>*

On the other hand, some of the Macedonian interviewees working in institutions managed by Albanians felt that the statistical percentage required by OFA is already achieved. Moreover, granting even greater representation of Albanian members takes away employment opportunities for Macedonians and puts them in disadvantaged position.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Round table discussion.

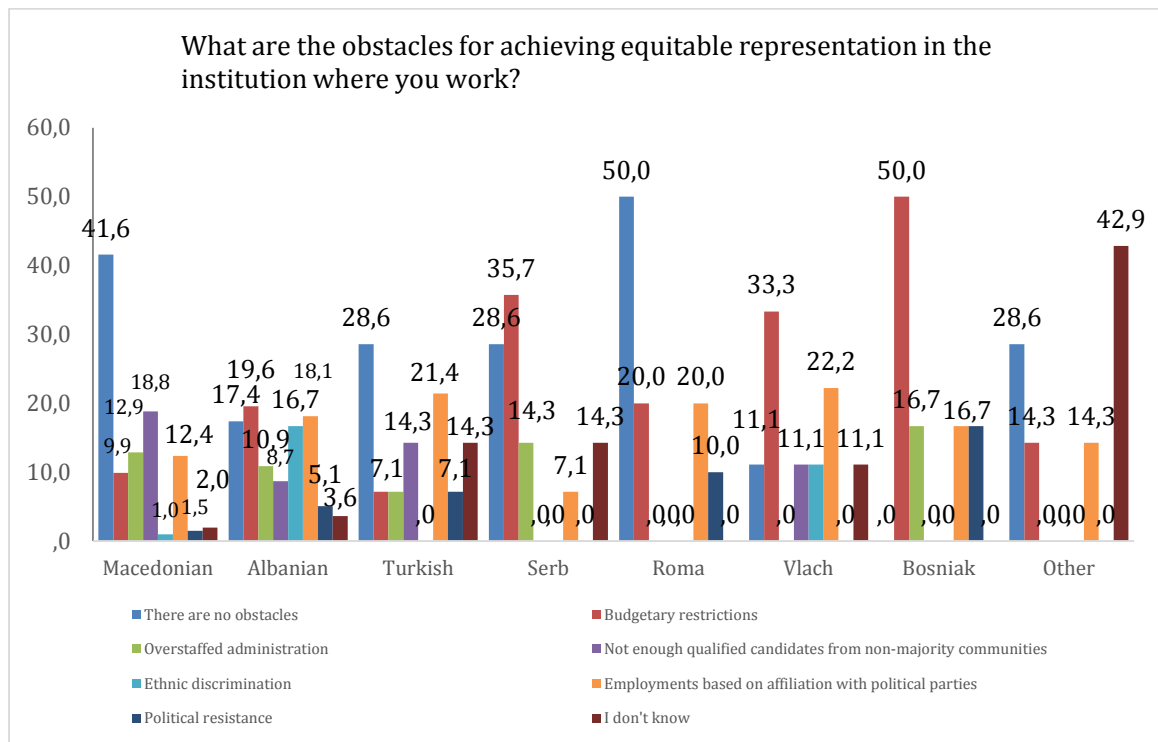
<sup>27</sup> Interview with central government employee.

Furthermore, the quantitative assessment of views expressed by Secretaries reveals that they deviate somewhat in their opinions from leaders in other categories. They find that promotion opportunities depend on ethnicity, salary depends on ethnicity, the attitude of superiors is better towards members of his/ her own ethnicity, they are not free to use the language of their ethnic community, the workplace emphasizes ethnic identity and insults on ethnic grounds often happen. Out of all respondents, state Secretaries show lowest expectations for improvement of interethnic relations.

**Recruitment and promotion procedures**

The previous sections show that **recruitment and promotion in the administration are largely based on political party affiliation**. Also, a bias is detected in the employment and promotion in institutions run by the Macedonian community. This is closely related to the perceptions on competence and integrity of less represented groups. Namely, some of the interviewees stated that at the beginning of implementation, Macedonians perceived non-majority persons, primarily Albanians, as poorly educated, lacking skills and knowledge of the Macedonian language. More recently, ethnic belonging to a less represented group and competence and integrity are not seen as mutually exclusive. Despite this positive shift, there are still some administrative servants (13.3%) that view insufficiently qualified candidates from the non-majority communities as an obstacle to implementation of equitable representation.

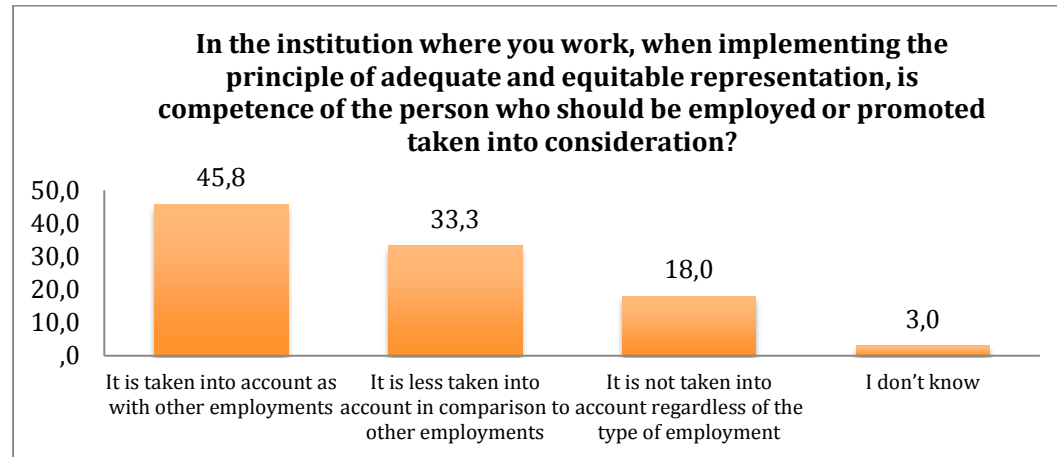
Figure 14. Obstacles for achieving equitable representation



This is particularly evident among Macedonian survey respondents (18.8%). When compared to other ethnic groups, they constitute the largest percentage to express this view. Candidates graduating from private university degrees are perceived as less qualified. Macedonian interviewees explained that there are cases of candidates with “strange” diplomas or diplomas from the faculties of the countries in the region that cannot be considered as reliable.

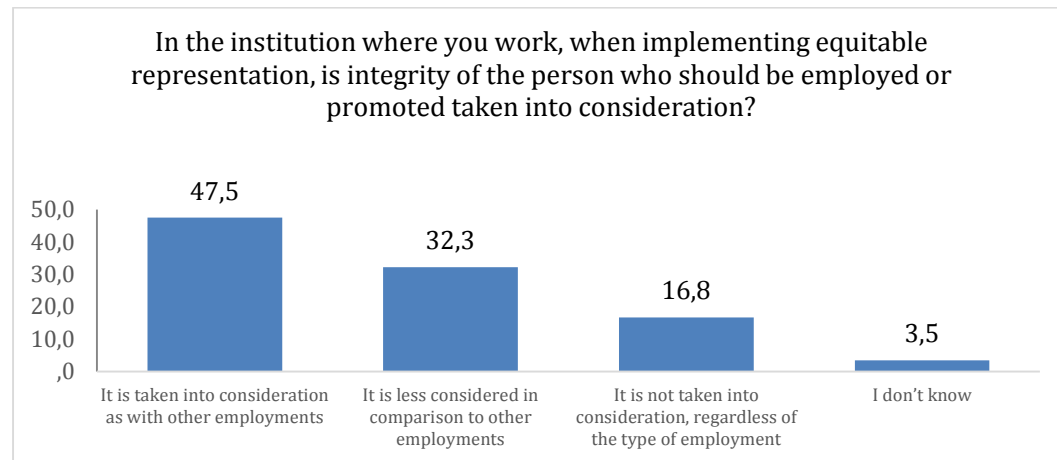
As survey responses demonstrate, almost **half of the respondents (45.8%)** believe that **competence is taken into consideration in employment** based on equitable representation as in the other employments. On the other hand, **one third of the respondents (33.3%)** state that **competence is less important**.

Figure 15. Competence as an influencing factor in employment and promotion



Similarly, in terms of integrity, almost **half of the respondents (47.5%)** claim that it is **taken into consideration** when employing less represented groups in their institutions. **One third (32.3%)** believe that **the integrity is less taken into consideration**.

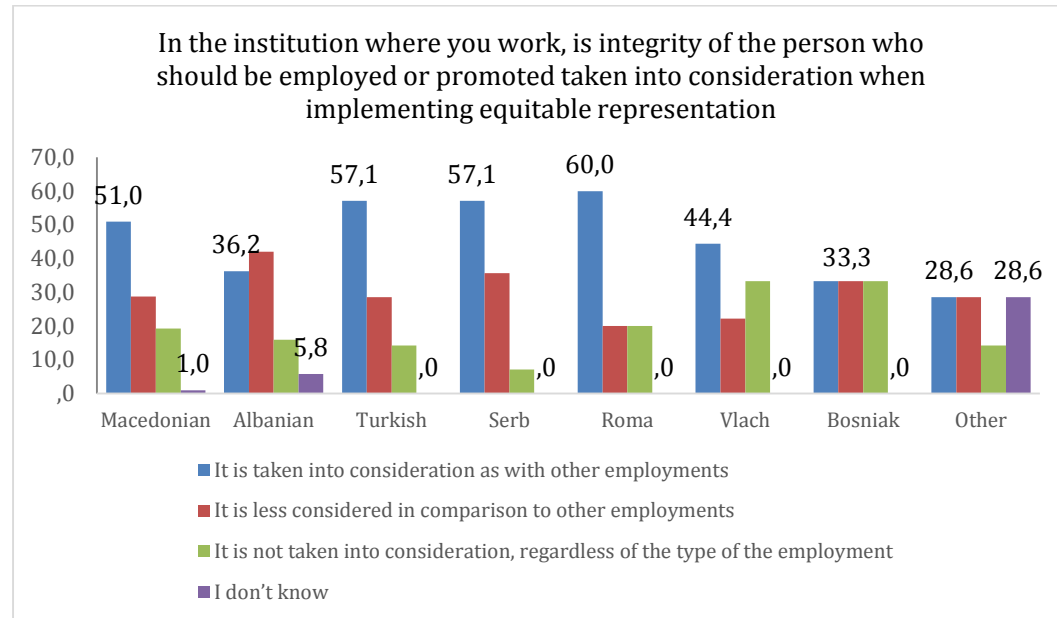
Figure 16. Integrity as a factor in employment and promotion.



Both in terms of importance of competence and integrity in employment and promotion based on equitable representation, the views between Macedonian and Albanian survey respondents differ. Third of the Albanians (36.2%) believe that competence matters, while 42% believe that competence is less important than in the other employments. The picture is slightly different among the ethnic Macedonians, with 51% holding the belief that competence is as important as in the case of other employments, while 28.7% believe that it is less important. In terms of integrity, half of the Macedonian survey respondents believe that the integrity is taken into consideration; while 27.7% state that it is less important. More than third (37%) from the members of the Albanian community believe that the integrity is equally important, while (39.1%) of them believe that the integrity of a person is less taken into consideration.

In terms of working positions, 30.4% of Macedonian Secretaries state that the integrity is less considered compared to other recruitments, while 30.4% believe that integrity is not considered for any type of employment. 48.3% of Albanian State Secretaries see integrity as less considered, compared to 10.3% stating that it is not considered at all.

Figure 17. Ethnic distribution on integrity as a factor in employment and promotion



State Secretaries views are more in line with the opinions expressed in the qualitative analysis. The accounts of interviewees and focus group discussants show that the principles of **competence and integrity are completely disregarded in recruitment and promotion procedures**. They are undermined by the political party recruitments where party loyalty is the main criterion for employment. Recruitment disregarding actual staffing needs and transparency of recruiting procedures are seen as controversial. The recruitment process has been described as corrupt. Only those persons who “should” be employed receive maximum points at the entry exam. As explained by one of the interviewees, it is sufficient for the candidate who “should be employed” to physically appear at the exam. An administrator tasked to monitor the candidates completes his or her test. It was noted that although this practice cannot be proven, the administrative servants in managing positions have crucial role because they decide on recruitment and for that reason the grades are fixed (even though these persons meet the basic criteria/requirements for employment).

Are promotion opportunities linked with ethnicity? The views of survey respondents are divided. 40% of respondents (either completely or mainly) believe that there is such dependency, compared to 54.8% (either completely or mainly) do not see such link. There are notable ethnic differences. One fourth of the Albanian respondents fully believe that that promotion depends on ethnicity. From the aspect of working position, 20.4% secretaries believe that the possibility for promotion fully depends on the ethnicity, while 35.2% believe that it mainly influences career enhancement. Also, Macedonian secretaries (26.1%) believe to a lesser extent that promotion is linked with ethnicity than secretaries of Albanian ethnicity (6.9%).

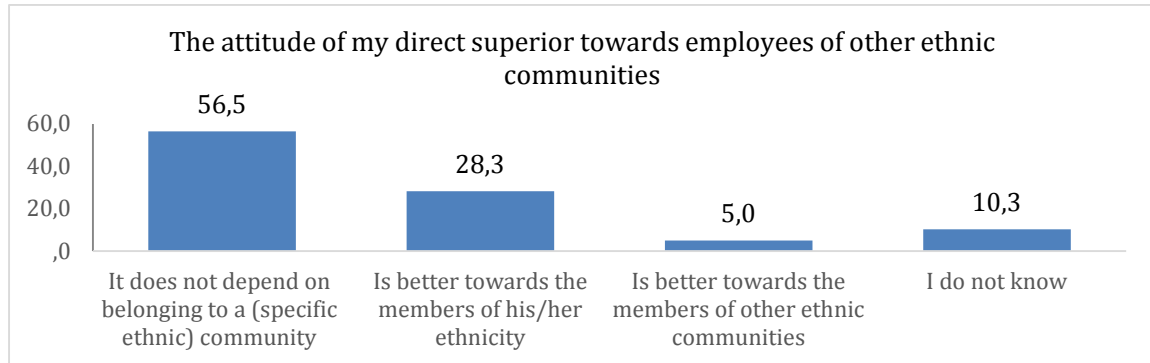
Majority of the respondents (62.5%) do not believe that ethnic belonging influences amount of salary. 17% of the respondents see ethnicity as contributing factor to salary. In terms of ethnic distribution of answers, Albanian (23.9%) and Roma (20%) respondents display slightly higher percentage of agreement, claiming that ethnic belonging mainly impacts amount of salary. Regarding work positions, secretaries (29.7% cumulatively completely yes and mainly yes) state that ethnicity influences salary, whereas this percentage is lower for the rest of the positions. Along ethnic lines, Macedonians (regardless of position) are more likely to believe that ethnic

belonging does not impact amount of salary, unlike Albanians who perceive stronger linkages between the two.

What all ethnic groups have in common is the shared belief that for the purpose of improving equitable representation, there should be **better opportunities for career advancement of all communities.**

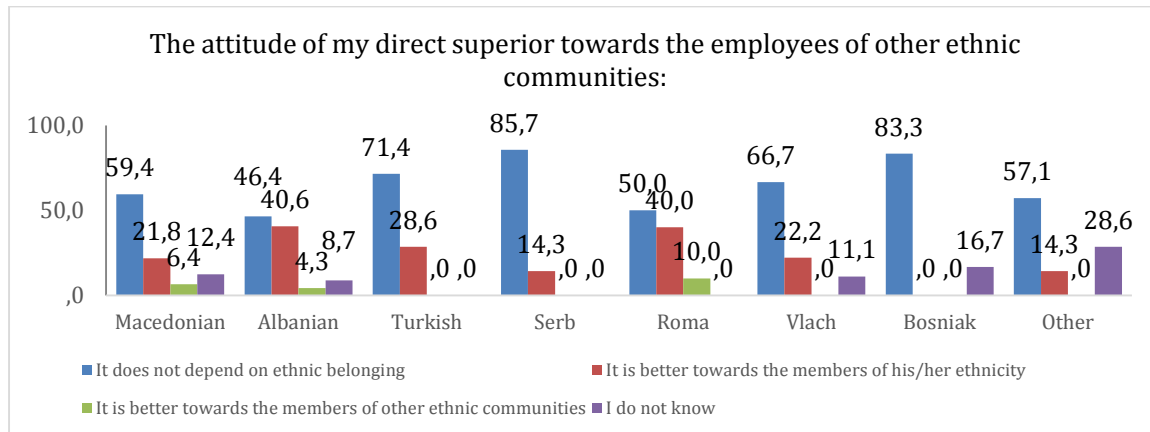
For more than half of the respondents, ethnicity does not influence treatment on behalf of superiors. Almost third of the respondents (28.3%) believe that he/she is treats better members of his/her ethnic group.

Figure 18. Attitude of supervisors towards person from other ethnicities



Albanian and Roma respondents believe in a greater percentage that the attitude of their immediate superior is better towards the members of his/her ethnic group (40.6% of Albanians and 40% of Roma).

Figure 19. Attitude of supervisors towards person from other ethnicities according to ethnic belonging



When compared to other positions, almost half of the secretaries believe that superiors treat better the members of their own ethnic group. The assistant administrative servants in greater percentage believe that the attitude does not depend on the ethnicity. From the aspect ethnicity, almost half of Macedonian respondents (43.1%) do not have a superior from another ethnic background.

Some of the answers of the representatives at local and central level were that the ethnicity has nothing to do with the promotion and the delegation of responsibilities. On the other hand, most of the respondents believe that the party affiliation of the management structure directly relates to the promotion to higher working positions.

### *Other implementation challenges*

Although for third of the respondents no obstacles exist in achieving adequate and equitable representation, the most frequently stated obstacle are **budgetary restrictions** (15.5%). 41,6% of Macedonians do not see obstacles to achieve equitable representation. 19,6% of Albanians identify budgetary restrictions as an obstacle, while 18,1% the party employments. Majority of Turks (28.6%) see no obstacle, while as 21,4% see the party employments as an obstacle. Half of the members of the Roma community see no obstacles to implementation. **Poor working conditions** (lack of desk, computer and other basic equipment) are also a major challenge for proper implementation of the principle.

At the institutional level, the implementation was to be monitored by annual plans for equitable representation. The interviewees state that said plans were prepared but due to lack of legislative mechanisms to monitor the implementation and to sanction non-implementation, plans are either not regularly prepared, or not prepared at all.

The new law on employees in the public sector provides for adoption of Methodology for Equitable Representation that should improve the transparency of the procedures for recruitment. However, most of the interviews are not familiar with the methodology, its content and the time for adoption and commencement of its implementation. Majority of interviewees have not been consulted in the process of preparation. The interviewees familiar with the methodology show scepticism regarding allocation of the newly employed both in the managerial and non-managerial position on grounds of ethnicity. This scepticism is mainly due to the current practice of the annual plans and the fact that mechanisms for controlling the process have not been envisaged. It is expected for the measures for overcoming the obstacles to be part of the Methodology for equitable representation that should improve the transparency of the recruitment procedures of administrative workers.

Therefore, respondents require consistent implementation of the Methodology for adequate and equitable representation through consultation, monitoring and sanctioning. Another risk for proper implementation and accountability could be the lack of accurate statistical data, due to the fact that the last census was held in 2002, as noted in the round table discussion.

### *Integration in the workplace and diversity management*

How is workforce integration understood in the context of implementation of the principle of equitable representation? How is diversity in the workplace managed? How this management can be improved according to the administrative servants in both managerial and non-managerial positions? This section will address these questions and present findings on the integration in the workplace and diversity management.

### *Perceptions and understanding of integration and diversity management*

There is a general lack of understanding on the meaning of the diversity management and workforce integration. Most frequently, these concepts are associated with:

- Inclusion and participation of all employees in the work process, regardless of their ethnicity;
- Acceptance of the underrepresented members in the institutions;
- Creating a multi-ethnic environment and understanding of the language of the members of other communities;
- Cooperation among employees regardless of ethnic belonging.

The respondents recommended to avoid excessive formalization of the measures and activities for integration in order to avoid causing the opposite effect i.e. resistance towards the measures. The misconceptions on diversity management and integration are possibly one of the reasons for resistance towards introducing formal procedures. Formal mechanisms for workforce integration and diversity management are seen as redundant because emphasis is placed on individual characteristics, such as the newly employed persons' desire to integrate and to learn to perform work-related tasks.

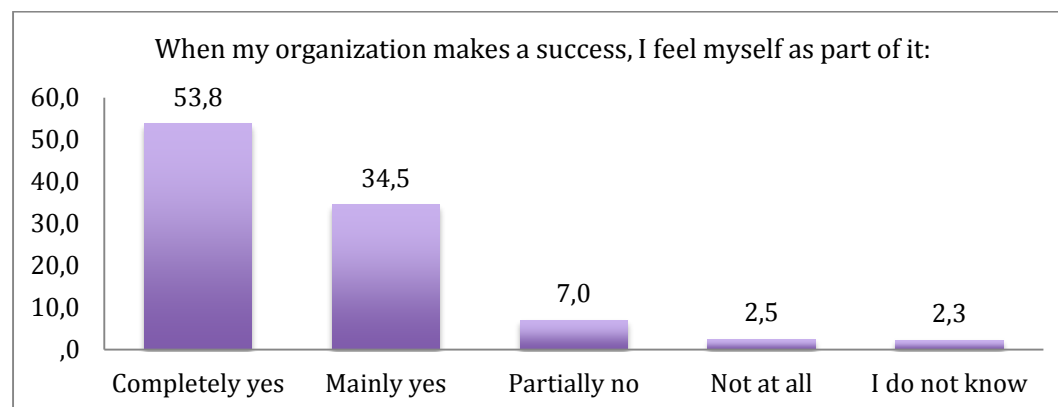
In addition, diversity management is predominantly linked with ethnic belonging. Other characteristics such as gender, age and disability are largely missing in the discussions.

### Work culture

To assess the work culture in the administration, the following components were analysed: identification with success of the institution, participation in creating vision, recognition for work, expression of cultural identity, ethnic and religious symbols and use of language.

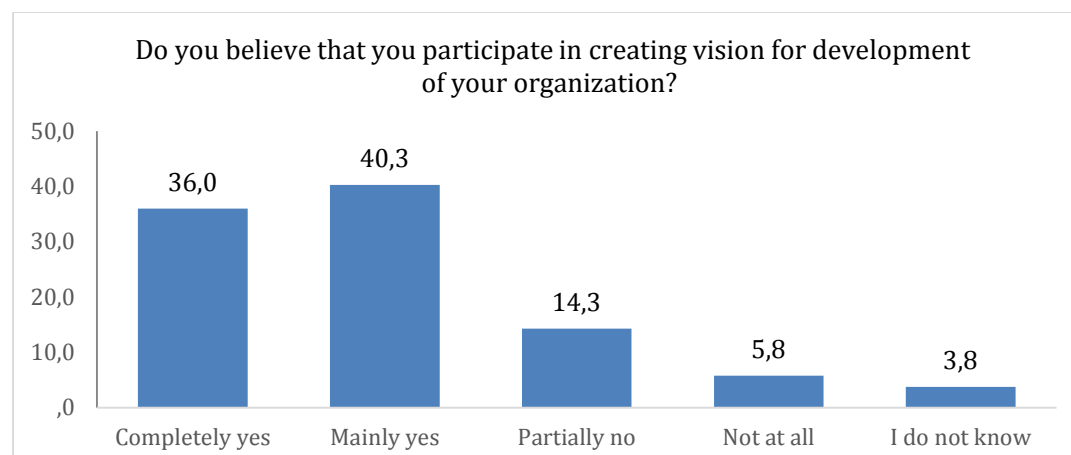
The respondents in general identify with the success of the institution. Namely, more than half of the respondents (53.8%) fully identify with the success of their institution, while 34.5% that mainly identify with it.

Figure 20. Sense of institution success



The overall impression is that majority of the respondents believe that they participate in creation of a vision for institutional development, with 36% completely agreeing and 40.3% mainly agreeing with this statement.

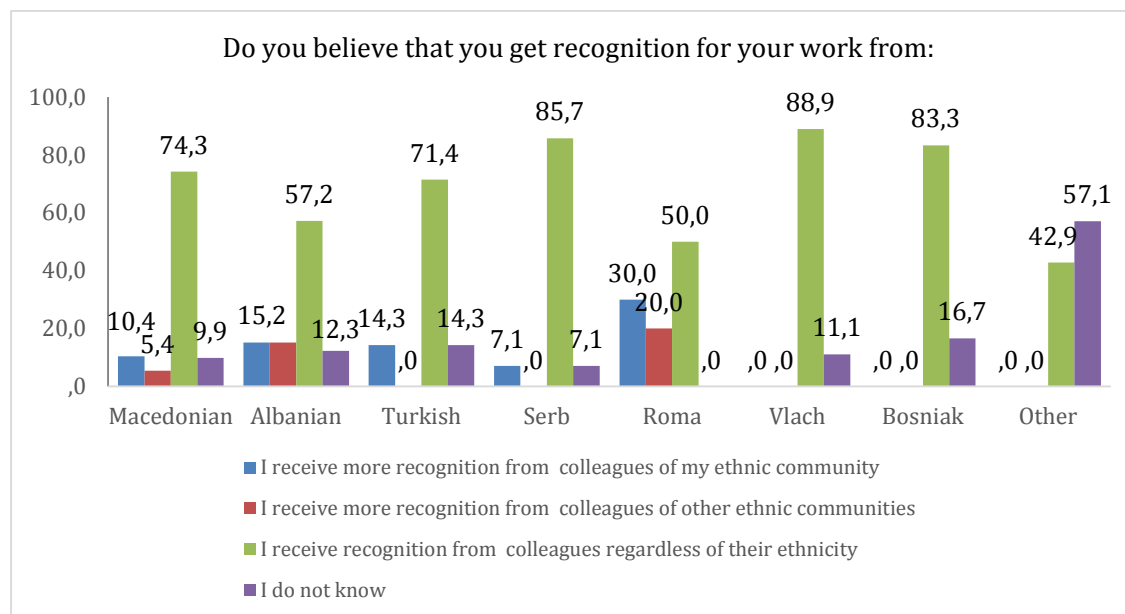
Figure 21. Participation in institutional vision





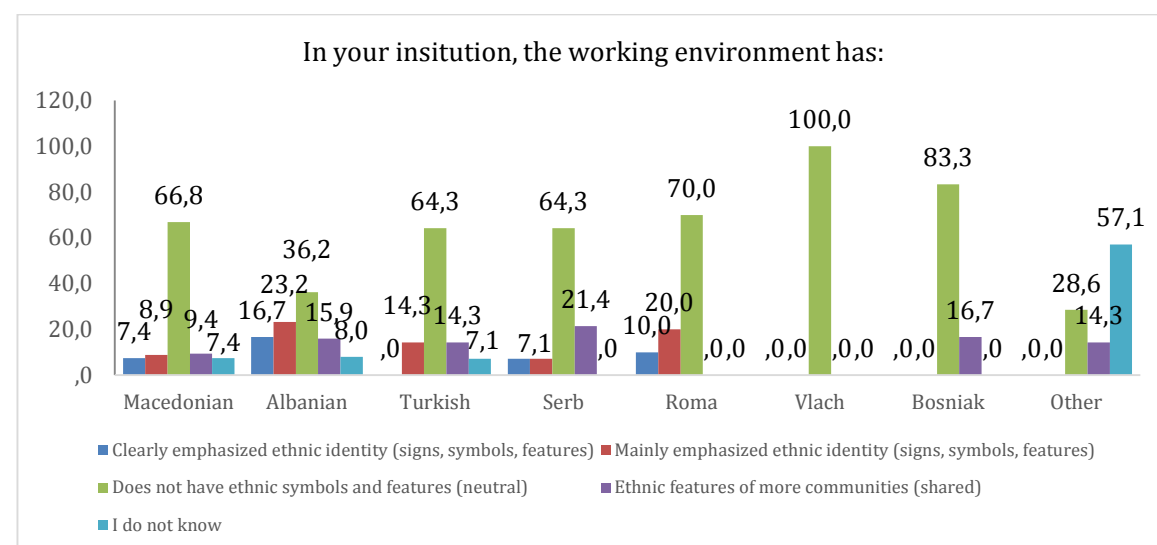
For majority of the respondents (68%) the recognition for the completed work comes from all colleagues regardless of the ethnicity. Through the prism of ethnicity, in comparison to the members of other ethnic communities, Roma mostly believe that recognition comes from colleagues with the same ethnic belonging. This percentage is smaller among Albanians, in comparison to members of other ethnic communities who believe that they get recognition from all colleagues regardless of their ethnic background. In terms of the working positions, similar results were noted.

Figure 22. Recognition for work



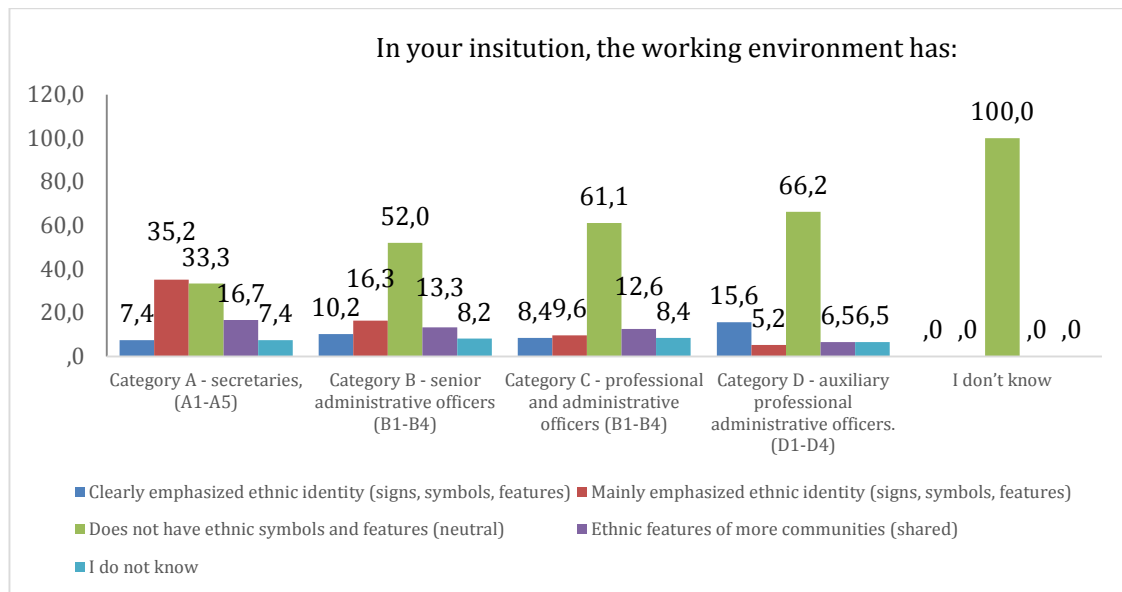
For half of the survey respondents (56.5%), the workplace is neutral. 23.8% of respondents that they work in an institution with emphasized ethnic identity. Albanians, compared to the other groups, demonstrate slightly higher feeling of emphasized ethnic identity in the workplace (16.7% with clearly emphasized ethnic identity and 23.2% with mainly emphasized ethnic identity). The situation is similar among the Roma respondents (10% with a clearly emphasized identity and 20% with mainly emphasized ethnic identity).

Figure 23. Expression of ethnic identity in the workplace



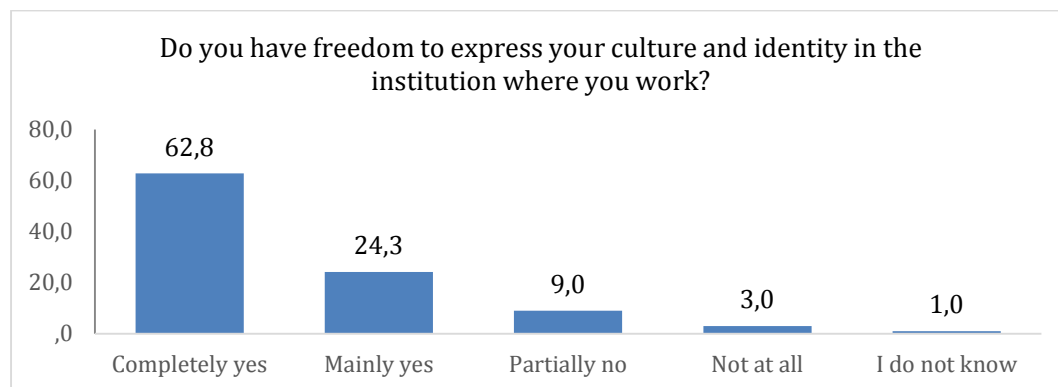
The secretaries, slightly more than the others, feel that the ethnic identity is mainly emphasized in their workplace (35.2%).

Figure 24. Expression of ethnic identity in the workplace, according to work position



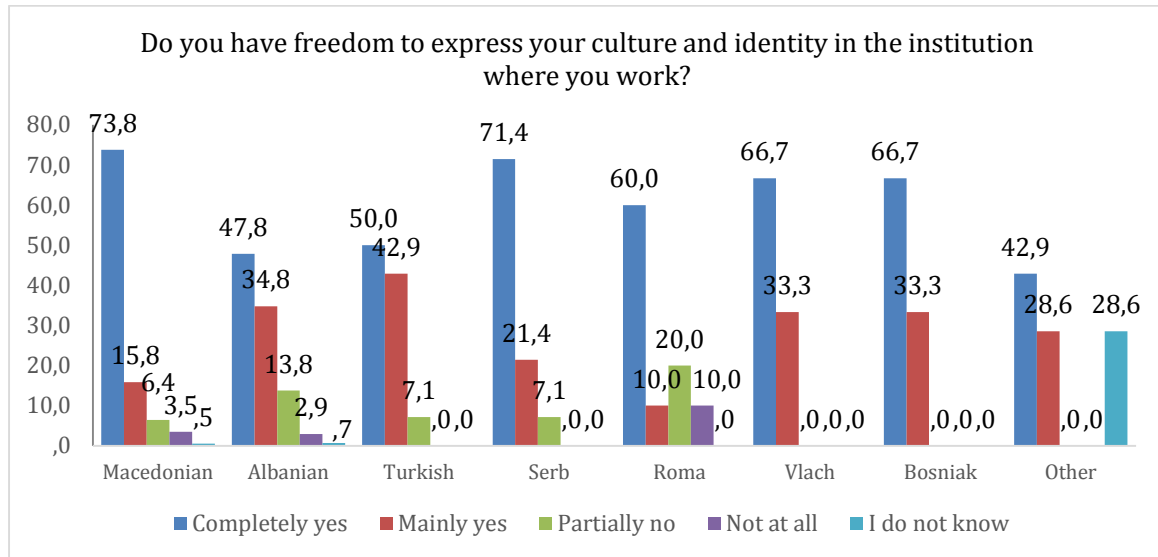
The number of those who do not feel free to express the culture and identity of their own ethnic group is small (12% cumulatively partially no and not at all).

Figure 25. Freedom for expression of culture and identity



The analysis of the results shows that the Albanians, compared with members of other ethnic communities, least responded with Completely yes (47.8%). On the other hand, 30% of Roma respondents (both fully and partially) feel that they have less freedom of expression of their culture and identity. All the respondents feel free to express their culture and identity regardless of the working position (cumulatively completely yes and mainly yes). When focusing on the secretaries, it is noticeable that compared to other positions, they rarely respond with completely yes, and much more with mainly yes.

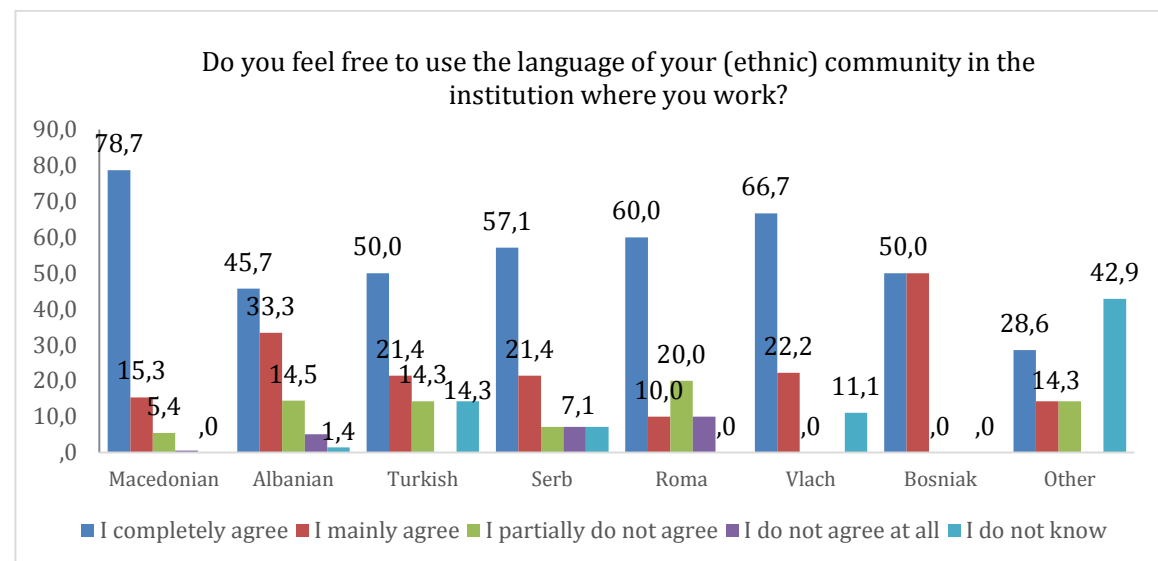
Figure 26. Freedom for expression of culture and identity, according to ethnicity



Ethnic and religious symbols in the workplace are obstacles toward integration. All interviewees stress the need for secularism in the workplace. According to them, there should be no ethnic or religious symbols since they do not contribute to achieving integration in the workplace.

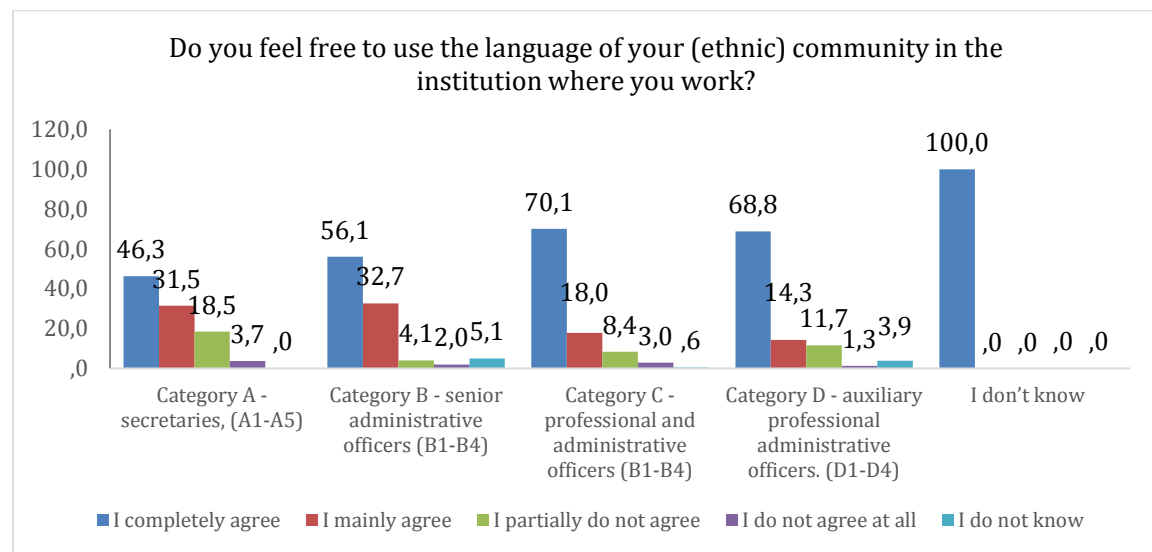
63.5% of respondents feel completely free to use the language of their ethnic group, while 5% feel mainly free. Very small number of people stated that they do not feel free to use their language. This is the case for the Roma community (30%) that feels the highest constrains to use their language.

Figure 27. Use of language



In terms of comparing answers across working positions, Secretaries express highest percentage of lack of freedom to use their language.

Figure 28. Use of language, according to work position



### Human Resource's Role

Respondents find that the Human Resources departments should establish measures for integration in the workplace that are part of the general politics and are based on legal framework and strategic goals for reform.

The context in which Human Resources departments function is also important. First, the nature of the public sector is still largely conservative and focused on strict following of the law. Personnel management- a remnant from the previous system, and human resources management are equated. Moreover, personnel management has been “rebranded” into human resources management. The change is of semantic nature, does not imply shift in practices or general attitude towards employee management (Aziri, Veseli & Ibraimi, 2013). Among the interviewed managing staff, there were examples of HR managers who have a broader understanding on HRM, yet their (what may be considered for the administration) progressive approach is circumscribed by budgetary constrains.

Additionally, there are overwhelming expressions of dissatisfaction on employment opportunities and work conditions. Employment without prior assessment is a trend. For this reason, assessment based on merit, observing the principles of competence and integrity, and on the employment need of the organization, is essential. This should create a mechanism that overcomes political manipulations in the recruitment procedure.

### Measures for improving integration and diversity management

*“Unfortunately, we still live in a society full of prejudices... All these years we aim to create institutional culture based on diversity. But I think that we are missing strategies and policies for diversity management.”<sup>28</sup>*

<sup>28</sup> Round table discussion

The views of the respondents are divided in terms of determining measures for integration/diversity management. Most of the respondents believe that measures should be included in human resources policies within each institution/municipality, while others believe that there should be a general policy that will embrace the adequate legal framework and strategic commitments for public administration reform.

The measures for integration should be determined through consultation with administrative servants or adopt top-down approach. Other suggestions include adoption of such measures and their revision to be made by advisors for integration in the institutions, or councils composed of employees of the institution (municipality) who will report the problems the employees face and will propose measures to overcome them.

The following subsections present the proposed measures.

### **Workplace induction**

The respondents are not familiar with the existence of formal policies for workplace induction. In practice, it is usually HR unit representatives who welcome new employees, introduce them to the colleagues, explain the work of the institution and accommodate them in certain unit/sector. Respondents express a need for a formal procedure for introduction in the workplace. They prefer implementation of the mentoring principle with a specific focus on equitable representation.

The views of the respondents about the scope of work assigned to the newly employed from the non-majority communities are divided. On the one hand, ethnicity is not an obstacle for the introduction of the newly employed and delegating tasks. On the other hand, ethnicity affects the scope and the type of assignments delegated to the newly employed but that mainly depends on the ethnicity of the managing structure of the institution (if it is from the same ethnicity), and the party affiliation as ground for employment. The political party affiliation affects integration. Views about impartiality and independence of the employee are crucial, but also most common among the respondents in terms of the professional integration of the employee.

### **Diversity management in the general framework of competences**

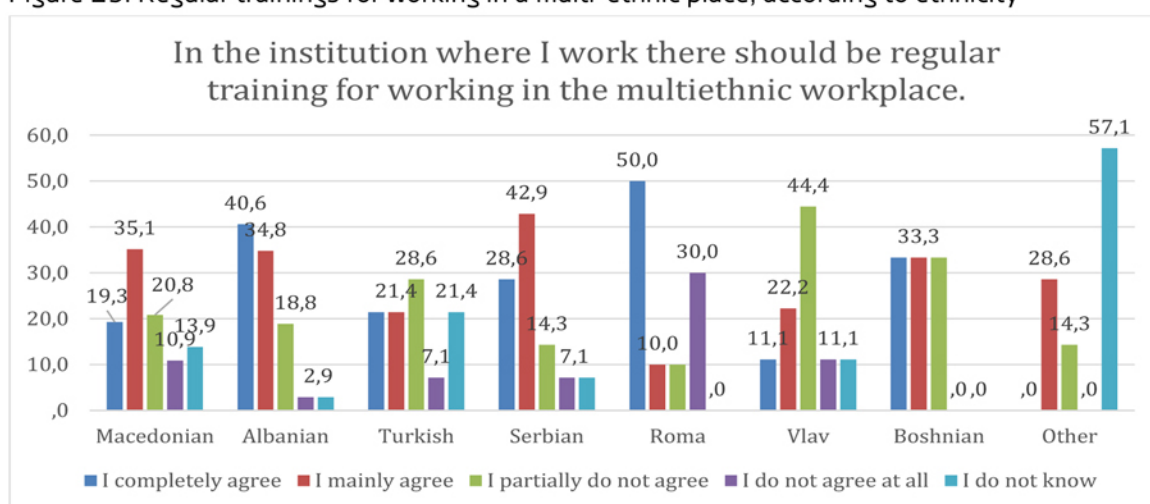
Most of the respondents are not familiar with the general framework of work competences that foresees diversity management only for administrative servants in managerial positions. There is a need of introducing diversity management competences to the intermediate and beginners' level. The Training Academy has been proposed as a possible body that could focus on the development of skills for integration/diversity management. Also, awareness-raising on the content of the framework of competences and the need for including diversity management capacities is necessary.

### Education, training and professional development

While most of the interviewees on local and central level stated that training to improve integration in the workplace should be organized, there were some respondents at central level who claimed that such training is not necessary.

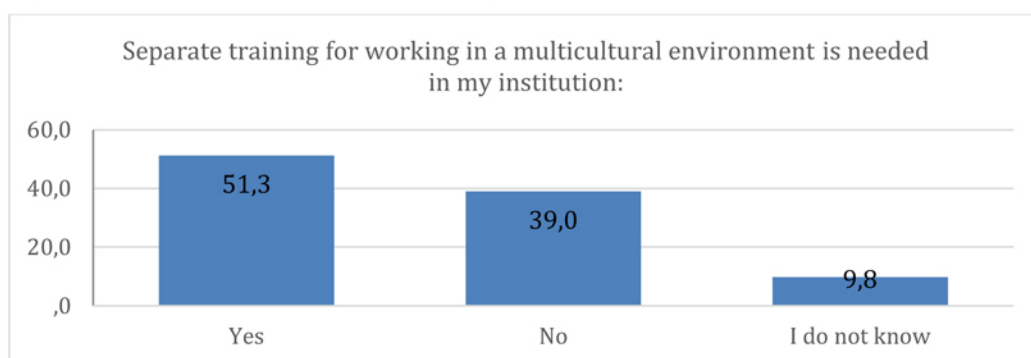
The survey findings for the need of regular trainings on working in multi-ethnic environment show that almost two thirds (61.3% cumulatively completely agree and mainly agree) identify a need for such training. From the perspective of ethnicity, 19.3% of the Macedonians completely and 35.1% mainly agree with the need for regular trainings. 40.6% of Albanians completely and 34.8% mainly agree that there is a need for such trainings. The Turks agree in a smaller percentage (42.8% cumulatively completely yes and mainly yes). Also the Vlachs agree in smaller percentage (33.3% cumulatively completely yes and mainly yes).

Figure 29. Regular trainings for working in a multi-ethnic place, according to ethnicity



Half of the respondents think that separate trainings for working in a multicultural environment should be organized.

Figure 30. Separate trainings for working in a multi-ethnic environment

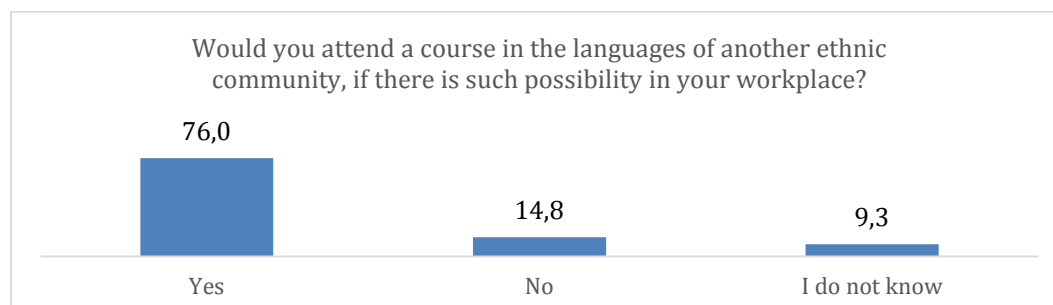


The views on how compulsory the trainings should be and the manner of funding differ among the representatives of the central government. Some of them believe that the trainings are compulsory as per the annual plan determined by the budget, while others believe that attending training events depends on funding from foreign embassies and foundations. Some interviewees state that employees close to the top management attend trainings.

The respondents of the local government stress that there are training opportunities, but they are very rare. It is emphasized that expensive trainings are not recommended due to the outflow of trained personnel, which is why such trainings are not funded.

Learning the language of the other ethnic communities was proposed as an activity that will contribute towards greater integration. Survey results show that 76% of respondents would attend a course to learn the language of other ethnic groups, in contrast to 14.8% who would not use such opportunity.

Figure 31. Attending a language course of another ethnic group



As noted by a member of the Parliament during the round table discussion:

*“When we talk about learning the language, it is usually assumed that Albanians should learn Macedonian, and of course it should be learned, as it is the official language. But also, Albanian language should be learned as well in those places where it is the official language. And even in those places where it is not, why one colleague should not speak the language of the other with whom s/he spends most of the day, to say the least, at least to greet him or her in their native language.”<sup>29</sup>*

Respondents note barriers in education history on a societal level due to differences in the quality of degrees. Ethnic Macedonian respondents also find that certain candidates have insufficient knowledge of the language. They call for measures for overcoming language barriers. Education is seen as a possible opportunity for a contribution towards greater integration. Further, a need for awareness about the aim and objective of the principle of equitable representation, integration and diversity management is identified by respondents.

### Communication and cooperation

All respondents agree that team building activities could contribute to better integration in the workplace. The ethnic element should be considered in the process of planning and organizing team building activities. Lack of finances is one of the main obstacles for organizing trainings.

Hardly any institution organizes team building while in the institutions that organize them the interethnic socializing is not taken into consideration. In terms of participation in team building activities, 29.5% states that all ethnic groups take part. 37.5% believe that most of the ethnic groups participate, while 18.8% stress that mainly members from one ethnic community take participation.

The majority of respondents does have interpersonal contact with members from other ethnic communities and celebrates community holidays with colleagues. Still, they express a need for cooperation and communication enhancing activities such as; regular staff meetings, happy hours, common rooms and gatherings outside the workplace.

<sup>29</sup> Round table discussion.

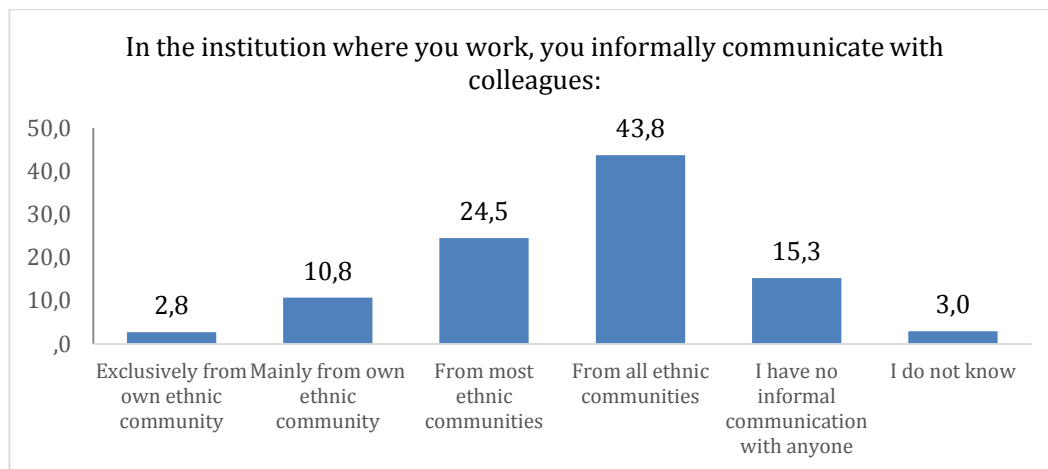
The survey findings demonstrate that almost one third (28.5%) of the respondents celebrate holidays together. For 18% of the respondents, holidays are celebrated separately.

Figure 32. Celebration of holidays



Almost half of the administrative servants (43.8%) informally communicate with colleagues from all ethnic groups. Very few (2.8%) communicate only with colleagues from their own community. In terms of informal communication outside working hours, third of the respondents communicate with members of all ethnic groups, while 27% communicate with members of most ethnic groups. Once again, the percentage of those who communicate only with colleagues of their own ethnicity is low (4.8%).

Figure 33. Informal communication



Majority of the respondents state that sitting arrangements could contribute towards better integration. There are also views that the sitting arrangement in the offices should be done on a sectorial basis and not along ethnic lines.

Small number of the respondents from the Macedonian community believe that in those offices where only one employee from a different ethnicity is placed (ex. only one employee from the Macedonian community, while the others belong to the Albanian community), language can have negative impact on integration. This is because in those offices only one language would be spoken which could be unknown for that particular employee (ex. Albanian language).

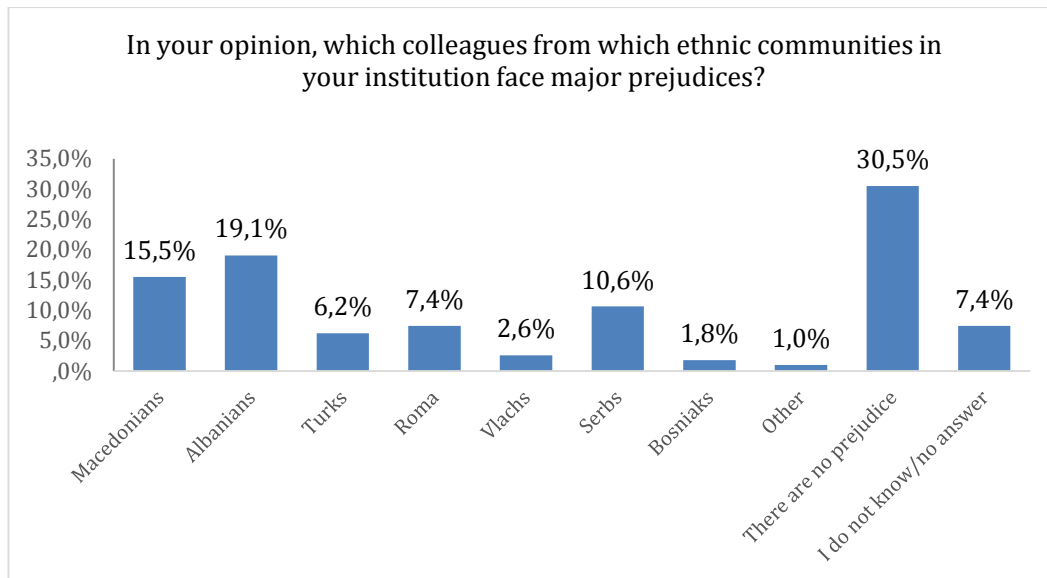


## Equality and non-discrimination

In addition to the two main and central topics of this research, equitable and integration and diversity management, we also collected data from the respondents on equality and non-discrimination issues.

According to almost a third of the respondents (38.0%), there are no prejudices towards members of different ethnic communities. However, 23.8% of the survey respondents have identified members of the Albanian community as the most subjected to prejudice. Half of the respondents do not express distrust towards any of the communities, while 14.5% of them express distrust towards Macedonians. 11.2 % of the total number of female respondents do not trust Albanians.

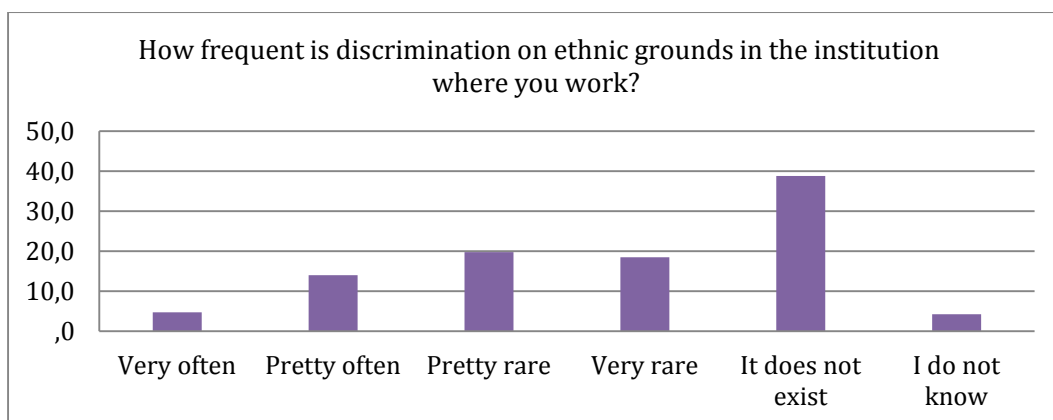
Figure 34. Prejudices in the work place



When asked how colleagues from different ethnic communities treat each other, 64.8% answered that there is equal treatment. 25.3% reported partially equal treatment. A small number (2%) of respondent believe they are treated unequally.

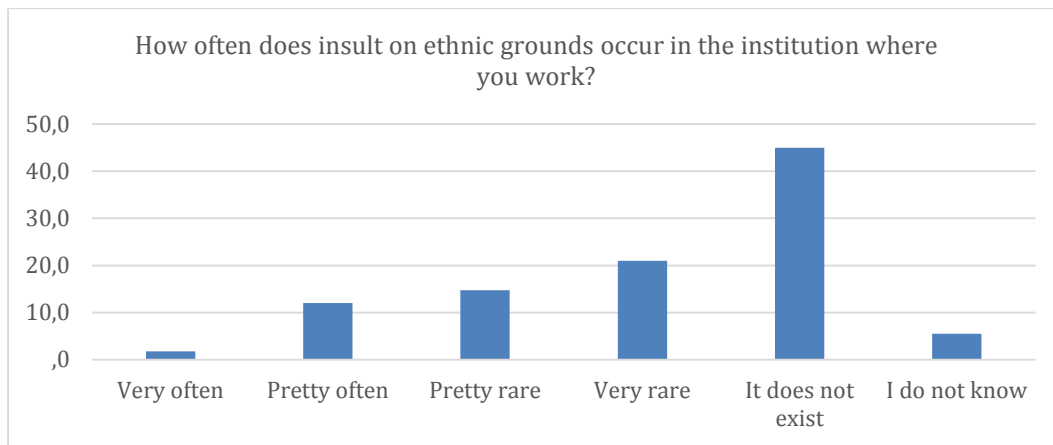
The distribution of the answers on how often ethnic discrimination appears shows that for 38.8% it does not exist, for 38.3% it is rare, while 18.8% of respondents claim that it is frequent.

Figure 35. Discrimination on ethnic grounds



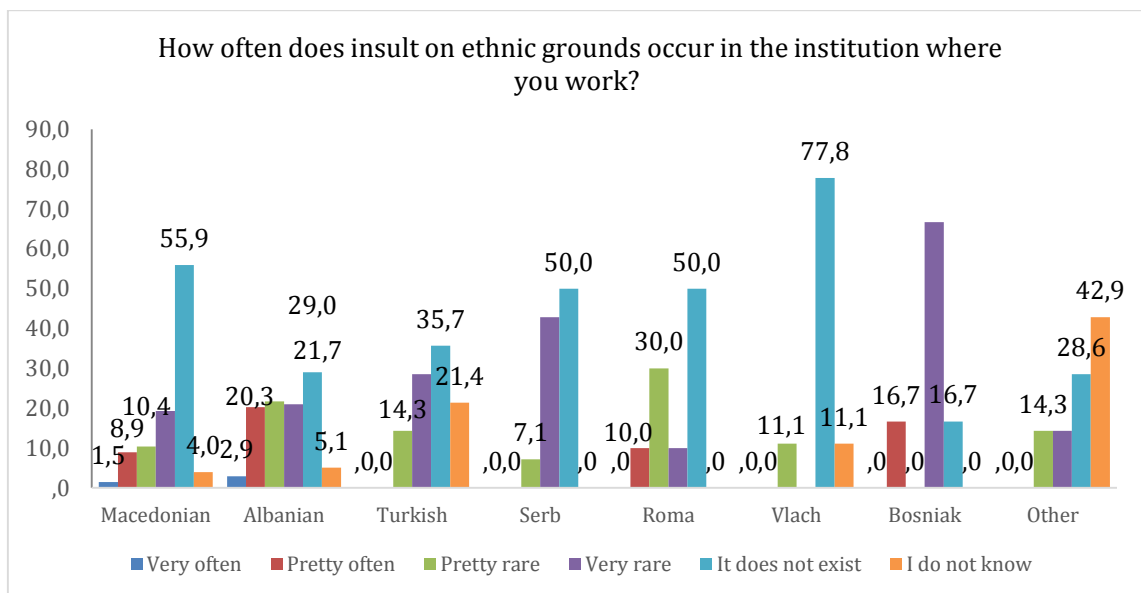
Almost half (45%) of the respondents believe that there are no insults on ethnic grounds. For 21% that is very rare, for 14.8% that is pretty rare.

Figure 36. Insult on ethnic grounds



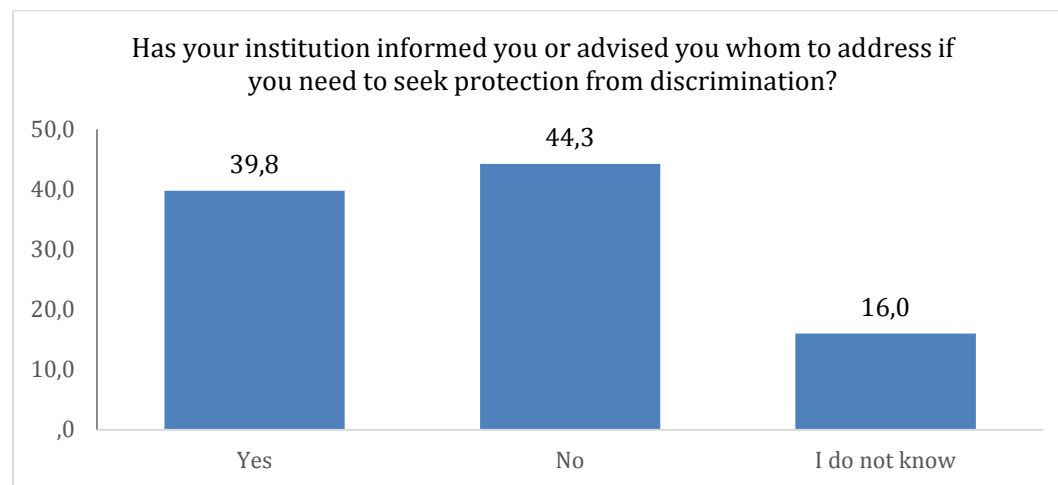
Fifth of the Albanians believe that insults on ethnic grounds occur quite often. In contrast to employees in other positions, secretaries state that insults on ethnic grounds happen quite often (31.5%). For 64.3% of the respondents there is no intimidation or violence on ethnic grounds in the workplace. Small number of the respondents report frequent occurrences of violence (4.8% cumulatively very often and pretty often).

Figure 37. Insult on ethnic grounds, according to ethnicity



The number of persons lacking information where to seek help in case of discrimination is higher than the number of persons who are informed (44.3% versus 39.8% who are informed).

Figure 38. Advice on seeking assistance



A representative of SIOFA commented these findings and stated:

*“I am surprised to see that around 40% of respondents do not feel discriminated. That supersedes my expectations. This is why it is important to how informed administrative servants are for the measures and approaches to tackle discrimination, to which 44.3% respond that they are not informed. I suppose that it those persons who are not informed that cannot identify discrimination in the workplace.”<sup>30</sup>*

Similarly, interviewees report that the employees are not advised where to turn to in case of discrimination (if they feel discriminated). In addition, there are no mechanisms for internal protection. Most of the respondents believe that the employees do not feel discriminated but, unlike discrimination, mobbing is noted. Small part of the respondents stated that personally they feel discriminated in terms of party affiliation and non-ethnic background. But, even if there were mechanisms for internal protection in place, their objectivity would have been questioned and the employees would not have used them. In terms of employment, the respondents believe that positive discrimination exists only for the Albanian ethnic community while as the other communities are marginalized.

Female interviewees and female round table participants tended to note gender discrimination in the workplace. As noted by an administrative servant on central level:

*“There are more women than men in the Ministry, but all the Ministers to date were men. Some of them could appreciate experience, but others acted in the following manner: “A woman is not going to tell me what to do”, and of course made the wrong decisions. But us female heads of units and sectors, we respect each other, we stick together.”*

The inclusion of persons with disabilities was also perceived as problematic, first and foremost as a result of inaccessible institutions.

To the knowledge of interviewees, the Ombudsman and the Commission for Protection from Discrimination have never been involved in tackling discrimination cases in their respective institutions.

<sup>30</sup> Round table discussion.

## 5. Pivot Model

Corresponding with the aims of the Ohrid Framework Agreement the state administration of the Republic of Macedonia has created job opportunities for non-majority members that had beforehand been underrepresented in their organization. Considering that the issue of a certain friction mainly existed between the majority of ethnic Macedonians and the non-majority of ethnic Albanians, the employment of ethnic Albanians was the main focus. This affirmative action intervention has successfully resulted in an increase in numbers and percentages of ethnic Albanian employees within the state administration of the Republic of Macedonia. This, however, does not necessarily lead to optimal cooperation and interpersonal working relations. A diverse organization may become segregated along ethnic lines if no explicit measures are implemented in order to ensure integration among employees. There are good reasons to assume that the Macedonian state administration is at risk of being or becoming a segregated diverse organization. A history of conflict and exclusion between groups on a societal level and politicization in the organization can fuel in-and outgroup effects.

### The current situation

This report identified seven key factors that are considered effective in several different countries: active management, an all-inclusive multicultural approach, affirmative action and legislation, commitment to diversity, measurable targets, a mission statement and positive intergroup contact. Applied to the situation in Macedonia these factors are evaluated in the following paragraphs.

#### Active diversity/human resource management

Currently steps are being taken to ensure a solid analysis and plan to increase the effectiveness of implementing the equitable representation initiative. There seems to be a clear awareness that equitable representation is not just about attracting employees of diverse ethnicity but that active management is required. When continuing in the process of managing diversity special attention should be given to strategic implementation of aligned practices throughout the organization. A continuous focus on the subject is crucial for its effectiveness.

For Macedonia, a long term perspective is necessary as there seems to be a long and persistent convention of recruitment and promotion through party affiliation. This cannot be expected to change overnight. The conservative nature of the public sector further stagnates the process. As well as expressions of dissatisfaction on employment opportunities and work conditions. Active awareness-raising and persistence of diversity advocates is necessary. A single-method intervention, such as numerical diversity through affirmative action, will not suffice in creating true organizational change. This has implications for expectation management, goal setting and intervention implementation. All these practices have to be resilient. The long-term effectiveness of a diversity management strategy can be guaranteed by intertwining the chosen interventions and practices into the organizational culture and everyday practice and by attaching evaluative measures and accountability to these practices.

#### Functional affirmative action

Affirmative action provides a basis of diversity upon which further practices and management can be built. Affirmative action has proven to be highly effective in the Macedonian state

administration in so far as that the diversity targets in numbers and percentages have been met. It is important to monitor these actions. Statistical data can be useful to check the status in the organization. When the desired targets are being met the affirmative action practices should be carefully reviewed and adjusted in alignment with organizational goals. Backlashes of affirmative action may become further obstacles in the process of achieving equitable representation. These backlashes may include (perceived or actual) discrimination of the majority group or the fuelling of existing stereotypes and stigmatization of non-majority groups. The method also does not directly solve the underlying causes of prejudice. To reduce the negative backlashes of affirmative action, the state administration in Macedonia should reconsider their recruitment and promotion practices. At this moment party affiliation clouds fairness and transparency in the organization. There are even noted incidences of corrupt practices. Various respondents call for a merit-based system and for monitoring and sanctioning of inadequate implementation of policy. A merit-based system still leaves room for affirmative action procedures by adding justifiable conditions and being transparent about the procedure. Affirmative action can be a mediator of the effectiveness of other measures such as training and it could also be a means to communicate top level commitment to equitable representation. But it is to be expected that these positive effects will only come about if it is considered a fair procedure.

### **All-inclusive multi ethnic/multi-cultural approach**

Since targets as far as numerical diversity are being met in the Macedonian state administration a shift can be made in the focus of the organization from creating diversity towards managing diversity. Research and best practice in Western Europe and the United States have identified an all-inclusive multicultural approach to be most effective in restoring and maintaining the balance between various different groups. All diversity groups should be equally addressed using this approach, including for example ethnicity, gender and disability. In this respect it is a dynamic approach where space can be made for all groups. There are various findings in the data that call for such an approach. Respondents note in different contexts that the current focus in the organization mainly lies on the tension between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians. It appears the perception is that the ethnic Albanian community has monopolized the objectives of equitable representation and the other non-majority members are neglected in the debate. This poses a threat to the majority group. Not only is an all-inclusive multicultural approach an opportunity to include these other non-majority members, this strategy may also alleviate some of the tension between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians. It assures that all groups of employees feel ownership towards equitable representation, making it an issue that everybody can contribute to.

### **Commitment to diversity**

It is important to pay continuous attention to the maintenance and building of support for organizational change. At face value it appears there is a good overall support for the implementation of equitable representation. Surely, there is truth to the notion that the acceptance of equitable representation has increased over time and through experience, but when the data is scrutinized more thoroughly certain conflicting responses indicate that the situation is more complex. Secretaries, for example, see a larger impact of ethnicity on organizational procedures than persons in other hierarchical positions. Also, ethnic Macedonians have a stronger belief in the commitment of their leaders to the implementation of the principle than other non-majority members. Ethnic Macedonians also believe to a lesser extent that promotion opportunities depend on ethnicity than ethnic Albanians. Contradictory findings like these raise questions about the real situation at hand. Possibly, certain viewpoints are biased. Respondents

have indicated that ethnocentrism and stereotyping do take place in society, these could easily be influencers on perception. It could also be that social desirability plays a role in the answers of the respondents. They may feel pressure to agree with the principle of equitable representation when actually they do not concur or maybe even disagree with this principle. A possible result is that, when asked explicitly, employees are quite positive about the principle but in practice, they resist change.

Ethnic Macedonians experience least difficulties regarding equitable representation. Their answers on the relevance and effectiveness of equitable representation sometimes deviates from those of minority respondents. It is interesting to explore this discrepancy further. A possible conclusion could be that there is lack of awareness among ethnic Macedonians. This is further evidenced by figures that show that 38.8% of respondents claim that discrimination on ethnic grounds does not exist, while for 18.8% of respondents, discrimination on ethnic grounds is frequent. Ethnic Albanians seem to experience insults on ethnic grounds most often. There appears to be a blind spot among certain employees. Interestingly, the interviewees are not aware of the Ombudsman or the Commission for Protection from Discrimination being involved in tackling discrimination.

This could be a good opportunity to utilize existing structures such as the Ombudsman to raise awareness of this issue and signal that discrimination will not be tolerated within state administration. The most explicit efforts on commitment to diversity management should be directed to leaders in the organization. Leaders play a vital role in successful implementation of the principle of equitable representation. Respondents note misconceptions on the definition of integration and a lack of willingness by political elites. Also, various findings in the data point towards perceived bias in leaders depending upon ethnicity. For example, ethnic Albanians show less trust towards leaders from other ethnicities. Whether these respondent perceptions reflect the truth or not, it is clear that the organization could invest more in restoring and strengthening the relationship between leaders and employees.

When it comes to getting leaders on board, the secretaries are an interesting group to explore. It appears that their view on equitable representation differs from persons in other hierarchical positions. They think that ethnicity plays a stronger role in promotion opportunities, salary, attitude of superiors and symbols in the workplace. This remarkable difference may indicate that secretaries are in a position to be more honest or realistic in their answers to the questions posed in this research than respondents in other categories. It would be interesting to explore the possibility of socially desirable answers. Secretaries seem to be in a position in which their opinions deviate, therefore, their answers could put a new perspective on underlying issues or resistance to change.

### **Measurable targets**

It appears there is no procedure for measurement or data collection on diversity issues in the organization. The current research is a good initiative to break this trend. Similar evaluative studies on employee perceptions could provide for a solid base upon which to build further goals or can serve as a benchmark. These evaluations indicate where investment in relation to commitment is necessary or which obstacles the stakeholders identify in the process of organizational change. But, also, registration of harassment or discriminatory incidents could be a good instrument to address ongoing issues in a quantifiable manner. Discrepancies in the experiences of insulting incidences in the workplace by ethnicity lay bare the need for such quantification. Ethnic Macedonians mostly reckon that insult on ethnic grounds in the workplace does not exist while a significantly larger proportion of ethnic Albanians reckon that insult on ethnic grounds in the workplace happens pretty often. Quantifying the experiences of employees provides objective insight into the issues at hand and can help in creating awareness and starting dialogue.

It is not clear if there is data available on the distribution of ethnic diversity in the organization. The assignment brief indicates that diversity quotas are being met in relation to the desired reflection of ethnic diversity in society versus ethnic diversity in the state administration. It would be interesting to explore how then this ethnic diversity is distributed throughout the organization. More insight into the stratification of different group members could provide direction for interventions. This could be viewed from various perspectives; are ethnic groups represented in all layers of the organization? (hierarchically), are different ethnic group members interacting in mixed groups? (socially), are different ethnic group members situated on different departments or establishments of the organization? (geographically), etc.

The data seem to indicate, for example, that there is a certain segregation in the workplace in the sense that sectors and departments within state administration are diverse but the diversity is mainly numerical and departments, sectors and teams are diverse along ethnic lines. If this is indeed the case, this might be considered incompatible with the principle of diversity management. More and more precise data from these perspectives would provide a more nuanced and precise view of the realistic situation on integration in the workplace.

### **Mission statement**

The research data provides little insight into the mission of the organization and the extent to which this is communicated to employees. It does appear that employees are very much aware of the equitable representation initiative. The perspective on the purpose of this initiative, however, varies among the employees. This finding suggests that the aim of the organization with regards to the initiative is not clear to the employees. It would be valuable to invest in aligning these perspectives and create a common mission that all employees can get behind. This is an important tool in embedding and aligning organizational goals when it comes to diversity. It is a means to provide direction and structure to the implementation of the diversity management strategy.

### **Positive intergroup contact**

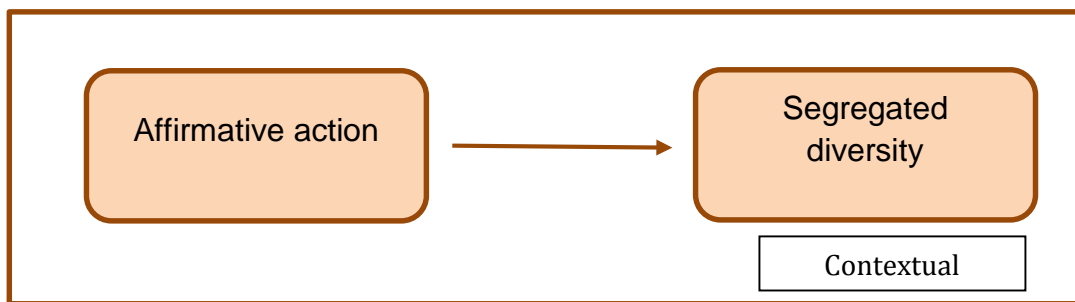
The majority of respondents indicate that they have intergroup contact in informal communication. There is, however, still a significant number of employees that indicate little intergroup contact. The research data shows that employees call for more regular opportunities to have non-work-related intergroup contact and they prefer mentoring through efforts of experienced employees during introduction periods. The request originating from the employees themselves is a great opportunity for the organization to increase positive interaction. In line with Allport's contact hypothesis and successful experiences from organizations in Northern Ireland, the organization should be supportive and facilitating and create contact opportunities where different ethnic groups have equal status and work together. The data seem to indicate there is a certain segregation in the workplace in the sense that sectors and departments within state administration are largely segregated along ethnic lines. When this is indeed the case, it would make diversity management intrinsically difficult. Cooperation, working in teams, creating a unified organization is the key if the goal is effective diversity management. Numerical diversity through affirmative action does not constitute a diverse workforce if employees rarely interact or work together.

The existing norms on languages spoken in the workplace gives for an interesting reflection. A key factor in diminished stereotyping and intergroup threat is positive intergroup contact. Communication is of vital importance to achieve this. Although efforts and openness to learn other languages should be encouraged (positivity and willingness towards other), in order to guarantee possibilities for communication it may be helpful to make clear agreements on language in the workplace. Not being understood or not understanding others may lead to frustration or mistrust. The issue of language and its formal position (state or municipality) is understandably a highly

sensitive issue within the Macedonian context. Yet, it is important to strive for a thorough debate and on the long term specific agreements within the state administration regarding this issue. Perhaps it might be interesting to see whether there are lessons to be learned from for example Belgian language policies.

### The current model

The situation in the state administration of the Republic of Macedonia can be captured in a schematic representation. The main intervention that is currently applied is affirmative action, aimed at increasing the percentages of non-majority ethnic groups. This intervention has successfully led to increased diversity in the organization, however, it is expected that this diversity will not be effective and sustainable in the long term. Because contextual factors influence the intervention and its outcome, a certain level of segregation within the group of ethnic diverse employees will be the result.



Model 1: The current diversity intervention strategy in the state administration of the Republic of Macedonia

### The Pivoted strategy

In order to optimally reap the benefits of organizational diversity, the state administration of the Republic of Macedonia must redefine its strategy. The current strategy has proven to be successful to a certain extent; creating diversity, but this is deemed insufficient to ensure lasting integration between groups of employees. A pivot is proposed to adjust the current strategy.

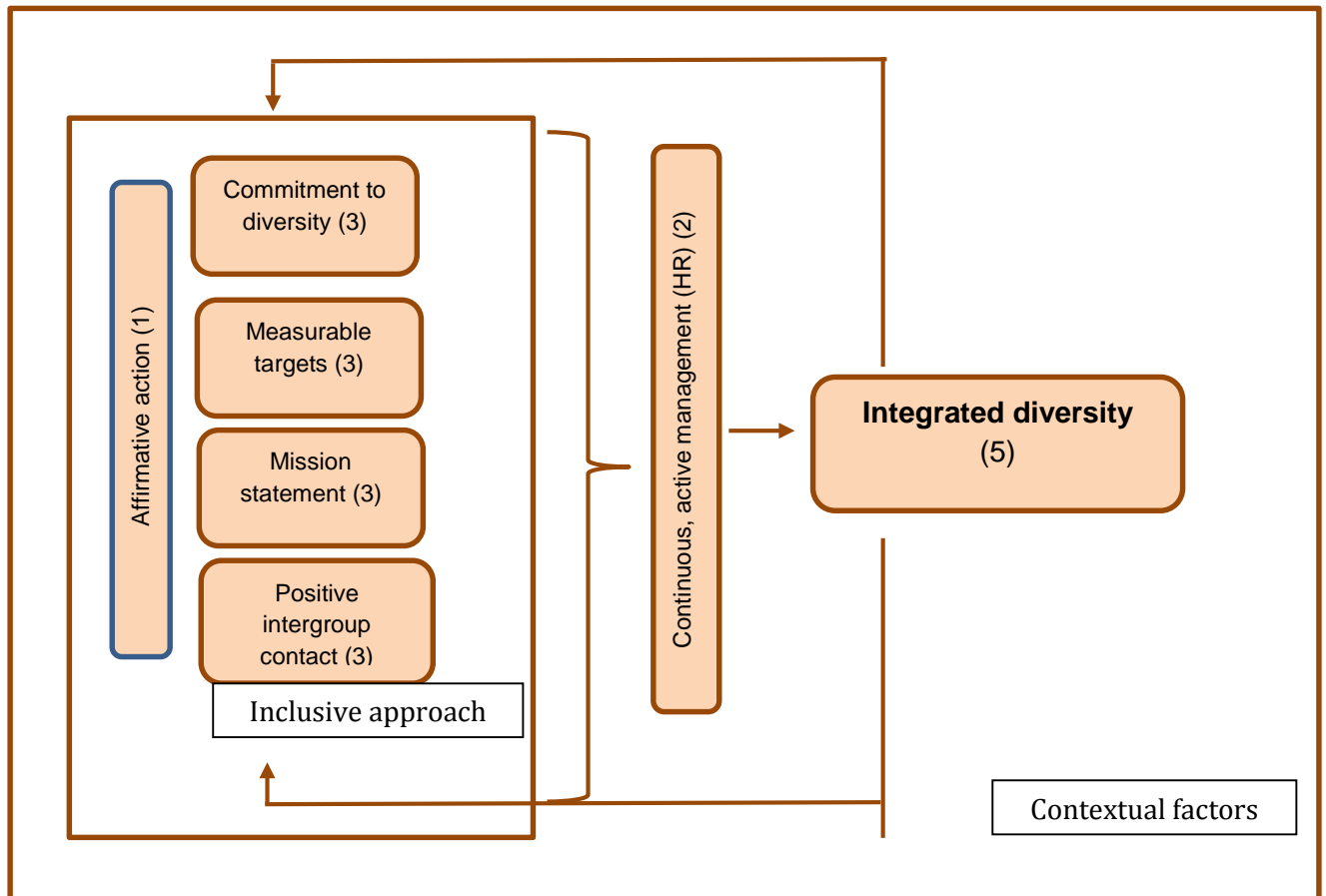
The power of the pivot lies in a deviation from the current trend of a single-method approach of recruitment. A new focus is needed to incorporate a broad vision towards human resource management and diversity, one that also pays attention to holding on to employees, successful cooperation, service and quality. With the current emphasis on recruitment, the strategy is outcome-focused. The aim of the pivot is to effectuate a process-focus. This means that the current affirmative action procedures are maintained at the base of the strategy, but in addition a new complementary diversity management strategy is built. This is a long-term strategy that requires work and investment. However, in previous studies a vast amount of knowledge is available on the effectiveness of diversity management, the strategy is built on these findings (see: *International recommendations for best practices*).

The process can be seen as the complete renovation of a house. The bearing walls and pillars are there but it takes time and effort to ensure the plastering is done correctly, the floor is laid, the isolation material is of good quality and the house is nicely decorated. A pleasurable living space requires continuous attention and enhancement but more importantly, half measures will result in costly repairs in the long run. This can also be applied to diversity management; continuous effort and thorough methods are the only way to ensure sustainable change.



**The pivot model: HR diversity management sandwich**

The strategy that is proposed, is a multi-method approach of diversity management, where diversity interventions are sandwiched into a general human resource management strategy. Commitment to diversity issues can be ascertained through a solidified human resource strategy; if the undertaken measures are in the broader interest of the organization and its employees, this will contribute to an intrinsic commitment to change. The organization should bear in mind the various actions that have been called for by employees, such as training, coaching and the facilitation of informal social meetings between employees. Building upon affirmative action as a working ingredient, various other interventions that should be integrated into the broader human resource strategy are proposed. Further explanation is given below the image.



Model 2: The proposed pivoted model of diversity management

1. When pivoting the model, affirmative action becomes the base of the strategy. Diversity quotas need to be upheld and action is needed when these tend to drop.
2. On top of that, employment of the target majority and non-majority members then needs to be continuously and actively managed. The emphasis here is on continuity. Advocates of diversity in the organization will need to realize that the benefits of the strategy will not occur overnight and certain obstacles will need to be conquered.
3. Active and continuous human resource management should be focused on established factors that positively contribute to integrated diversity. These factors are: commitment to diversity (especially at the top-level), creating measurable targets, communicating a mission statement and facilitating positive intergroup contact.
4. All of the contributing factors should be based on an all-inclusive approach so as to make diversity management an issue that is relevant to all employees, ethnic majority and ethnic non-majority members alike. When all employees feel ownership toward the new strategy, the commitment to diversity management and the susceptibility of the organization towards change will increase.
5. This organizational change will contribute to an increase in diversity integration. This is, however, an iterative process; the strategy is not outcome-focused, but process-focused. This means that the strategy requires constant re-evaluation and maintenance.
6. Specific to the state administration of the Republic of Macedonia is a history of conflict and exclusion between groups and a deeply rooted politicization of the organizational processes. In order for the diversity strategy to be effective, there needs to be a simultaneous targeting of these processes through formal agreements. Congruency, fairness and transparency are key in creating employee trust and therefore commitment to organizational goals and change. This calls for value driven human resource management. Various employees of the state administration have stressed the need for merit-based recruitment and promotion procedures. It is important that this is enforced and monitored by an independent, responsible party within the organization. Where societal influences affect the organization through stereotyping or discrimination a counterbalance should be sought. For example, stereotypes can be countered by ensuring that there are effective leaders in the organization from ethnic non-majorities. Discrimination can be countered by enforcing values that object to exclusion and discriminatory practices.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was primarily concerned with introduction of measures and actions on integration in the workplace and diversity management in Macedonian administration for the purposes of advancing progress in the promotion of equality of the communities, as one of the objectives of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. More specifically, the focus of the study was:

- a) To analyse the implementation of equitable representation and assess diversity management from the perspective of public administration, and propose measures and activities for improvement.
- b) To assess international comparative practices for diversity management and integration in the administration and how they can be adjusted and employed in Macedonian context in order to alleviate the risk of unsuccessful policy transmission.
- c) To propose a model for integration and diversity management in the Macedonian administration.

Based on mixed-method approach, insight in the above-mentioned key issues was obtained. The views of administrative servants were assessed through survey, the opinions of managing staff were obtained through in-depth interviews, and civil society representatives offered their perspectives on the subject matter during a focus group discussion. The proposed pivot model was built on the basis of desk research on international practices, and then modified to fit the Macedonian context with the help of managing staff on local and central level that participated in a focus group discussion.

Our findings suggest that one of the greatest achievements from the implementation of equitable representation is the numerical increase of non-majority employees in the administration. However, the main barrier for further implementation, along with diversity management and achieving equality in the workforce is the politicisation of the administration. Employment and promotion based on party membership hinders proper implementation of equitable representation and undermines opportunities for creating administration representative of all groups in society, appreciative of diversity and free of discrimination.

Equitable representation is increasingly considered as monopolized process that applies only to the Albanian community, while smaller non-majority communities have been side-lined in the process. Furthermore, there seems to be a lack of commitment of leadership structures for implementation of equitable representation and diversity management. The members of non-majority communities are mostly present in the institutions run by members of the non-majority communities. The allocation of members of the communities in the institutions run by the Macedonian community is problematic as is the promotion/employment in the managing working posts, particularly in the institutions run by the members of the Macedonian community.

There are overwhelming misconception and lack of understanding on the meaning of integration and diversity management. These concepts are largely associated with ethnicity, while other characteristics, such as gender, age, bodily ability etc. are neglected. Human resources management still largely resembles personnel management. Language barriers, along with ethnic and religious symbols in the workplace are obstacles toward integration. Poor working conditions additionally burden the process of integration.

There is lack of knowledge about the possibilities for legal protection against discrimination i.e. where the employees could turn to in case of discrimination, which points to the need for addressing this information gap. Furthermore, respondents reported no existing internal mechanisms for addressing discrimination issues internally, and identified a need for developing mechanisms for internal protection from discrimination. Finally, respondents consider that positive action measures should exist, however they are now to target all smaller ethnic communities.

Based on our research findings, the following recommendations are provided:

### Recommendations on equitable representation

- Since party employments are the obstacle for proper implementation of the principle, de-politicisation of the institutions should receive immediate attention.
- Strengthening leadership commitment to equitable representation and diversity management.
- Full implementation of the merit system observing the principles of competence and integrity is of crucial importance. Thus, mechanisms for overcoming the political manipulations of the laws are needed, particularly in terms of recruitment as the most problematic area.
- The representation of other smaller ethnic communities should be increased.
- Measures are needed to achieve legally envisaged satisfying level of representation in all institutions at all levels, regardless of the ethnic belonging of the management structure.
- Measures are needed for equitable promotion of members of non-majority communities in managerial positions.
- The vacant posts in all institutions should be filled with employees not yet allocated from the Secretariat for Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement.
- There is a trend of employment without prior assessment of the needs for employment and the profile of the employees. Assessment of the real needs for employment in the institutions is necessary, as well as assessment of the required profiles so as to avoid creation of surpluses of one profile and deficits of another.
- There is a need for extensive institutional consultation before finalizing the Workforce Planning Methodology, which should be followed by consistent implementation.
- Establishing monitoring mechanisms of the implementation Workforce Planning Methodology, along with accountability and sanctioning for improper implementation.
- Better promotion opportunities for all communities.
- Scope of work and career advancement should be based on merit and not on political party membership.
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### Recommendations on integration and diversity management:

- Recruitment based on political party is the greatest obstacle for integration. Hence, there is a need for non-party influence over the institutions;
- Independence and impartiality of the employees are key to professional integration of the employees;
- Establishing of merit-based system through full implementation of the principles of integrity and competence;
- Variety of personal characteristics (ex. gender, bodily ability, age...), and not only ethnicity, should be considered to achieve integrated and diverse workforce.
- Overcoming language barriers by learning languages of the non-majority communities, but also a good command of the Macedonian language is needed.
- Educational policies and integrated education as measures/policies that would contribute towards integration in the workplace and diversity management.
- The Strategy for Public Administration reform should include measures to introduce tools for diversity management and integration at the workplace. The pivot model suggested in this publication could be the basis for further discussion.
- Human resources departments should implement measures for integration in the workplace that are part of general politics and based on legal framework and strategic goals for reform.

- Public administration should be better acquainted with the framework for general work competences where the diversity management is planned only at advanced level (only for state employees at managing positions). There is a need for introducing these competences at intermediate (middle) and initial (beginners) level. Also, there is a need for informing the employees about the framework of competences and the need for their introduction.
- To enhance cooperation and communication of diverse groups the following activities are suggested: regular staff meetings, happy hours, common rooms and gatherings outside the workplace.
- The ethnic and religious symbols do not encourage the integration in the workplace, thus they should not be present.
- Improved working conditions, equipment and premises.

#### Recommendations on discrimination and equal opportunities

- Considering that administrative servants are not aware of existing structures such as the Ombudsman and the Commission for Protection from Discrimination being utilized in tackling discrimination cases, there is a need to improve information and understanding on possibilities for legal protection against discrimination.
- Establishing mechanisms within institutions to addressing discrimination issues internally.

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