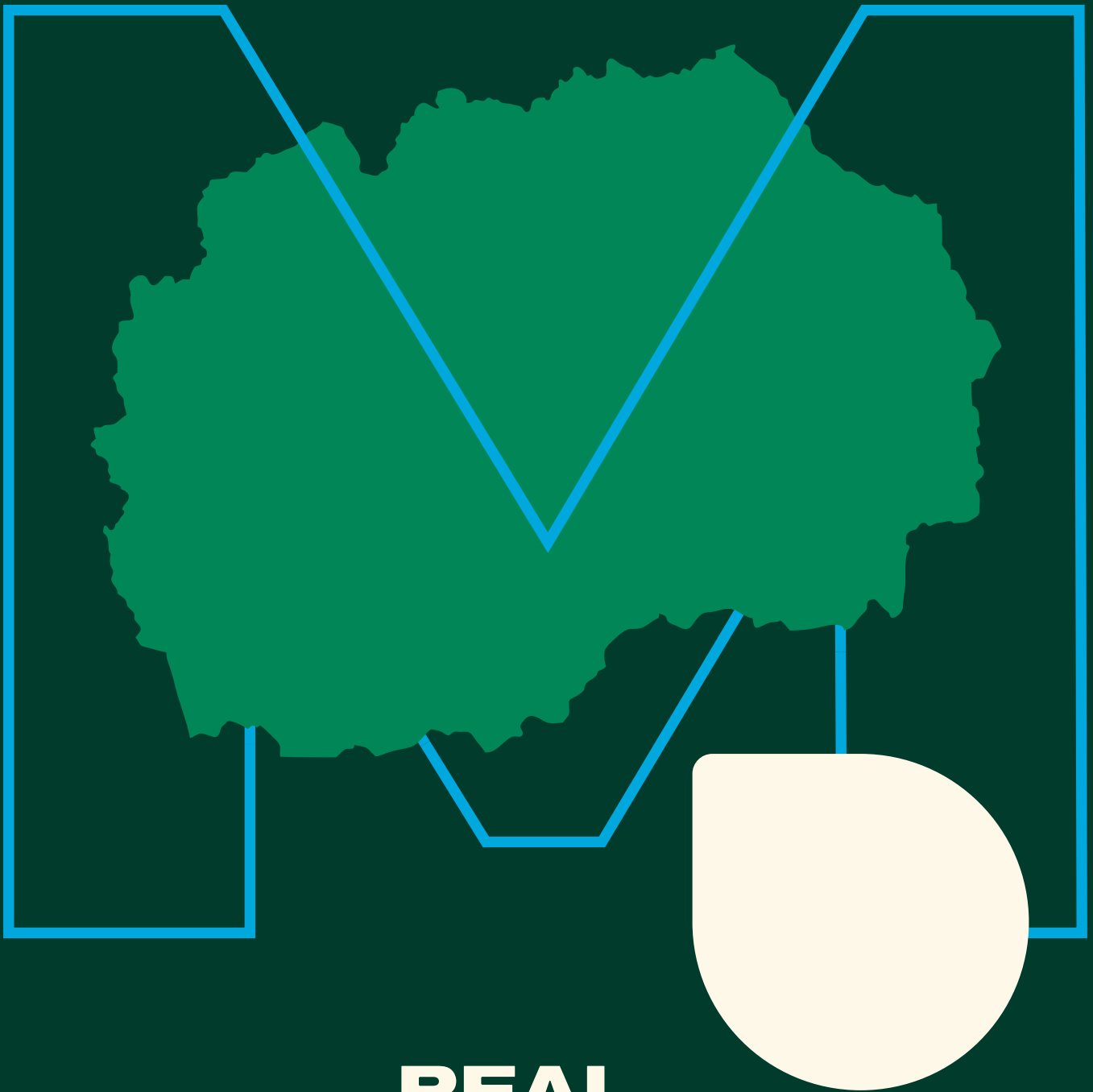


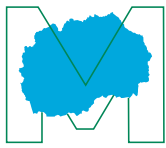
REAL DEAL country profile

# Republic of **North Macedonia**



**REAL  
DEAL**

RESHAPING CITIZENS'  
DELIBERATION FOR THE  
EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL



REAL DEAL country  
profile

**Republic of  
North Macedonia**



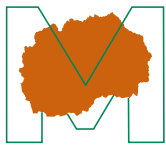
# Overview

---

The Republic of North Macedonia (North Macedonia) is a land locked country in southeast Europe in a region of historical political unrest, but which has experienced only a short period of unrest in 2001. The country is referred to as the Republic of North Macedonia since 2019 and the population is 1.8 million people. Since July 2022, the initial phases of negotiating accession to the EU have been ongoing and the European Council endorsed the decision to open accession negotiations with North Macedonia. After the Council approved of the Negotiating Framework, in accordance with the revised enlargement methodology, on 19 July 2022 the EU started the opening phase of the accession negotiations.

The Republic of North Macedonia is a parliamentary democracy with three branches of government - executive, legislative and judicial. There are 78 branches of local government, referred to as municipalities. The capital city of Skopje is comprised of 10 municipalities. National government is responsible for standardising and transposing international laws relating to the environment, waste management measures, sustainable development, developing and monitoring a national action plan for the environment.

***The Republic of North Macedonia  
is a parliamentary democracy  
with three branches of government  
executive, legislative and judicial.***



REAL DEAL country  
profile

**Republic of  
North Macedonia**

2

2.1

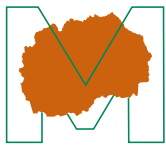
# Dimensions of environmental governance

The Aarhus Convention was ratified by North Macedonia in 1998 and is transposed into domestic law under the Law on Ratification of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision making, and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.

Under Article 8 of the Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia, a core principle for the respect for the environment is identified along with principles of respect for social justice and international law. The Aarhus Centre in Skopje contributes to the implementation of environmental legislation and Aarhus Convention in practice in North Macedonia. This is achieved through coordination with Aarhus network members within North Macedonia, local authorities and the national Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning. The Centre prepares guidance on including CSOs in decision making processes and supports the organisation of the National Strategy Meetings, an annual meeting related to climate change. The Centre was established under the EU initiative Building capacities of environmental CSOs to increase democratic processes in the Republic of North Macedonia.

***The Aarhus Convention  
was ratified by North Macedonia  
in 1998.***

North Macedonia has enacted a plethora of environmental related laws and policies since the early 2000s. The Action Plan on Renewable Energy Resources 2015 identifies multiple renewable domestic fuel sources which can be capitalised for residential and commercial needs. The Energy Development Strategy until 2040 identifies how to reduce carbon emissions from North Macedonia's energy system, suggests how to improve energy efficiency, identifies the need for investment in research and development and the



REAL DEAL country  
profile

**Republic of  
North Macedonia**

need to increase the regulatory framework of energy supply and ensure security of energy markets. Key Performance Indicators are outlined for each strategy goal and the strategy itself was circulated for consultation with members of the public, however at the later stages of development.

The two primary pieces of legislation relating to the environment in north Macedonia are the Energy Law to improve consumer protections on energy supply choices and the Law on Ambient Air Quality sets measures for avoidance, prevention or reduction of harmful effects from ambient air pollution on human health and the environment.

Based on the Voluntary National Review process from 2020, North Macedonia has indicated commitment to embedding the sustainable development goals within the National Sustainable Development Plan. This action is to integrate SDGs into the national mechanism in collaboration with the United Nations.

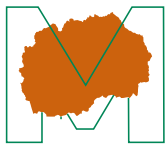
## 2.1

### **Transparency (access to information)**

Article 16 of the Convention provides for access to information of activities of public authorities. Further, the Law on Free Access to Public Information includes information pertinent to risks to the environment as subject to freedom of access and a provision similar to whistleblowing protections under Article 37 of the law which prevents liability for providing information which discloses wrongdoing in relation to the environment.

The Agency for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information is the guardian of the Law on Free Access to Public Information in North Macedonia. It has been operational since the end of 2019. Details of cases heard by the Agency have been analysed but are not available in English and it is unclear if any relate to Aarhus relevant principles.

North Macedonia is also a member of the Open Government Partnership and has developed a 3-year plan to promote democratic transparency. Public consultation was facilitated in the development of this plan, but it is not possible to retrieve details of these submissions through English language.



REAL DEAL country  
profile

**Republic of  
North Macedonia**

## 2.2

### Participation

The International Republican Institute, an organisation promoting citizen engagement in democratic processes in over 100 countries, has found that public participation in North Macedonia is very low due to disengagement with local government and negative experiences of indifferent politicians. Qualitative research indicated that local governments were not considered as viable options for complaints or recommendations by the public for their local area and where there was engagement, proposals were rejected. In November 2021, the Council of Europe supported a 2-day training initiative for up to 80 community representatives to build capacity on engaging on local planning and civic participation. Community Action Teams are established in some cities with a focus on countering extremism under the Stronger Cities Network. This initiative engaged local government and stakeholders and was positively received as a mechanism to address extremism. There is a basis for this initiative in national policy. There is potential for a similar mechanism to be established in relation to the environment.

## 2.3

### Access to Justice

Article 15 of the Constitution provides for the right to appeal against individual legal acts issued in a first instance proceedings by a court, administrative body, organisation, or other institution carrying out public mandates is guaranteed.

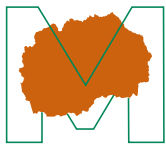
No domestic litigation relating to climate and access to information or participation was found during the preparation of this profile.

## 2.4

### Compliance assurance, accountability, and effectiveness

There is no Environmental Protection Agency or equivalent body within North Macedonia. The Macedonian Environmental Information Centre (MEIC) is the Department within the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning providing advice to the government on environmental issues.

Information on the environment is the starting point for any activity in the field of environment (e.g., information on the level of pollution, sources of funding targeted at environmental protection or activities of organisation active in environment protection). For that purpose, i.e. for proper management of the process of collecting, processing, delivery, and dissemination of environmental information, the MEPP established the Macedonian Environmental Information Centre (MEIC) in April 1998.



REAL DEAL country  
profile

**Republic of  
North Macedonia**

## ***The OECD is positive about the ambitions of North Macedonia's climate related policies.***

North Macedonia has been found to be non-compliant with some EC Directives relating to the environment. Due to a lack of domestic legislation, North Macedonia was deemed to have failed to transpose Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, and the emission ceilings established under the National Emission Reduction Plan (NERP) in North Macedonia were found to be inadequate.

The EIA process within North Macedonia has been criticised as not facilitating stakeholder/public engagement sufficiently due to lack of notice of EIA procedures, lack of measuring the impact of consultation and inaccurate recording of public contributions. For companies who have been granted a licence to exploit natural resources with an Integrated Environmental Permit, self-reporting and declaration of emissions is relied upon. Not all IEP holders have equipment which self-monitor emissions.

A significant environmental project of wastewater management and treatment has been launched in March 2022, which adheres to EU standards on water management. This is partly financed by the European Investment Bank and will support North Macedonia's process of membership to the EU. Other environmental projects funded by the EU include expansion of railways and transitioning power plants to renewable fuel processing centres. The OECD is positive about the ambitions of North Macedonia's climate related policies but notes the need for follow through by implementing the National Energy and Climate Plan and National Energy Strategy 2040.

An interesting initiative on climate awareness has been the development of a toolkit for private actors as part of the Green Climate Fund readiness project in 2022. The toolkit provides an overview of the legal and policy framework for climate initiatives on multiple issues such as transport, agriculture, and biodiversity. It outlines the risk of climate change and discusses potential contributions through adaptations, finance, and technology development in relation to the private sector.

Through a United Nations Environment Programme there has been positive engagement with the MOEPP to promote biodiversity, introduce legal restrictions on exploitation of some forest species and to designate a new national park.



REAL DEAL country  
profile

**Republic of  
North Macedonia**

# 3

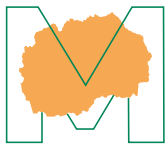
## Institutional context

---

Monitoring of environmental initiatives in North Macedonia is under the remit of the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning. The Ministry also monitors environmental issues, is responsible for natural amenities, physical planning, and information systems. Environment and climate change is relevant to the work of the Ministry of Health in relation to infectious diseases that can arise from nature and the impacts of pollution and climate events on humans. Municipalities are responsible for locally implementing national laws, policies, and standards/plans.

In the Balkan region, North Macedonia is a leader in adopting climate initiatives through the preparation of their National Energy Climate Plan which identifies strategies for decarbonisation, energy sufficiency and security and energy innovation and competitiveness.

***In the Balkan region, North Macedonia is a leader in adopting climate initiatives through the preparation of their National Energy and Climate Plan.***



REAL DEAL country  
profile

Republic of  
North Macedonia

# 4

## Role of Civil Society

Based on the [Balkan Civil Society Development Network](#), in 2019 there were over 10,000 civil society organisations within North Macedonia. There is a [lack of transparency relating to funding](#) of civil society organisations and no consultation on the priority areas of funding streams.

There is a well-coordinated network of civil society through the Aarhus Centre Skopje. The principles of the Aarhus convention are embedded in the work of [many environmental NGOs](#). There are three NGOs which are supported financially by the [Access Initiative](#) which is itself an international network of environmental NGOs. These organisations are Biosfera, Florozon and the Macedonian Green Centre.

The European Commission's 2021 report on North Macedonia is positive about the role of civil society in democratic reform. The [Council for Cooperation with and Development of Civil Society](#) was established in 2018 and has met on numerous occasions to discuss civil society funding, cross border initiatives and engagement in national crisis management deliberations.

Under the [Open Parliament Action Plan](#) there are commitments to increase opportunities for citizens to contribute to government through information portals and raising awareness of the functions and how to access public authorities.

***In 2019 there were over 10,000 civil society organisations within North Macedonia... The principles of the Aarhus convention are embedded in the work of many environmental NGOs.***