

Screening report

North Macedonia

Cluster 4 – Green agenda & sustainable connectivity

Chapter 14– Transport Policy

Date of screening meetings:

Explanatory meeting: 24-27 June 2019, update on 15 March 2023

Bilateral meeting: 26 - 29 June 2023

Chapter 15– Energy

Date of screening meetings:

Explanatory meeting: 26-27 March 2019, update on 16 March 2023

Bilateral meeting: 14 - 15 September 2023

Chapter 21– Trans European Networks

Date of screening meetings:

Explanatory meeting: 27 March and 27 June 2019, update on 15-16 March 2023

Bilateral meeting: 29 June 2023 and 15 September 2023

Chapter 27– Environment and Climate Change

Date of screening meetings:

Explanatory meeting: 13-17 May 2019 updated 20 - 24 March 2023

Bilateral meeting: 3 - 7 July 2023

PREAMBLE

After the first Intergovernmental Conference on accession negotiations with North Macedonia in July 2022, the Commission immediately launched the screening process.

The screening is based on the enhanced enlargement methodology, which was adopted in 2020 and organises the negotiating chapters in thematic clusters in order to inject dynamism into the negotiating process and to foster cross-fertilisation of efforts beyond individual chapters. These thematic clusters bring together the chapters / areas according to broader themes and will allow a stronger focus on core sectors. Within each individual cluster, screening is carried out through meetings on a chapter-by-chapter basis. The substance of those clusters and chapters, as set out in Annex II of the Negotiating Framework, mirror the requirements for membership stemming from the Copenhagen criteria.

This report provides an assessment of where North Macedonia stands in terms of alignment and capacity to apply the EU acquis in Cluster 4. Since the negotiating Framework also refers to the possibility of accelerated integration, thus where appropriate, North Macedonia has requested participation in certain areas already before accession. This report provides the Commission's opinion and answer to these requests.

Regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations remain essential elements of the enlargement process.

It is important to continue the dialogue with civil society and other stakeholders, with the aim of ensuring the support of citizens for the EU accession process. North Macedonia is expected to strategically communicate the benefits and obligations of the accession process to its public.

A) INTRODUCTION

The enhanced enlargement methodology¹, as reflected in the Negotiating Framework with North Macedonia, puts the negotiating chapters of the EU *acquis* into clusters. The **Green agenda & sustainable connectivity cluster** encompasses the legislation on green transition and energy, transport, infrastructure, environment and climate change. This cluster includes four chapters of the EU *acquis*:

- Under Chapter 14, **Transport** covers the smooth functioning of the single market for transport, protecting consumers and ensuring seamless transportation.
- Under Chapter 15, **Energy** covers a single set of rules for the functioning of the single market for energy but also for the greening of the EU's energy market. Rules on energy efficiency and renewable energy and the structure of the energy market are also included.
- Under Chapter 21, **Trans-European Networks** policies aiming to ensure that the EU's infrastructure is thoroughly connected in terms of transport and energy capacity are included.
- Under Chapter 27, **Environment and Climate Change** policies aiming to promote the protection of the environment and enabling Europe to become the first climate neutral continent in 2050 are included.

The chapters under the **Green agenda & sustainable connectivity** cluster should not be seen in isolation, as several have **commonalities and so interact with each other** to be mutually reinforcing. For example, **Energy, Trans-European Networks, Transport and Environment and Climate Change** are key components of the European Green Deal and Green Deal Industrial Plan.

This **screening report is structured** according to the **respective areas and chapters** of the cluster. Each area/chapter starts with a short overview of the **main content of the EU *acquis* / European standards**. Each thematic area within a chapter then first summarises the **country's presentations followed by the outcome of the expert discussions** of the bilateral screening meeting, ended with the **Commission's assessment**.

In the last **section**, based on its findings the Commission draws **recommendations for the next steps in the accession negotiations process related to the present Cluster**.

North Macedonia stated that it accepts the EU *acquis* in the chapters of Cluster 4. It reserved however the right to request for transitional arrangements in certain limited areas of the *acquis* in this Cluster at a later stage in the negotiations.

¹ COM(2020) 57 final

B) CHAPTER 14 – TRANSPORT POLICY

The EU transport policy focuses on sustainable and smart mobility, supporting Europe's competitiveness with the welfare of its citizens by enhancing safety, security, and passenger rights, thereby contributing to social and territorial cohesion. Its objectives include improving the internal market by promoting a well-connected, safe, competitive, resource-efficient, environmentally friendly, and user-friendly transport system, ensuring high levels of sustainable and smart mobility across the Union.

The EU transport policy facilitates the smooth, efficient, and free movement of people and goods across integrated networks utilising all transport modes—road, rail, water, and air. It tackles critical issues like climate change, clean fuels, labour standards, and passenger rights, while fostering competitive conditions for industry growth and job creation. With over 30 years of implementation, the emphasis on sustainable and smart mobility has intensified, particularly in light of rising greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector, while at the same time promoting the sector's competitiveness and contribution to a well-functioning internal market.

The EU transport policy is governed by Title VI, Articles 90-100 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and is implemented through numerous legislative texts, including regulations, directives, and decisions. The *acquis* under this chapter covers road transport and road safety, clean vehicles and intelligent transport systems, rail and combined transport, passenger rights, aviation, maritime transport and security, and inland waterways. A strong and well-equipped administration is key to implementing the EU transport *acquis*.

I. ROAD TRANSPORT

IA ROAD CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE

a. Country presentation

Regarding **Road Charging Infrastructure**, North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with the Eurovignette Directive 1999/62/EC on the Charging of Heavy Goods Vehicles for the Use of Certain Infrastructures. Tolls in North Macedonia are charged to both light and heavy vehicles. Authorities mentioned that there is an open toll system on the basis of four vehicle categories. Administrative capacities, maintenance, protection of roads and collection of tolls are under the supervision of the Public Enterprise for State Roads. The Public Enterprise for State Roads is monitoring the collection of tolls and road tax.

To improve the implementation of road charging infrastructure, a new strategy will be introduced, ensuring that toll collections and road taxes are specifically directed towards road maintenance and. To support it, additional staff will be employed at the Public Enterprise for State Road. By the end of 2024, an analysis will be prepared for alignment of the national legislation. Based on the analysis, new by-laws for road tax will be prepared for further compliance with Directive 1999/62/EC by 2027.

b. Commission assessment

On **Road Charging Infrastructure**, road charges pursuant to Chapter III of the Directive cover both heavy and light-duty vehicles. However, no circulation tax pursuant to Chapter II is levied on heavy-duty vehicles. The current national legislation is **partially aligned** with the Eurovignette Directive 1999/62/EC.

I.B EUROPEAN ELECTRONIC TOLLING SYSTEMS (EETS)

a. Country presentation

On **European Electronic Tolling Systems (EETS)**, the collection started back in 2014. Electronic toll collection is based on Dedicated Short Range Communication (DSRC) technology in line with Directive 2004/52/EC on the Interoperability of Electronic Road Toll Systems. The EETS system in the country is interoperable with EU members states and based on DSRC technology.

National legislation is **not aligned** with Directive (EU) 2019/520 on the Interoperability of Electronic Road Toll Systems and Facilitating Cross-Border Exchange of Information on the Failure to Pay Road Fees in the Union.

The Directive (EU) 2019/520 has been analysed within the framework of an Intelligent Transport System (ITS) implementation project. The drafting of amendments to the Law on Public Roads and the corresponding by-laws will follow, with the aim of their implementation at the latest by 2027.

Regarding the interoperability toll payment initiative of the Open Balkan (Initiative), North Macedonia is in the final test phase and expecting to start implementing this initiative shortly.

b. Commission assessment

On **European Electronic Tolling Systems**, good progress was achieved in the last years. In addition, the country plans to ensure regional interoperability by 2027 and introduce electronic tolling; along with the alignment to Directive (EU) 2019/520 on Electronic Tolling into national law, this would be a positive step forward.

I.C ROAD OPERATORS

a. Country presentation

Regarding the **admission to the occupation of road operators**, national legislation is **aligned** with Regulation (EC) No 1071/2009 Establishing Common Rules Concerning the Conditions to be Complied with to Pursue the Occupation of Road Transport Operator.

In the last years, progress took place in relation to the conditions for obtaining a license for separate types of transport in road traffic, namely on registered activity, financial stability, good reputation, professional experience.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications is preparing a draft text for a new Law on Road Transport, aiming to align by 2025 with Regulation (EU) 2020/1055 with a view to adapting them to latest EU updates in the road transport sector. The adoption of Regulation (EU) 2016/403 with regard to the Classification of Serious Infringements of the Union Rules, which may lead to the loss of good repute by the road transport operator is planned after the adoption of the new law.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding the **admission to the occupation of road operators**, North Macedonia needs to ensure that registered companies have a stable and effective establishment. In this regard, it is important to fight against letterbox companies, notably with the rule of effective and stable establishment. The current state of play **does not align** with the requirements of effective and stable establishment under Regulation (EC) No 1071/2009. The new EU *acquis* arising from the Mobility Package will update Regulation (EC) No 1071/2009, notably but not only on the rules of effective and stable establishment.

I.D ACCESS TO THE HAULAGE MARKET

a. Country presentation

Regarding **access to the haulage market**, national legislation is **fully aligned** with the EU legislation referring to the part of access to the road haulage market. National legislation is **aligned** with Regulation (EC) No 1072/2009 on Common Rules for Access to the International Road Haulage Market.

There is **no alignment** with Regulation (EU) No 517/2013 adapting certain regulations and decisions in the fields of free movement of goods, freedom of movement for persons, company law, competition policy, agriculture, food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy, transport policy, energy, taxation, statistics, trans-European networks, judiciary and fundamental rights, justice, freedom and security, environment, customs union, external relations, foreign, security and defence policy and institutions.

b. Commission assessment

On access to the haulage market, the Mobility Package will update Regulation (EC) 1072/2009, notably on Stable Establishment and Cabotage (Cooling Off Period). Overall, North Macedonia has a varying level of alignment in this area.

I.E MARKET ACCESS FOR INTERNATIONAL PASSENGER TRANSPORT AND MODEL OF DOCUMENTS FOR PASSENGER TRANSPORTS

a. Country presentation

On access to the market to international passenger transport and model documents for passenger transport, authorities mentioned that the national legislation is **partially aligned** with Regulation (EC) No 1073/2009 on Common Rules for Access to the International Market for Coach and Bus Service, notably on conditions for obtaining a licence for the transport of passengers, the procedure for registering regular bus lines, the issuance of permits for special regular services and the free transport of passengers. Full alignment is foreseen after the adoption of the new transport law.

The legislation is **aligned** with Regulation 611/2012/EU amending Regulation (EC) 1073/2009 as well as with Regulation (EU) 361/2014 laying down detailed rules for the application of Regulation (EC) No 1073/2009.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding **access to the market to international passenger transport and model documents for passenger transport**, the central objective of Regulation (EC) No 1073/2009 is to support the establishment of fair and open competition, which should be supported by the country to ensure the appropriate implementation of the legislative framework.

I.F TARIFFS AND CRISIS MEASURES

a. Country presentation

On tariffs and crisis measures, North Macedonia is **not aligned** with Regulation (EEC) 4058/89 on the Fixing of Rates for the Carriage of Goods by Road between Member States and Regulation (EEC) 3916/90 on Measures to be Taken in the Event of a Crisis in the Market in the Carriage of Goods by Road. Analysis and adaptation of the national legislation will be carried out to align with Regulation (EEC) 4058/89 upon EU accession.

b. Commission assessment

On tariffs and crisis measures, there is **no alignment**.

I.G DIMENSION AND WEIGHT OF VEHICLES

a. Country presentation

On **dimension and weight of vehicles**, in relation to the Directive 95/53/EC on the Maximum Weight and Dimension of Certain Road Vehicles authorities informed that the national legislation **is aligned** with the following acts:

- Directive 2007/46/EC establishing a Framework for the Approval of Motor Vehicles and their Trailers, and of Systems, Components and Separate Technical Units Intended for Such Vehicles;
- Directive 2002/24/EC relating to the Type-Approval of Two or Three-Wheel Motor Vehicles;
- Directive 1999/37/EC on the Registration Documents for Vehicles;
- Directive 96/96/EC on the Approximation of the Laws of the Member States relating to Roadworthiness Tests for Motor Vehicles and their Trailers;

There is **no alignment** with:

- Decision (EU) 2019/984 on the Time Limit for the Implementation of the Special Rules Regarding Maximum Length for Cabs Delivering Improved Aerodynamic Performance, Energy Efficiency and Safety Performance;
- Directive (EU) 2015/719 laying down for Certain Road Vehicles Circulating within the Community the Maximum Authorised Dimensions in National and International Traffic and the Maximum Authorised Weights in International Traffic;
- Directive 2002/7/EC laying down for Certain Road Vehicles Circulating within the Community the Maximum Authorised Dimensions in National and International Traffic and the Maximum Authorised Weights in International Traffic.

The new Law on Vehicles will be adopted by the end of 2024 and will be aligned with all rulebooks embedded in Decision (EU)_ 2019/984, Directive 2002/7/EC and Directive (EU) 2015/719.

b. Commission assessment

Dimensions and weight of vehicles and alignment with Directive 96/53/EC on Weight and Dimension are not about type-approval but focused on the conditions of circulation on the roads. Regarding administrative capacity, it is important that North Macedonia ensures it has enough inspectors by the end 2025. It is positive that there is a project in North Macedonia focused on building the capacity of inspectors.

North Macedonia also **needs to align** with amendments to Regulation (EU) 2019/1242. All EU Member States have chosen weigh-in-motion systems installed in the infrastructure pursuant to obligations arising from the Directive. Despite alignment with the original Directive 96/53/EC, national law **is not aligned** with subsequent amendments introduced by Directive 2002/7/EC, Directive (EU) 2015/719, Decision (EU) 2019/984 and Regulation (EU) 2019/1242.

Moreover, Directives 2007/46/EC, 2002/24/EC and 96/96/EC are outdated and are now replaced respectively by Regulations (EU) 2018/858, (EU) No 168/2013 and Directive 2014/45/EU.

I.H HIRED VEHICLES

a. Country presentation

On **hired vehicles**, national law **has not been aligned** with Directive 2006/1/EC on the Use of Vehicles Hired without Drivers for the Carriage of Goods by Road. Alignment with Directive 2006/1/EC on the Use of Vehicles Hired without Drivers for the Carriage of Goods by Road, analysis and implementation with the national legislation will be carried out in order to fully comply upon accession.

b. Commission assessment

On **hired vehicles**, North Macedonia **is not aligned with** Directive 2006/1/EC. However, this is not a problem as the Directive foresees minimum conditions for the use of vehicles hired without drivers, in particular a minimum period in which a vehicle with a foreign number plate does not need to be re-registered in the country of use. Since North Macedonia did not seem to impose conditions on the use of vehicles hired abroad and used on its territory, this was in line with the EU *acquis*.

I.I SOCIAL PROVISIONS, DRIVING TIME AND REST PERIODS

a. Country presentation

Regarding **social provisions, driving time and rest periods**, the national framework is composed of the European Agreement concerning the work of crews of vehicles engaged in international road transport (AETR) and the Law on Working Time of Mobile Workers in Road Transport and Recording Devices in Road Transport. National legislation **is fully aligned** with Regulation (EC) No 561/2006 on the Harmonisation of Certain Social Legislation Relating to Road Transport and Directive 2006/22/EC concerning Social Legislation relating to Road Transport Activities.

However, the country **is not aligned** with Decision 2007/230/EC concerning social legislation relating to road transport activities. **Full alignment** with Regulation (EU) 2020/1054 as regards Minimum Requirements on Maximum Daily and Weekly Driving Times, Minimum Breaks and Daily and Weekly Rest Periods is planned immediately after the amendment of the European Agreement concerning the work of crews of vehicles engaged in international road transport (AETR) agreement.

The final version of the Rulebook related to Decision 2007/230/EC on the form, content and method of filling out the driver's activities form will be published in the short term. When it comes to the Recommendation 2009/60/EC on guidelines for best enforcement practice concerning checks of recording equipment to be carried out at roadside checks and by authorized workshops, an analysis of the Recommendation will be made in the short term with a view to adopt a plan with deadlines for implementation.

Full alignment is foreseen by 2027 when it comes to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/695 laying down rules for the application of Directive 2006/22/EC as regards the Common Formula for Calculating the Risk Rating of Transport Undertakings, Regulation (EU) 2021/2179 on the Functionalities of the Public Interface Connected to the Internal Market Information System for Posting Drivers in the Road Transport Sector and Directive (EU) 2020/1057 laying down Specific Rules with respect to Directive 96/71/EC and Directive 2014/67/EU for Posting Drivers in the Road Transport Sector.

As regards accelerated integration, North Macedonia requested access to the Internal Market Information System.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding **social provisions, driving time and rest periods**, progress achieved to align with Regulation (EU) 2020/1054 is noted. On Regulation (EC) No 561/2006, the alignment seems satisfactory. On Directive (EU) 2020/1057, plans for a future alignment are noted as the legislation is binding only for the EU Member States.

Regarding accelerated integration, the Commission takes note of the request to join the Internal Market Information System. The Commission reiterates that this initiative is being considered as part of the New Growth Plan for the Western Balkans.

I.J TACHOGRAPH

a. Country presentation

Regarding **the tachograph**, authorities mentioned that the national legal framework is **fully compliant**

with most relevant EU legislation, such as:

- Directive 2002/15/EC on the Organisation of the Working Time of Persons Performing Mobile Road Transport Activities;
- Regulation 561/2006/EC on the Harmonisation of Certain Social Legislation Relating to Road Transport;
- Directive 2006/22/EC on Minimum Conditions for the Implementation of Regulation 3820/85/ECC and 3821/85/EEC concerning Social Legislation Relating to Road Transport Activities;
- Regulation 2135/98/EC on Recording Equipment in Road Transport.

The rulebook on technical specifications of tachograph and methodology of usage, installation, repair, inspection and control is **fully aligned** with Regulation 3821/85/EEC on Recording Equipment in Road Transport.

The rulebook on data, the methodology of transferring the data from the tachograph and the rules of keeping records is **aligned** with the Regulation 581/2010/EU on the Maximum Periods for the Downloading of Relevant Data from Vehicle Units and from Driver Cards.

However, national legislation is **not aligned** with:

- Regulation (EU) No 165/2014 on Tachographs in Road Transport;
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/68 on Common Procedures and Specifications Necessary for the Interconnection of Electronic Registers of Driver Cards;
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/548 laying down a Standard Form for the Written Statement on the Removal or Breakage of a Tachograph Seal;
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/799 laying down the Requirements for the Construction, Testing, Installation, Operation and Repair of Tachographs and their Components.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding **the tachograph**, as a result of being a Party to the European Agreement concerning the work of crews engaged in international road transport (AETR), North Macedonia is already implementing the digital tachograph scheme, which is based on the EU system.

Initial steps taken by North Macedonia to transition to the smart tachograph are welcome and further efforts in this regard are supported. Also various initiatives undertaken by North Macedonia to facilitate the understanding, alignment, and implementation of EU *acquis* in this sector are supported. At the same time, national legislation is **not aligned** with the provisions of Regulation (EU) No 165/2014.

I.K DRIVING LICENSES

a. Country presentation

On **driving licences**, the national legislation is **partially aligned** with Directive 2006/126/EC on Driving Licences. Notably in the following sections: definitions, equalities between categories, issuance, validity and extension, conditions for acquiring the right to drive vehicles, health examination, conducting training for driver candidate, and conducting of the driving test.

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with Directive 2011/94/EU and Directive (EU) 2015/653 on Driving Licences. The Ministry of Internal Affairs plans to initiate amendments to the Law by the end of 2028 in order to fully harmonise national legislation with EU legislation.

National legislation is **not aligned** with Regulations (EU) 383/2012 and (EU) No 575/2014 laying down Technical Requirements with Regard to Driving Licences which Include a Storage Medium (Microchip).

The Ministry of Internal Affairs will conduct an analysis for compliance with these Regulations and will prepare the national legislation to fully comply with them. This is foreseen after the country's accession to the EU.

It is confirmed that all driver candidates needed to go through medical examination. For the specific category B, drivers do not need examination when they prolong their driving license.

b. Commission assessment

On **driving licences**, North Macedonia has **partial alignment** with provisions in Directive 2006/126/EC and plans to **fully align** with them by the end of 2028. A modification of the current driving license Directive was proposed by the Commission in March 2023. It is very likely that new rules would be in place by 2028.

It is recommended to incorporate all amendments of, Directive 2006/126/EC, such as Directives 2009/113/EC, (EU) No 36/2012, 2013/47/EU, 2014/85/EU, (EU) 2016/1106/, (EU) 2018/645, (EU) 2018/933 and (EU) 2020/612.

Alignment with Regulation (EU) No 383/2012 is optional as it is not mandatory for Member States.

I.L TRAINING OF DRIVERS

a. Country presentation

On **training of drivers**, the national legislation is **mostly aligned** with Directive (EU) 2022/2561 on the Initial Qualification and Periodic Training of Drivers of Certain Road Vehicles for the Carriage of Goods or Passengers, notably in the section which refers to the driver training section.

The national legal framework is **not aligned** with Directive (EU) 2018/645 on the Initial Qualification and Periodic Training of Drivers of Certain Road Vehicles for the Carriage of Goods or Passengers. Those amendments are planned to be aligned in 2025.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding **training of drivers**, there is **partial alignment** with:

- Directive 2003/59/EC, although there is no alignment with amendments through Directive (EU) 2018/645.

I.M VEHICLE EQUIPMENT

a. Country presentation

On **vehicle equipment**, North Macedonia's legal framework is **partially aligned** with Directive 91/671/EEC on Seat Belts and Child Restraint Systems and Directive (EU) 2015/413 Facilitating Cross-Border Exchange of Information on Road-Safety-Related Traffic Offences.

National legislation is **not aligned** with Directive 2007/38/EC on Retrofitting of Mirrors to Heavy Good Vehicles, Directive 92/6/EEC on Speed Limitation Devices and Directive 89/459/EEC on the Tread Depth of Tyres, but alignment is foreseen to be in the next five years.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with vehicle equipment *acquis*.

I.N SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – ROAD TRANSPORT

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with road transport *acquis*. The country has a good understanding of the challenges ahead, with concrete timing and budget associated to most of future planned steps. However, further efforts are needed to fully align and enforce the legislation under this chapter, notably on dimension and weight of vehicles, driving licences, road operators, social provisions, driving time and rest periods, tachograph, training of drivers, vehicle equipment and market access, ensuring fair competition and service provision.

II. CLEAN VEHICLES AND INTELLIGENT TRANSPORT SYSTEMS

a. Country presentation

Regarding **clean vehicles**, the national legal framework **is aligned** with Directive 2012/27/EU on Energy Efficiency and Directive 2010/31/EC on the Energy Performance of Buildings. On the contrary, it **is not aligned** with Directive 2009/33/EC on the Promotion of Clean and Energy-Efficient Transport Vehicles and its related amendments.

The Law on Energy efficiency provides that persons from the public sector at the state level, when conducting public procurement for products that use energy, must include the energy efficiency criterion when choosing the most favourable offer. North Macedonia is planning to align with Directive 2009/33/EC by 2024. On Alternative Fuels Infrastructure, the legal framework **is not aligned** with Directive 2014/94/EU but future alignment is foreseen.

On **intelligent transport system** (ITS), national legislation **is not aligned** with Directive 2010/40/EU on the Framework for the Deployment of ITS in the Field of Road Transport and for Interfaces with Other Modes of Transport. North Macedonia adopted the National ITS Strategy in December 2023, which is aligned with national and international legal framework.

b. Commission assessment

On **clean vehicles**, Directive 2009/33/EC on Clean Vehicles was revised in 2019, with important changes introducing the definition of a clean vehicle. Directive 2014/94/EU would be replaced by the new Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation adopted by the Council on 25/7/2023. This new instrument sets binding targets for EU Member States and will need to be implemented by North Macedonia.

On **intelligent transport systems**, Directive 2010/40/EU has been amended in November 2023 by Directive (EU) 2023/2661. Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/1926 on Multimodal Travel Information Services has also been amended in November 2023 by Delegated Regulation (EU) 2024/490.

C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – CLEAN VEHICLES AND INTELLIGENT TRANSPORT SYSTEMS

On clean vehicles and intelligent transport system, further work should be made as the country is still at early stage. Following the Smart and Sustainable Mobility Strategy, additional *acquis* was adopted recently and should be reflected in North Macedonia's plans for further alignment. National framework for the digital and decarbonisation transitions should be adapted.

III. ROAD SAFETY

III.A ROAD SAFETY STATISTICS AND TRENDS

a. Country presentation

On **road safety statistics and trends**, national legislation is **partially aligned** with Decision 93/704/EC on the Creation of a Community Database on Road Accidents. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has established a database of traffic accidents in order to monitor road traffic safety.

b. Commission assessment

On **road safety statistics and trends**, the number of fatalities is a key indicator and the downward trend is encouraging despite further work being needed. It is positive that North Macedonia made some progress in aligning with the CADaS protocol. The country is on the right path to become part of the Community database on Accidents on the Roads in Europe (CARE). For this, North Macedonia would need three years of stable data. Additional steps are required to comply fully with the EU *acquis*.

III.B INLAND TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS AND CHECK ON TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS

a. Country presentation

Regarding **inland transport of dangerous goods** and **check on transport of dangerous goods**, the national framework is compliant with Directive 2008/68/EC on the Inland Transport of Dangerous Goods and Directive 95/50/EC on Uniform Procedures for Checks on the Transport of Dangerous Goods by Road.

b. Commission assessment

On **inland transport of dangerous goods** and **check on transport of dangerous goods**, national legislation is fully compliant and internal preparations for implementation are ongoing. The availability of international agreements in the official language(s) is important to ensure legal certainty and to ensure that all citizens involved in manufacturing, packing, loading, unloading, commerce with goods qualified as dangerous for transport receive the appropriate training and knowledge to handle them safely. It would be important as well to not add extra conditions for the carriage of dangerous goods, to those provided for in the Directive. The latest relevant provisions are entailed in Directive (EU) 2022/1999.

III.C TRANSPORTABLE PRESSURE EQUIPMENT

a. Country presentation

Regarding **transportable pressure equipment**, national legislation **is not aligned** with Directive 2010/35/EC on Transportable Pressure Equipment . Alignment is foreseen by 2024.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding **transportable pressure equipment** there is an appropriate and operational administrative structure in place that applies consistently the previous Directive 1999/36/EC. The next step should be to align with and apply the current Directive 2010/35/EU.

III.D ROADWORTHINESS, ROADSIDE INSPECTION AND REGISTRATION DOCUMENTS

a. Country presentation

On **roadworthiness**, Albania stated that the national legislation **is partially aligned** with Directive 2014/45/EU **and it is not aligned** with Commission implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/621. On **roadside inspection**, the national legislation **is partially aligned** with Directive 2014/47/EU and Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/2205. On **registration documents**, Albania stated that national law **is partially aligned** with Council Directive 1999/37/EC, Commission Directive 2003/127 and Directive 2014/46/EU. The national law **is not aligned** with Council Directive 2013/22/EU.

b. Commission assessment

For **roadworthiness, roadside inspection & registration documents**, there have been changes introduced by Commission Delegated Directives 2021/1717/EU and 2021/1716/EU, which have to be taken fully into account when reaching compliance with Directives 2014/45/EU and 2014/47/EU. North Macedonia will have to update its national laws accordingly.

III.E DISTINGUISHING SIGNS

a. Country presentation

Regarding **distinguished signs**, national legislation is **partially aligned** with Regulation 2411/98/EC on the Recognition in Intra-Community Traffic of the Distinguishing Sign of the Member State in which Motor Vehicles and their Trailers are Registered. The part not aligned concerns the yellow stars and will be implemented upon accession.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with legislation on distinguished signs.

III.F TUNNELS

a. Country presentation

On **tunnels**, part of the provisions of Directive 2008/96/EC on Road Infrastructure Safety Management **are partially aligned** into the Law on Public Roads and will be applied upon accession. The law establishing a Road Traffic Safety Agency will be adopted in 2024 and will be established by 2025.

Directive 2004/54/EC on Minimum Safety Requirements for Tunnels in the Trans-European Road Network **is not aligned**. The harmonisation with the Directive will be done following the analysis of the Directive. It is foreseen that it will be harmonised during 2025, after the adoption of the planned amendments to the Law on Public Roads.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding **tunnels**, North Macedonia is **partially aligned**. North Macedonia is advised to apply the technical requirements foreseen in the Tunnel Directive as well as road safety audits for the new road infrastructure, in order to ensure that good road infrastructure is built. This should be taken into consideration in the technical requirements to companies.

North Macedonia is advised to train road safety auditors as well as security tunnel officers as soon as possible as it is a process that takes time.

III.G ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT

a. Country presentation

On **road infrastructure safety management**, Directive 2008/96/EC is **aligned** into national legislation and the application is postponed upon accession. Nonetheless, preparatory work for implementation is currently ongoing.

b. Commission assessment

On **road infrastructure safety management**, an appropriate implementation needs extensive preparations at legal, institutional, administrative and professional levels. In addition, at this stage, it is important to avoid building roads that do not fully comply with the Directive, as the costs and efforts required for refurbishment would be very high.

III.H CROSS-BORDER EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON ROAD-SAFETY-RELATED TRAFFIC OFFENCES

a. Country presentation

Regarding, **cross-border exchange of information**, national legislation is **not aligned** with Directive (EU) 2015/413 Facilitating Cross-Border Exchange of Information on Road Safety Related Traffic Offenses..

It is planned to prepare a draft law amending the Law on road traffic safety toward compliance with Directive (EU) 2015/413 in order to establish a national contact point for data exchange, procedures, and

systems.

b. Commission assessment

The planned establishment of a national contact point for data exchange, procedures, and systems is welcomed in order to make further progress in alignment with the EU *acquis* in the field of cross-border exchange of information on road-safety-related traffic offences.

III.I SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – ROAD SAFETY

On road safety, North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with the *acquis*. Efforts should be reinforced on statistic, road infrastructure and safety management, transportable pressure equipment, dangerous goods and cross border exchange of information.

IV. RAIL TRANSPORT

IV.A SINGLE EUROPEAN RAIL AREA

a. Country presentation

On the **single European rail area**, the Law on the Railway System is **aligned** with the EU legislation, respectively with:

- Directive 91/440/EEC on the Development of the Community's Railways;
- Directive 95/18/EC on the Licensing of Railway Undertakings;
- Directive 2001/14/EC on the Allocation of Railway Infrastructure Capacity and the Levying of Charges for the Use of Railway Infrastructure.

However, these Directives have been repealed by the recast of the Directive 34/2012/EU Establishing a Single European Railway Area. North Macedonia is **fully aligned** with this Directive notably on management of the railway undertakings according to commercial principles and independence of essential functions of an infrastructure manager, while it is **partially aligned** notably on separation of accounts, the authorities divided into assets, staff, rights of assets, management of railway infrastructure, assessment of compatibility.

The authorities are planning to incorporate the missing elements by 2027.

b. Commission assessment

On the **single European rail area**, the separation of infrastructure management and transport operations which are at the cornerstone of the reform is noted.

Directive 2012/34/EU is applicable to all EU Member States and shall be also prepared as by-laws for prescribing rules for infrastructure manager and railway undertakings.

North Macedonia should further refine its workplan, including intermediate milestones, to achieve the preparation of the implementing acts by the deadline of 2027.

IV.B EUROPEAN RAIL NETWORK FOR COMPETITIVE FREIGHT

a. Country presentation

Regarding the **European Rail network for competitive freight**, there is **no alignment** with European legislation, until a freight corridor is established across the country.

In order to make progress, there is a plan for construction of a multi-modal transport terminal as soon as possible. The establishment of this freight corridor will be possible if there is an improvement of the railway infrastructure in the region.

b. Commission assessment

On the **European Rail network for competitive freight**, the revised TEN-T guidelines, as well as the proposal for a new Regulation on Rail Capacity Management, will have an impact in this regulatory area. A focus on effort on the further alignment and implementation of Directive 2012/34/EU, as amended by Directive (EU) 2016/2370 and the relevant implementing acts, is recommended.

IV.C TRAIN DRIVER LICENSING AND SOCIAL FIELD

a. Country presentation

On train driver licensing/social field, the law on the safety of the railway system is **partially aligned** with provisions of:

- Directive 2007/59/EC on the Certification of Train Drivers Operating Locomotives and Trains on the Railway System in the Community;
- Regulation (EU) No 36/2010 on Community Models for Train Driving Licences, Complementary Certificates, Certified Copies of Complementary Certificates and Application Forms for Train Driving Licences;
- Decision 2010/17/EC on the Adoption of Basis Parameters for Registers of Train Driving Licenses and Complementary Certificates;
- Decision 2011/765/EU on Criteria for the Recognition of Training Centres Involved in the Training of Train Drivers, on Criteria for the Recognition of Examiners of Train Drivers and on Criteria for the Organisation of Examinations.

Authorities are planning **full alignment** by 2027.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding Train Driver Licensing/Social Field, the main *acquis* principles are implemented, notably as the authority to issue licences is established. Due to the upcoming new act on train driver licensing and certification, no further alignment seems necessary at this stage. National law should keep supplementing EU law on training, since it will be a goal for the new act to harmonise training contents at EU level for wide application and validity of knowledge and skills certificates, at least for similar driving context.

In addition, the most difficult issue will be to define who will be responsible to verify people attending trainings and who will be issuing certificates and licenses. It will be important to have minimum content in the future, that opens the door for top-ups, additional contents. Some important steps are expected when it comes to digitalisation. The intention is to create a European register based on digitalisation. Moreover, there is an increase of common specifications within the EU.

IV.D INTEROPERABILITY

a. Country presentation

On interoperability, the Law on Interoperability in the Railway System is **partially aligned** with Directive (EU) 2016/797 on the Interoperability of the Railway System within the European Union (recast). In the national law on interoperability, there were no provisions on Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSI). During 2023 the Law Amending the Law on Interoperability in the Railway System has been adopted. This law requires the Safety Directorate to propose and the Ministry to approve technical specifications for interoperability (TSIs). The amendments mandate the Institute for Standardization to draft national standards for European standards, as requested by the Ministry.

b. Commission assessment

On **interoperability**, vehicle authorisation and processes are aligned to EU legislation. The main issue is the cooperation with the European Railways Agency (ERA), which shares the main responsibilities with

National Safety Authority (NSA) (so called “dual system” applicable to the authorisation of vehicles and vehicle types, as well as for the certification of the safety performance of railway undertakings).

The legislation in compliance of which vehicles are authorised, the EU technical specifications for interoperability (TSI), is laid down in directly applicable implementing regulations. These acts are also 100% mirrored in the international legislation of OTIF, to which North Macedonia is member.

IV.E RAILWAY SAFETY

a. Country presentation

Regarding railway safety, provisions of the Directive 2004/49/EC on Safety of the Community’s Railways **have been partially aligned**, notably on definitions.

The provisions of Regulation (EU) No 445/2011 on a System of Certification of Entities in Charge of Maintenance for Freight Wagons is **partially aligned**. In order to comply with the Directive (EU) 2016/798 on Railway Safety, and all the missing relevant secondary acts will be prepared and implemented in the national legislation. Due to the lack of interest for the position of investigator, there has not been established such a position.

b. Commission assessment

On **railway safety**, the national safety agency is established. The national safety body is present but will be merged into an all transport mode with wider accident investigation entity. The legislation is in compliance of which safety is performed, monitored and railway undertakings, infrastructure managers are certified/authorised with the EU common safety methods (CSM). If the country manages to implement this EU regulation, not much alignment required on an act-by act basis.

IV.F EUROPEAN AGENCY FOR RAILWAYS

a. Country presentation

On the European Agency for Railways, the competences of the Directorate (National Safety Authority) and the obligations regarding the notification that must be submitted to the Agency of the European Union for Railways are covered. The law is considered partially compliant with Regulation (EU) 2016/796 on the European Union Agency for Railways.

The national legislation is planned to be harmonised with the relevant EU legislation, as well as with the obligations foreseen for the Directorate (NSA) in order to function synergistically with the European Union Agency for Railways. Implementing acts related to safety and interoperability will be translated and implemented upon the country's accession to the EU.

b. Commission assessment

On the European Agency for Railways, the Regulation establishing the Rights and Obligations of the European Railways Agency implements the EU level part of the rail Interoperability and the Rail Safety Directives. A solid alignment of these Directives is key, whereas non-EU Countries do not gain a lot by applying the ERA regulation. The powers that ERA will gain in the country, will only manifest itself once EU membership is obtained.

IV.G SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – RAIL TRANSPORT

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with the EU acquis on rail transport. Further efforts need to be done in the area of interoperability, single European rail area, railway safety and European rail network for competitive freight

V. COMBINED TRANSPORT

a. Country presentation

The national legal framework is composed of the Law on the Railway System.

In the Law on the Railway System, in Section IV: Railway transport, in Art. 13 provisions are prescribed for the combined transport of goods, during the transportation of which is used road, railway, inland waterway or maritime transport. Art. 13 of the Law is **partially aligned** with Art. 1 and Art. 3 of the Directive 92/106/EEC on the Establishment of Common Rules for Certain Types of Combined Transport of Goods between Member States.

There is a location in Skopje where combined Transport is possible. Goods can come by train and be uploaded on trucks. For the time being, there are no specific incentives proposed for the uptake of combined transport. Alignment is foreseen by 2027.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** on combined transport.

C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – COMBINED TRANSPORT

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with combined transport,. Positive steps are taken with plans to fully align with the Directive by 2027. The country will have to take into consideration the new combined transport directive.

VI. PASSENGER RIGHTS

VIA GENERAL FRAMEWORK

a. Country presentation

The legal framework on passenger rights across all modes of transport is **partially aligned** with the EU *acquis*, while only in the air transport sector the relevant national legislation has been fully enacted.

b. Commission assessment

To assess compliance, the Authorities of North Macedonia are invited to send the texts of the relevant national implementation measures adopted in this sector (national measures have been communicated regarding only air passenger rights), including the corresponding correlation tables.

VI.B AIR PASSENGER RIGHTS

a. Country presentation

Regarding air passenger rights, there is **full alignment** with requirements of:

- Regulation (EC) No 2027/97 on Air Carrier Liability in the Event of Accident. Provisions of the Regulation are aligned in the law on contractual and real right relations in respect of the aviation transport;
- Regulation (EC) No 261/2004 on air passenger rights.
- Regulation (EC) No 1107/2006 concerning the Rights of Disabled Persons and Persons with Reduced Mobility when Travelling by Air.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding air passenger rights, North Macedonia has adopted the national measures for the implementation of the EU *acquis* in this domain.

VI.C RAIL PASSENGER RIGHTS

a. Country presentation

Regarding rail passenger rights, national legislation is **fully aligned** with the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 on Rail Passengers' Rights and Obligations. However, the national legislation **has not been aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2021/782, which repealed Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 and there is no specific timeline for the alignment.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding **rail passenger rights**, although the legislation of North Macedonia is aligned with the previous Regulation on Rail Passenger Rights there is **no alignment** with the new Regulation repealing the former one.

VI.D BUS AND COACH PASSENGER RIGHTS

a. Country presentation

Regarding **bus and coach passenger rights**, national legislation has been **partially aligned** with Regulation (EU) No 181/2011, in particular the issues of non-discrimination between the passengers regarding the transport conditions offered by carriers, issuance of tickets, rights in the event of cancellation or delay, the carriage of luggage. In order to fully align with the Regulation, the national legislation still needs to be harmonised in terms of the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility and the amounts for compensation for damage and assistance in case of traffic accidents. Amendments to update the current national legal framework in view of ensuring full alignment are expected after 2024.

b. Commission assessment

As regards bus and coach passenger rights, the outstanding provisions relate to the rights of persons with reduced mobility, as well as compensation and assistance in case of traffic accidents.

VI.E WATERBORNE PASSENGER RIGHTS

a. Country presentation

Concerning **waterborne passenger rights**, the national legislation **is not aligned** with Regulation (EU) No 1177/2010 on the Rights of Passengers when Travelling by Sea and Inland Waterway. North Macedonia is in the process of assessing which provisions are to be aligned into national law, taking into consideration that the country is landlocked and has no vessels nor ports falling under the Regulation. There is no inland waterway transport in the country except for recreational purposes and there are no vessels that have a minimum of three crew members and that meet the minimum number of passengers criteria of the Regulation.

The Regulation (EU) No 1177/2010 is foreseen to be aligned by 2024.

b. Commission assessment

Concerning waterborne **passenger rights**, since North Macedonia needs to assess how to approach the pertinent Regulation, it is not clear which specific provisions they aim to align, although right to care/assistance, right of passengers in case of cancellation and delay, information, complaint and implementation (enforcement) were singled out in the presentation.

VI.F SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – PASSENGER RIGHTS

On passenger rights, the country's legislation is **partially aligned** with the EU rules. It should in particular strengthen the role of enforcement bodies and their oversight activities.

VII. AVIATION SAFETY

VII.A AVIATION SAFETY

a. Country presentation

There is **partial alignment** with the basic Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 on Common Rules in the Field of Civil Aviation and Establishing a European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) (Basic Regulation).

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with the Basic Regulation.

VII.B AERODROMES

a. Country presentation

On **aerodromes**, national legislation is in process of alignment with Regulation (EU) 139/2014 laying down Requirements and Administrative Procedures Related to Aerodromes. .

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with the Regulation on aerodromes.

VII.C AIRCREW

a. Country presentation

For **aircrew**, there is **full alignment** with requirements of Regulation (EU) No 1178/2011 laying down Technical Requirements and Administrative Procedures Related to Civil Aviation Aircrew and its amendments listed in Annex 1 of European Common Aviation Agreement (ECAA).

Regarding **aircrew (balloons and sailplanes)**, the national legislation is in process of alignment with the following regulations :

- Regulation (EU) 2018/395 laying down Detailed Rules for the Operation of Balloons;
- Regulation (EU) 2018/1976 laying down Detailed Rules for the Operation of Sailplanes;
- Regulation (EU) 2020/357 as regards Balloon Pilot Licences.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with the *acquis* on aircrew.

VII.D AIR OPERATIONS

a. Country presentation

For **air operations**, there is **full alignment** with requirements of the Regulation (EU) No 965/2012 laying down Technical Requirements and Administrative Procedures related to Air Operations and its Changes according to Annex 1 of the ECAA Agreement.

After the completion of the screening, the national legislation has been aligned with the following acts, all amending Regulation (EU) No 965/2012::

- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/2036;
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/1296;
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/2237;
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/2203
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/203
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/217
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/1020
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/1111
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/2076.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with the *acquis* on air operations.

VII.E AIRWORTHINESS

a. Country presentation

Regarding **initial airworthiness**, there is **full alignment** with requirements of Regulation (EC) No 748/2012 on Initial Airworthiness pursuant to Annex 1 of the ECAA Agreement.

For continuing **air airworthiness**, there is **full alignment** with the requirements of the Regulation (EU) No 1321/2014 on the Continuing Airworthiness of Aircraft and Aeronautical Products and its amendments pursuant to Annex 1 of the ECAA Agreement.

Regarding **additional airworthiness**, there is **full alignment** with the requirements of the Regulation (EU) 2015/640 on Additional Airworthiness Specifications for a Given Type of Operations and amendments pursuant to Annex 1 of the ECAA Agreement.

For the **air safety list**, there is **partial alignment** with requirements of the Regulation (EC) No 474/2006 establishing the Community List of Air Carriers which are Subject to an Operating Ban within the Community.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with the *acquis* on airworthiness. Regarding the air safety list, the country also needs to align with Regulation 474/2006/EC. North Macedonia also needs to align with Regulation (EC) No 2111/2005.

VII.F OCCURRENCE REPORTING AND SAFETY INVESTIGATION OF ACCIDENTS AND SERIOUS INCIDENTS IN CIVIL AVIATION

a. Country presentation

On occurrence reporting, there is **full alignment** with requirements of

- Regulation (EU) 376/2014/EU on the Reporting, Analysis and Follow-Up of Occurrences in Civil Aviation;
- Commission Implementing Regulation 2015/1018/EU, pursuant to Annex 1 of ECAA Agreement.

The national legislation is planned to be aligned with Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/2082 laying down the arrangements for the implementation of Regulation (EU) 376/2014 as regards the common European risk classification scheme within 2024.

On safety investigation of accidents and serious incidents, there is full alignment with requirements of Regulation (EU) No 996/2010 on the Investigation and Prevention of Accidents and Incidents in Civil Aviation.

North Macedonia will align with Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/1128 on Access Rights to Safety Recommendations and Responses stored in the European Central Repository after the completion of the second transitory period of Protocol V of the ECAA Agreement.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with the *acquis* on occurrence reporting and on investigation and Prevention of Accidents and Incidents in Civil Aviation.

VII.G DRONES – UNMANNED AIRCRAFT

a. Country presentation

For drones – unmanned aircraft, during the screening procedure, the following acts were in process of alignment and in 2024 a national Regulation on Unmanned Aircraft Systems was adopted in alignment with:

- Regulation (EU) 2019/947 on the Rules and Procedures for the Operation of Unmanned Aircraft;
- Regulation (EU) 2021/664 on a Regulatory Framework for the U-Space;
- Regulation (EU) 2021/665 as regards Requirements for Providers of Air Traffic Management/Air Navigation Services and Other Air Traffic Management Network Functions in the U-Space Airspace Designated in Controlled Airspace;
- Regulation (EU) 2021/666 establishing the Common Rules for Effectively Making the Presence of Manned Aircraft Operating in U-Space Airspace Electronically Conspicuous.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with the *acquis* on drones-unmanned aircraft.

VII.H MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION SECURITY RISKS

a. Country presentation

Regarding management of information security risks, the national legal framework is **not aligned** with Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/1645 and Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/203 regarding Requirements for the Management of Information Security Risk.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **not aligned** with the *acquis* on management of information security risks.

VII.I SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – AVIATION SAFETY

On **aviation safety**, North Macedonia has made good progress in aligning with and implementing EU

aviation safety legislation. At present, North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with the Union's aviation safety *acquis*. However, there are still several areas where work should continue or has not even started.

This relates to the areas of aerodromes, air operations, initial and air airworthiness's, occurrences reporting and aviation accident and incident investigations, drones - unmanned aircraft and security risks legislation.

While North Macedonia's alignment with the Union's aviation safety *acquis* is ongoing, it is important to note that North Macedonia is already an observer in EASA Management Board; its Civil Aviation Authority is a full Member of the EU's ramp inspection programme and North Macedonia is participating in EASA Advisory Bodies, which will support their efforts for further alignment.

VIII. AIR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

VIII.A FRAMEWORK REGULATION

a. Country presentation

On **framework regulation**, there is **full alignment** with Regulation (EC) No 549/2004 laying down the Framework for the Creation of the Single European Sky, as amended by Regulation (EC) No 1070/2009.

There is **no alignment** with Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/317 laying down a Performance and Charging Scheme in the Single European Sky and it is planned that alignment will occur after the country joins the EU.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with the framework regulation on air traffic management. It is to be noted that the Single European Sky regulatory framework is being reformed with the adoption on 23 October 2024 of the Regulation (EU) 2024/2803 on the implementation of the Single European Sky (SES2+ recast), which will repeal Regulations (EC) No 549/2004, 550/2004, 551/2004.

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VIII.B SERVICE PROVISIONS

a. Country presentation

Regarding service provisions, there is **full alignment** with requirements of the Regulation (EC) 550/2004 on the Provision of Air Navigation Services in the Single European Sky, as amended by Regulation (EC) 1070/2009

There is **full alignment** with the requirements of:

- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 716/2014 on the Establishment of the Pilot Common Project Supporting the Implementation of the European Air Traffic Management (ATM) Master Plan, repealed by Commission Implementing Regulation 2021/116
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/373 according to Annex 1 from ECAA Agreement and requirements from the Regulation 482/2008/EU
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 176/2011 on the Information to be Provided before the Establishment and Modification of a Functional Airspace
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EC) No 482/2008 Establishing a Software Safety Assurance System to be Implemented by Air Navigation Service Providers.

- Regulation (EU) 2015/340 laying down Technical Requirements and Administrative Procedures Relating to Air Traffic Controllers' Licences and Certificates.

The national legislation is in process of alignment with the amendments to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/373 laid down in Regulation (EU) 2021/665, Regulation (EU) 2021/338 and Regulation (EU) 2022/938.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with the *acquis* on air service provisions.

VIII.C AIR SPACE

a. Country presentation

For **air space**, there is **full alignment** with:

- Regulation (EC) 551/2004 on the Organisation and Use of the Airspace in the Single European Sky, as amended by Regulation 1070/2009;
- Commission Regulation (EU) No 255/2010 laying down Common Rules on Air Traffic Flow Management;
- Commission Regulation (EC) 2150/2005 laying down Common Rules for the Flexible Use of Airspace;
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 923/2012 laying down the Common Rules of the Air and Operational Provisions Regarding Services and Procedures in Air Navigation according to Annex 1 from ECAA Agreement;
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/123 laying down Detailed Rules for the Implementation of ATM Network Functions.

National legislation is not aligned yet with the amendments of the Regulation (EU) No 923/2012 provided in (EU) 2020/469 as amended by Regulations (EU) 2020/1177 and (EU) 2021/666.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with the *acquis* on air space.

VIII.D INTEROPERABILITY

a. Country presentation

For **interoperability**, the national legal framework is composed of the Regulation on Rules and Requirements in Respect of Systems Interoperability, their Components and Related Procedures for Provision of Air Navigation Services with the European Air Traffic Management Network.

There is **full alignment** with requirements of:

- Regulation 552/2004/EU on the Interoperability of the European Air Traffic Management Network, as amended by Regulation 1070/2009 in order to improve the performance and sustainability of the European aviation system;
- Commission Implementing Regulation 1206/2011/EU laying down requirements on aircraft

identification for surveillance for the single European sky

- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 1207/2011 laying down Requirements for the Performance and the Interoperability of Surveillance for the Single European Sky;
- Commission Regulation (EU) 73/2010 laying down Requirements on the Quality of Aeronautical Data and Aeronautical Information for the Single European Sky;
- Commission Regulation (EC) 262/2009 laying down Requirements for the Coordinated Allocation and Use of Mode S Interrogator Codes for the Single European Sky;
- Commission Regulation (EC) 29/2009 laying down Requirements on Data Link Services for the Single European Sky;
- Commission Regulation (EC) 633/2007 laying down Requirements for the Application of a Flight Message Transfer Protocol Used for the Purpose of Notification, Coordination and Transfer of Flights between Air Traffic Control Units;
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 1079/2012 laying down Requirements for Voice Channels Spacing for the Single European Sky;
- Commission Regulation (EC) 1033/2006 laying down the Requirements on Procedures for Flight Plans in the Pre-Flight Phase for the Single European Sky;
- Commission Regulation (EC) 1032/2006 laying down Requirements for Automatic Systems for the Exchange of Flight Data for the Purpose of Notification, Coordination and Transfer of Flights between Air Traffic Control Units.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia has a **high level of alignment** with the *acquis* on interoperability. It is to be noted that Regulation (EC) No 552/2004 on Interoperability has been repealed by Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 with a transition period of 5 years. All implementing regulations related to interoperability mentioned above have been repealed and moved under this regulation.

VIII.E SINGLE EUROPEAN SKY ATM RESEARCH (SESAR)

a. Country presentation

Regarding Single European Sky ATM Research (SESAR), the national legal framework is composed of the Regulation on Rules and Requirements in Respect of Systems Interoperability, their components and related procedures for provision of air navigation services with the European ATM network.

There is **full alignment** with requirements of the Regulation 219/2007/EC on the Establishment of a Joint Undertaking to Develop the New Generation European Air Traffic Management System (SESAR).

The national legislation is not aligned with Regulation 2021/2085/EU establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe. The alignment was planned to be carried out during 2024, but the implementation is expected to be done after the country's entry into the EU.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with the *acquis* on the Single European Sky ATM Research (SESAR). There is no need at the moment to further align the legislation for the Regulation (EU) 2021/2085 establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe, as this can only be pursued following accession to the EU.

VIII.F SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – AIR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

With regard to **air traffic management** North Macedonia shows dedication and has made good progress in the general alignment and implementation of the EU acquis. There are still some areas where further work is necessary.

North Macedonia is already an observer in the EASA Management Board and is participating in several EASA Advisory Bodies.

Synchronisation of the SESAR technology deployment as defined in CP1 (EU) 2021/116 is essential for the functioning of the European ATM network and is therefore a priority for the EU. North Macedonia should not postpone it.

IX. AIR TRANSPORT

IX.A MARKET OPERATION

a. Country presentation

Regarding **market operation**, there is **full alignment** with requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1008/2008 on Common Rules for the Operation of Air Services in the Community, as amended by Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 on Common Rules in the Field of Civil Aviation and Establishing a European Union Aviation Safety Agency and Regulation (EU) 2019/2 on Common Rules for the Operation of Air Services in the Community.

The Civil Aviation Agency is the competent institution for implementation of the Regulation (EC) No 1008/2008 on Common Rules for the Operation of Air Services in the Community.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **fully aligned** as regards market operation.

IX.B STATISTICS

a. Country presentation

On **statistics**, there is **full alignment** with Regulation (EC) No 437/2003 on Statistical Returns in respect of the Carriage of Passengers, Freight and Mail by Air and Commission Regulation (EC) 1358/2023 on the List of Community Airports but not with its amendment by the Commission Regulation (EC) No 158/2007.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** on statistics.

IX.C INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

a. Country presentation

For insurance requirements, there is **full alignment** with requirements from the Regulation (EC) 785/2004 on Insurance Requirements for Air Carriers and Aircraft Operators as amended by Regulation (EC) No 1137/2008 and Regulation (EU) No 285/2010.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **fully aligned** on insurance requirements.

IX.D SLOTS

a. Country presentation

Regarding **slots**, the national legal framework is **fully aligned** with Regulation (EEC) 95/93 on Common Rules for the Allocation of Slots at Community Airports.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is fully **aligned** with the *acquis* on slots.

IX.E AIRPORT CHARGES

a. Country presentation

For **airport charges**, the national legal framework is not aligned with Directive 2009/12/EC on Airport Charges with adoption of relevant legislation.

Regarding accelerated integration, North Macedonia requested to participate in the expert group on airport charges (Thessaloniki Forum).

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is in process of alignment on airport charges.

Regarding accelerated integration, the Commission will explore the possibility, together with members of the Thessaloniki Forum, on North Macedonia's participation in the expert group on airport charges (Thessaloniki Forum).

IX.F GROUND HANDLING

a. Country presentation

On **ground handling**, the national legal framework is **fully aligned** with Directive 96/67/EC on Access to the Ground Handling Market at Community Airports.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia has a high level of **alignment** with the *acquis* on ground handling.

IX.G COMPUTERISED RESERVATION SYSTEMS

a. Country presentation

For **computerised reservation systems**, the national legal framework **is not aligned** with Regulation (EC) No 80/2009 on a Code of Conduct for Computerised Reservation Systems.

The Law on Contractual and Real Right Relations in respect of Aviation Transport **is aligned** with Regulation (EEC) 2299/89 on a Code of Conduct for Computerised Reservation Systems. Draft amendments of the Law on Contractual and Real Right Relations in respect of Aviation Transport are in process of preparation and will allow alignment with Regulation (EC) 80/2009 by the end of 2024.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** on computerised reservation systems.

IX.H ENVIRONMENT AND NOISE

a. Country presentation

Regarding **environment and noise**, there is **full alignment** with the Directive 2006/93/EC on the Regulation of the Operation of Aeroplanes. Nevertheless, there is **no alignment** with Regulation (EC) 598/2014 on the Establishment of Rules and Procedures with regard to the Introduction of Noise-Related Operating Restrictions at Union Airports within a Balanced Approach and Directive 89/629/EEC on the Limitation of Noise Emission from Civil Subsonic Jet Aeroplanes.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with the *acquis* on environment and noise.

IX.I WORKING TIME

a. Country presentation

For working time, there is **full alignment** with the minimum requirements from the Directive 2000/79/EC concerning the European Agreement on the Organisation of Working Time of Mobile Workers in Civil Aviation concluded by the Association of European Airlines (AEA), the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), the European Cockpit Association (ECA), the European Regions Airline Association (ERA) and the International Air Carrier Association (IACA)

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **fully aligned** with the *acquis* on working time.

IX.F SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – AIR TRANSPORT

Regarding **air transport**, North Macedonia has made good progress in the general alignment with and implementation of the EU aviation *acquis* in relation to market access. There are still several areas where work continues or needs to start, but the overall advancement is satisfactory. Further action needs to take place in relation to the climate and environmental sustainability of aviation and in line with the EU's legislation in this area (in force or upcoming). In addition, in the Smart and sustainable mobility strategy, there will be many elements amending the Aviation *acquis*, aligning with the EU's overarching goals for a greener and more efficient transport sector.

X. AVIATION SECURITY

a. Country presentation

On civil aviation security, there is **full alignment** with the requirements of:

- Regulation (EC) 300/2008 on Common Rules in the Field of Civil Aviation Security and repealing Regulation with the amendments, according to Annex 1 from ECAA Agreement, as amended by Commission Regulation 18/2010/EU and supplemented by Commission Regulation 272/2009/EC;
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1998 laying down Detailed Measures for the Implementation of the Common Basic Standards on Aviation Security;
- Commission Regulation (EU) 1254/2009 laying down Procedures for Conducting Commission Inspections in the Field of Aviation Security.
- Commission Regulation (EU) 72/2010 laying down Procedures for Conducting Commission Inspections in the Field of Aviation Security;
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/413 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1998 as regards Third Countries Recognised as Applying Security Standards Equivalent to the Common Basic Standards on Civil Aviation Security;
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1583 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1998 laying down Detailed Measures for the Implementation of the Common Basic Standards on Aviation Security, as regards Cybersecurity Measures;
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/111 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1998 as regards the Approval of Civil Aviation Security Equipment as well as Third Countries Recognised as Applying Security Standards Equivalent to the Common Basic Standards on Civil

Aviation Security;

- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/421 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1998 laying down Detailed Measures for the Implementation of the Common Basic Standards on Aviation Security;
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1174 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1998 as regards Certain Detailed Measures for the Implementation of the Common Basic Standards on Aviation Security.

The national legislation is not yet aligned with the amendments of Commission Regulations contained in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/566.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with aviation security *acquis*.

C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – AVIATION SECURITY

In the area of civil aviation security, North Macedonia needs to continue its efforts in ensuring progressive and full alignment to the evolving EU *acquis*. In the interim period, North Macedonia may maintain compliance with the Union legislation by applying European Civil Aviation Conference Doc 30, Part II – Security.

XI. MARITIME TRANSPORT AND MARITIME SECURITY

a. Country presentation

On **maritime transport and maritime security**, in the national legal system of the country, **there is no national legislation** implementing the EU Maritime Transport & Maritime Security.

b. Commission assessment

There are several EU Member States which have no access to the sea, no ports but nevertheless have registers and ships. In this regard it is noted that Luxembourg has a vessel register and vessels, while Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary have maritime registers but no maritime vessels currently flying their flag.

Countries have to nominate a focal point for maritime security. A landlocked Member State may still register ships under its flag and in this case has to be fully aligned with the measures regarding ships of Regulation 725/2004/EC on Enhancing Ship and Port Security.

Alignment of most if not all maritime transport and maritime safety legislations is expected. Administrative capacities issues were identified and the European Commission, with North Macedonia authorities will work with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) to identify priorities.

The legal scope of Regulation (EU) 2017/352 Establishing a Framework for the Provision of Port Services and Common Rules on the Financial Transparency of Ports excludes its application to Member States without maritime ports on the TEN-T network. In this respect, Art. 1 paragraph 4 of the Regulation states: This Regulation applies to all maritime ports of the trans-European transport network, as listed in Annex II to Regulation 1315/2013/EU. It can be confirmed that Regulation (EU) 2017/352 does not apply to North Macedonia. This Regulation is the only piece of legislation concerning maritime ports.

North Macedonia is **not aligned** with EU *acquis* on maritime transport and maritime security.

c. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS -MARITIME TRANSPORT AND SECURITY

North Macedonia is **not aligned** with EU *acquis* on maritime transport and maritime security. The country needs to establish a National Maritime Authority as a focal point for ship registration and compliance with EU regulations, while also collaborating with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) for capacity building and training.

XII. INLAND WATERWAYS

a. Country presentation

On market access, the national legislation **is not aligned** with the EU legislation. Transport in internal water only takes place for recreational purposes on Lake Ohrid.

Regarding jobs and skills, the national legislation **is partially aligned** with Directive 87/540/EEC on Access to the Occupation of Carrier of Goods by Waterway in National and International Transport and on the Mutual Recognition of Diplomas, Certificates and other Evidence of Formal Qualifications for this Occupation, in the part of Recognition of Certificates Issued by EU Member States and Signatories of the Sava Commission.

National legislation **is not compliant** with Directives (EU) 2021/1233 as regards the Transitional Measures for the Recognition of Third-Country Certificates and (EU) 2017/2397 on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications in Inland Navigation which are planned to be aligned by 2025. As regards the Directive (EU) 2017/2397 on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications in Inland Navigation, North Macedonia needs to align only with Art. 39 (3).

For **vessels**, the national legislation, in the field of technical rules of vessels in inland navigation **is aligned** with Directive 2006/87/EC, which is out of force and has been replaced by (EU) 2016/1629 laying down technical requirements for inland waterway vessels. The national legislation **is not compliant** with:

- Directive (EU) 2016/1629 on Inland Waterway Vessels;
- Directive 2010/35/EU on Transportable Pressure Equipment;
- Directive 2008/68/EC on Inland Transport of Dangerous Goods which are nevertheless not applicable since no goods are transported on Lake Ohrid;

The new Law on Inland Navigation will be aligned with Directive (EU) 2016/1629 by 2025.

On **environment**, the national legal framework is composed of the Law on Inland Navigation.

North Macedonia is considered fully aligned with Directive 98/70/EC relating to the Quality of Petrol and Diesel Fuels.

The national legislation is **partially aligned** with Directive 98/70/EC as regards the Specification of Petrol, Diesel and Gas-Oil and Introducing a Mechanism to Monitor and Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Directive 93/12/EEC relating to the Sulphur Content of Certain Liquid Fuels. The missing elements are notably related to sustainability criteria for biofuels, system for verification of the fulfilment of sustainability criteria and life cycle calculation of greenhouse gas emissions from biofuels.

National legislation **is not aligned** with Directive (EU) 2016/1628 on Requirements Relating to Gaseous and Particulate Pollutant Emission Limits and Type Approval for Internal Combustion Engines for Non-Road Mobile Machinery and Directive 2014/94/EU on the Deployment of Alternative Fuels Infrastructure.

Regarding **river information services**, the national legal framework is composed of the Law on Inland Navigation. The national legislation **is not aligned**.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with EU inland waterway *acquis*.

C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – INLAND WATERWAYS

Authorities have a good understanding of EU **inland waterways** *acquis*, notably in relation to market access, jobs and skills, vessels, environment, and river information system. North Macedonia is advised to prioritize alignment with the EU *acquis*, especially on job and skills and environment.

Finally, it is recommended to continue cooperation with the Transport Community permanent secretariat and to participate actively the working groups supporting the implementation of the action plan for waterborne transport.

XIII. FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION - TRANSPORT POLICY

a. Country presentation

North Macedonia has a vision on fighting against corruption regarding Chapter 14. The general policy framework is the National Strategy for the Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest 2021-2025.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications implements the main elements of this Strategy, it has notably signed an integrity policy, nominated a person to implement it and established an internal audit sector.

In this regard, the National Transport Strategy 2018 – 2030 is willing to apply the principles of good governance, focusing notably on professionalism and transparency.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications implements specific activities to support the fight against corruption, such as digitalization of procedures, increasing transparency by publishing all significant acts, documents and information on its official website.

The Ministry developed a Corruption Prevention Plan. It identified the risks of corruption and made assessment to prevent each risk including public procurements, employment and promotions of employees.

b. Commission assessment

Good progresses were made by North Macedonia to set up institutions and legal framework to fight against corruption in Chapter 14.

C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

North Macedonia has the institutions and legislative framework in place to effectively fight corruption.

C) CHAPTER 15 – ENERGY POLICY

The EU energy policy focuses on energy security, sustainability, and integration of energy markets. It is based on key policy areas, such as energy efficiency, including energy performance of buildings, eco design and labelling, renewable energy, gas and oil storage, electricity and gas markets, nuclear energy, nuclear safety and radiation protection, and overall governance.

The EU energy policy is recognised in the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU Art. 114, 122, 194, and 216-218.

An increasingly important part of the EU energy policy is the links with climate, environment, and transport policy. These areas are at the core of the European Green Deal and the REPowerEU strategy, which aims to make the EU climate neutral by 2050 and ensure the energy independency of the EU, based on a systemic and coherent approach within the different areas.

Implementation and enforcement of the EU energy *acquis* requires significant investments both in infrastructure and policy frameworks. This needs to be accompanied by a structured co-operation amongst all stakeholders including different ministries and agencies, industry, and civil society. A strong and well-equipped administration at national and local level is imperative for compliance. North Macedonia is a Contracting Party to the Energy Community Treaty and a Contracting Party of the Energy Charter Treaty.

I. HORIZONTAL LEGISLATION

a. Country presentation

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2018/1999/EU on Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Change (Governance Regulation). The energy law amendments establish an obligation to publish the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) and its submission to the Energy Community Secretariat, however several provisions still need to be fully incorporated into the Energy law, which includes the biennial integrated reporting on the impacts of the NECP on the internal energy market, renewable energy, energy efficiency, energy security, energy poverty and research, innovation and competitiveness, as well as the obligations for annual reporting. In addition, provisions on the obligations of the competent state authorities for acting on requests, proposals and suggestions submitted by the Energy Community Secretariat in relation to the NECPs, the annual reports and the integrated reports still need to be incorporated into law.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding Governance Regulation, North Macedonia has made some efforts to align and implement the Governance Regulation. This can be seen by the finalisation of the draft NECP, submission to the Energy Community Secretariat and adoption of the NECP in 2020 and 2022, respectively, being the first country in the region to have a draft NECP. Currently, the plan is under revision to be amended according to the Energy Community Recommendations. Further efforts, including aligning North Macedonia's national legislation with all the provisions of the Governance Regulation and reviewing the North Macedonia's NECP in line with the Energy Community recommendations needs to be undertaken.

C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – HORIZONTAL LEGISLATION

Overall, on the Governance Regulation, which is the main horizontal regulation covering the different energy and climate areas, North Macedonia is **partially aligned**. Focus should be given to the adoption of an updated NECP and the full transposition of all provisions of the Governance Regulation.

II. ENERGY EFFICIENCY

II.A ENERGY EFFICIENCY

a. Country presentation

North Macedonia is **not aligned** with Directive (EU) 2018/2002 amending Directive 2012/27/EU on Energy Efficiency (2018 EED). Nevertheless, different national legislations and plans including the Energy Efficiency Law of 2020, Energy Law, Rules for the supply of heat energy, Tariff system for the sale of heating energy, Network rules for transmission and distribution of electricity Network Distribution Rules of heating energy and the NECP are aligned with several provisions of Directive (EU) 2012/27/EU on Energy Efficiency (2012 EED). A gap analysis was prepared to evaluate the level of alignment and how the missing provisions of 2012 and 2018 EED will be incorporated into national legislation. Based on this analysis, the main provisions missing are the energy efficiency first principle; the level of renovation rate for public buildings; the energy efficiency obligation schemes and/or alternative measures; a new assessment of the potential for the application of highly efficient combined energy production and effective central heating and air conditioning systems. On heating and cooling, in 2020 North Macedonia developed an assessment on the potential for application of highly efficient cogeneration and efficient central heating and air conditioning systems. North Macedonia highlighted that it faces several challenges for implementation of the heating and cooling provisions of the 2018 EED, including a very high share, around 60%, of households presently relying on wood burning for domestic heating.

In the area of energy performance of buildings, North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with Directive (EU) 2010/31/EU on the Energy Performance of Buildings (Recast EPBD), but it is **not aligned** with Directive (EU) 2018/844 on Energy Performance of Buildings, which amends the 2010 EPBD (2018 EPBD amendment). New rulebooks on energy performance of buildings, energy audits of large retailers and energy audit of buildings have been drafted, but not adopted yet. In order to achieve full transposition of the Recast EPBD, the 2020 Energy Efficiency Law has to be amended (amendments expected for June 2024) and, subsequently, the secondary legislation stemming from it has to be adopted. Different new provisions are currently included in the draft rulebooks, including for the methodology for the calculation of the energy characteristics of buildings (National Calculation Methodology); the preparation of Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) in accordance with the EPBD; minimum energy performance standards and other elements. For the alignment with the 2018 EPBD amendment, a gap analysis is needed and is expected to be completed by 2025. Furthermore, a legal basis still needs to be provided for the transposition of electromobility, smart readiness indicators and optimization of energy use of technical building systems. In addition, the draft law amending and supplementing the Law on Energy Efficiency foresees a Long-term Strategy to support the reconstruction of housing, public and commercial buildings, for the period up to 2050, with the aim of transforming existing buildings into highly energy-efficient and decarbonized buildings with almost zero energy consumption energy.

North Macedonia is **not aligned** with:

- Delegated Regulation (EU) 244/2012 establishing a Comparative Methodology Framework for Calculating Cost Optimal Levels of Minimum Energy Performance Requirements for Buildings and Building Elements. It aims to align it through amendments to the Energy Efficiency Law and be implemented in the Rulebook on energy performance of buildings by the end of 2024;
- Regulation (EU) 2020/2155 establishing an Optional Common European Union Scheme for Rating the Smart Readiness of Buildings;
- Regulation (EU) 2020/2156 detailing the Technical Modalities for the Effective Implementation of an Optional Common Union Scheme for Rating the Smart Readiness of Buildings.

b. Commission assessment

Greater efforts are needed for North Macedonia to accelerate its alignment with the EU energy efficiency *acquis*, both for the EED 2018 and for the Recast EPBD and 2018 EPBD amendment. For full alignment with the 2012 EED several by-laws need to be incorporated into national legislation. North Macedonia has not yet implemented Art. 7 of the 2018 EED on energy savings obligation, nevertheless North Macedonia has ongoing work on the development modalities of implementation (energy efficiency obligation schemes and/or alternative measures) and methodology for the identification of the obliged companies under Art. 7 of the 2018 EED. A draft with the needed amendments to the energy efficiency law has been prepared but, it still requires adoption. Given the high number of outstanding by-laws, the alignment process will most likely be finalised in 2025.

On energy performance of buildings, overall, the alignment is still substantially lagging behind, with the national legislation having been aligned only partially with the 2010 Recast Directive and the alignment with the 2018 EPBD amendment not having even started yet. For the latter, North Macedonia still has to carry out a gap analysis, expected to be concluded in 2025, therefore it is still uncertain when the national legislation will be aligned.

In particular, in order for North Macedonia to become fully aligned with the requirements of the EPBD as amended, the national legislation in force will need to be amended and complemented accordingly. Amongst others, provisions have to be included on the setting of minimum energy performance requirements, with a view to achieving cost-optimal levels of energy performance and on nearly zero-energy buildings. In addition, national requirements will have to be introduced on the establishment of inspection of heating and air-conditioning systems, including for the installation of building automation and control systems. National transposition also has to include requirements on the establishment of technical building systems and buildings requirements, including for the installation of self-regulating devices, also requirements on electromobility and smart readiness indicators, financial incentives and market barriers, establishment of a calculation methodology for the energy performance of buildings, and the setting up of independent control systems for energy performance certificates and inspection reports.

In parallel with the above-mentioned transposition of the substantive EPBD requirements, North Macedonia will have to lay down at national level the rules on penalties applicable to infringements of the national provisions adopted pursuant to the EPBD as amended, in line with Art. 27 EPBD.

North Macedonia has **not yet adopted** at national level Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 244/2012. It is of the utmost importance that North Macedonia adopts this Regulation as soon as possible and implements the Regulation correctly in order to calculate cost-optimal levels of energy performance for the purpose of then setting minimum energy performance requirements that achieve such cost-optimal levels.

In terms of administrative capacity, the Energy Efficiency Unit has only six people, while only three are working on the area of energy performance of buildings, there is therefore an issue of inadequate capacity because it might not be sufficient for EPBD alignment purposes. If the capacity of the national administration to align with the EPBD as amended is inadequate, this will probably lead to a slow alignment with the Directive, without excluding the possibility that national alignment will turn out to be incomplete or incorrect.

Given the limited extent of alignment at present, the lack of complete information on the timeline for complete alignment and, the administrative capacity, it is important that North Macedonia develops a clear timeline for the EPBD and EED full alignment.

II.B ENERGY LABELLING AND ECO-DESIGN

a. Country presentation

On **Eco-Design**, North Macedonia is partially aligned with Directive (EU) 2009/125/EC establishing a Framework for Setting of Eco-Design Requirements for Energy-Related Products and not aligned with

Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/341 on Eco-Design Requirements. Different products are covered under the North Macedonia Ecodesign decree with the same requirements as in the EU *acquis*, these include lighting, televisions and TV boxes, dishwashers. Other products are covered, but there is **partial alignment** with the EU *acquis* in fridges and freezers, washing machines and dryers, electric motors and off mode, standby and networked standby. Based on the North Macedonia Energy Efficiency Law, a new Decree on Eco Design is planned to be adopted, with an expected full alignment by 2027.

On **energy labelling**, North Macedonia is **not aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2017/1369/EC and Regulation (EU) 2021/340 setting a Framework for Energy Labelling and Energy Labelling Requirements. North Macedonia has **aligned** with the old Energy labelling Directive 2010/30/EU, which was repealed by Regulation (EU) 2017/1369. A Rulebook on labelling energy consumption and other resources for energy-using products based on Energy Efficiency Law has been drafted and is in the process of being adopted. The proposed rulebook will fully align with among others:

- Regulation (EU) 2017/1369; Regulation (EU) 2019/2013 on Energy Labelling of Electronic Displays;
- Regulation (EU) 2019/2014 on Energy Labelling of Household Washing Machines and Dryers; Regulation (EU) 2019/2015 on Energy Labelling of Light Sources;
- Regulation (EU) 2019/2016 on Energy Labelling of Cooling Devices; Regulation (EU) 2019/2017 on Energy Labelling of Household Dishwashers;
- Regulation (EU) 2019/2018 on Energy Labelling of Refrigerating Appliances with a Direct Sales Function.

Alignment with Regulation (EU) 2017/1369 is planned for 2025 at the latest and Regulation (EU) 2021/341 is planned for 2027.

North Macedonia is **not aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2020/740 on the Labelling of Tires. The Rulebook on labelling of products that use energy, which is an integral part of the Rulebook on labelling, will align national legislation with Regulation 2020/740. North Macedonia aims to align with this Regulation by 2025.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia has made some efforts to align with EU labelling legislation and limited efforts to align with EU eco-design legislation, further progress is needed in this field. Increased administrative capacity is needed if the legal acts are to be aligned according to the timelines presented. For Regulation (EU) 2020/740 on the Labelling of Tires it is key that North Macedonia ensures alignment with this Regulation and that the level of sanctions for the non-compliance of labelling of tires is in line with the EU provisions.

II.C SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS - ENERGY EFFICIENCY

On energy efficiency the legislation of North Macedonia is **partially aligned**, with a very low level of alignment on eco-design and products. Legislation on energy efficiency needs to be further developed, by adopting long term renovation strategy, putting in place requirements for eco-design, and implementing energy efficiency obligations schemes or alternative measures.

III. RENEWABLE ENERGY

a. Country presentation

On renewable energy, North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with Directive (EU) 2018/2001 on Renewable Energy (RED II Directive) through different national laws, decrees, decisions and rulebooks. A gap analysis for the transposition of RED II Directive has been developed and the missing draft provisions have been prepared. These include, new decision on the national mandatory targets for the share of energy produced from renewable sources in the gross final energy consumption and in the final energy consumption in

transport; by-law for support measures for energy production from biomass; new legal provisions to determine the stability of financial support and assessing the effectiveness of support schemes; new legislation to provide an obligation to the Government/Ministry for energy, mining and mineral resources to submit to the Union Renewable Development Platform annual data on the national contribution or any benchmarks set to monitor progress; new legislation targeted at investment in renewables (urban planning, construction and environment) to specify administrative procedures, regulations and rules and where possible simplify and accelerate procedures; adoption of a Rulebook on the technical specifications of the equipment for Renewable Energy Sources (RES); new legislation on long-term contracts for the purchase of energy from renewable energy sources and the implementation of such contract; adoption of a law on biofuels; new legislation to fully align and specify the provisions for the establishment and operation of energy communities; new legislation to specify the obligations for the organization and duration of the permit granting process by establishing contact points and/or a one-stop shop for requests for administrative permits for the construction of RES plants and the issuing process; introduce changes to the Electricity Distribution Grid Code to make the procedure for connection to the grid of renewables self-consumers even simpler; and introduce measures to increase renewable energy sources in the heating and cooling sector, as well as in central heating and cooling. In addition, intervention is needed in each individual law that contains provisions on the procedures for granting permits in order to further simplify and speed up the procedures for RES producers. North Macedonia stated that all those aspects will be part of the new Law on RES which is planned to be adopted by the end of 2024.

In the NECP, North Macedonia has a target of achieving 38% share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption in line with the 2030 target set by the Energy Community.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia has made some effort to align with the renewable energy *acquis*. The country has **aligned** with Directive 2009/28/EC on the Promotion of the Use of Energy from Renewable Sources (RED I) and that they are **aligning with** RED II. For RED II important provisions are in preparation, these concern key provisions like the simplification of permitting, guarantees of origin, heating and cooling, support schemes, power purchase agreements and union dataset reporting. A swift adoption and enforcement of these provisions is crucial.

On biofuels, the sustainability and relevant certification rules have not been implemented into national legislation. This may seem problematic, considering that only certified sustainable biofuels should be counted towards the overall and sectoral targets and receive subsidies. In addition, the lack of alignment of the sustainability and certification rules not only affects biofuels in the transport sector, but also bioliquids and biomass fuels that must be sustainable and certified.

On administrative capacity, North Macedonia has a unit of six people dealing with renewables within the relevant ministry. However, only three positions are filled which shows a clear lack of administrative capacity.

North Macedonia will also need to align with Directive (EU) 2023/2413 amending Directive (EU) 2018/2001, Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 and Directive 98/70/EC as regards the Promotion of Energy from Renewable Sources.

C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – RENEWABLE ENERGY

The legislation of North Macedonia has **a low level of alignment** with the *acquis* on renewable energy. Focus should be given to the alignment with the RED II provisions on biofuels, guarantees of origin, support schemes and renewable energy communities. The NECP target for renewable energy is aligned with the 2030 Energy Community targets.

IV. SECURITY OF SUPPLY

a. Country presentation

On gas, North Macedonia is **not aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2017/1938 concerning Measures to Safeguard the Security of Gas Supply and with Regulation (EU) 2022/1032 on Gas Storage (Regulation on Gas Storage). Currently North Macedonia has no underground storage facilities and has technical limitations to lease free gas storage facilities in other neighbouring states, therefore North Macedonia has in place an obligation to store other fuels to replace gas. Major gas infrastructure projects in the Southeast Europe region are being developed, such as the expansion of the Chiren underground gas storage (UGS) facility and the liquid natural gas (LNG) terminal in Alexandroupolis, Greece. Bulgartransgaz plans to launch a procedure for binding long-term reservation of storage capacity of part of the incremental capacity in UGS (up to 250 million cubic meters), which will enable North Macedonia natural gas suppliers to store surplus of natural gas for subsequent use during periods of high consumption. For the LNG terminal in Alexandroupolis, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the aim of NOMAGAS JSC Skopje to participate in the ownership structure of the LNG terminal.

On electricity, North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with Regulation 2019/941 on Risk Preparedness in the Electricity Sector (Regulation on Risk Preparedness for the Electricity sector). In 2022 the Ministry of Economy prepared a gap analysis to assess the compliance with the Regulation. This showed that the following provisions need to be aligned : precise definition of obligations of the Competent Authority; identification of regional and national electricity crisis scenarios; obligation to prepare short-term and seasonal adequacy assessments; introduction of an obligation to establish risk preparedness plans which will be submitted for assessment to the Secretariat of the Energy Community; and introduction of an obligation for early warning and declaration of an electricity crisis, based on the seasonal adequacy assessment; introduction of an obligation to assess the electricity crisis as soon as possible, and no later than 3 months after the end of the crisis.

On oil stocks, North Macedonia is partially aligned with EU Directive on emergency oil stocks. Currently, they correspond to at least 50.65 days of the average which is below the obligation of 90 days daily average net imports.

Gas security of supply provisions including aspects related to gas storage are not compliant with the EU *acquis*.

b. Commission assessment

On gas, North Macedonia has made very low efforts to implement the SoS Regulation and the Gas Storage Regulation. North Macedonia should align as soon as possible with Gas Storage Regulation, even without gas storage facilities, since provisions on burden sharing mechanism and certification procedures, are still valid for countries without gas storage facilities. The transmission system operator (Nomagas) was certified in May 2024, which is a positive development towards ensuring a high level of gas risk preparedness over the years.

Technical limitations to lease free gas storage facilities in other neighbouring states are present and despite some efforts, so far it seems that North Macedonia has not implemented a strong regional cooperation with the neighbouring countries. Nevertheless, in the future North Macedonia plans to improve their cooperation with neighbouring countries. As regard financial and human resources required to adopt and implement the security of gas supply framework, including all the aspects related to the gas storage, North Macedonia refers that the country has updated the Energy Strategy Act on this purpose.

On electricity sector, Regulation on Risk Preparedness for Electricity, is partially aligned and the alignment will require significant changes in the national Energy Law and further implementation. This will have to be followed by the appointment of competent authority as a first step, harmonization of the network codes for transmission and distribution of electricity; identification of regional and national electricity crisis scenarios; and establishment of a risk-preparedness plan.

On oil, North Macedonia has made some efforts to align with the EU Directive, but further efforts are needed to implement the Directive provisions. On oil stocks, North Macedonia still needs to fully meet the emergency oil stock obligation as outlined in the 2023-2025 action plan for the establishment of mandatory reserves. Reporting requirements are only partially fulfilled.

C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – SECURITY OF SUPPLY

On security of supply, the legislation of North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with the EU *acquis* on security of supply for electricity and oil and **not aligned** with the EU *acquis* on security of supply on gas.

V. INTERNAL MARKETS

V.A ELECTRICITY MARKET

a. Country presentation

On electricity, North Macedonia electricity transmission system operator (MEPSO) is a member of ENTSO-E and regularly cooperates with ENTSO-E in the resources adequacy assessment and in the mechanism for mutual financial compensation. MEPSO has been certified by Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC). The National Electricity Market Operator of North Macedonia (MEMO) has created a functional power exchange and is designated by the government, based on the ERC proposal, as a Nominated Electricity Market Operator (NEMO).. Forward capacities are allocated through the single platform for coordinated auction with participation in the auction office for coordinated auction of forward capacities SEE CAO Montenegro, where capacities are allocated in annual, monthly and daily levels in the borders with Greece and Kosovo. In the level of SEE CAO, harmonization of auction rules was adopted and signed, according to which capacities are allocated. Bilateral agreements for cross-border capacity allocation have been concluded in the borders with Serbia and Bulgaria, where annual, monthly and daily auctions are conducted. Negotiations with Bulgaria for access to the single coordinated auction platform are in progress. North Macedonia stakeholders, i.e. MEMO, MEPSO and ERC actively participate in the market coupling process with Albania, Montenegro, Greece and Kosovo. There is currently an active initiative for the SEE Market Coupling project, which aims to enable day-ahead market coupling among the electricity markets of these countries.

The electricity market has been fully liberalized since 2019, and all consumers can choose their electricity supplier. There are 20 active suppliers and 23 active wholesalers of electricity on the electricity market. The universal supplier that supplies small consumers and households is selected through a tender, and the price is established in accordance with the “Tarif System for the sale of electricity to consumers supplied by the universal supplier and the supplier in last resort”, with the supplier of last resort being obliged to supply consumers who are left without an electricity supplier. Transmission and distribution costs for consumers supplied by the universal supplier are shown separately on electricity bills starting from July 2022. All other consumers receive separate bills for the tariff for using the distribution system (including transmission costs) and separate bills for using the electricity transmission system for those consumers who are connected directly to the electricity transmission system.

North Macedonia is **not aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2019/942 on Establishing a European Union Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators. ERC gained status of observer in the Electricity Working Group of Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) in 2021. The national legislation should comply with the following obligations in order to align with the Regulation: establish a mechanism for the national bodies to appeal decisions made by ACER; take into account the opinions and recommendations of ACER and act accordingly on the individual decisions and decisions of ACER that are binding for ERC, the operators of the distribution and transmission systems for electricity and natural gas, the electricity market operator, and the Ministry of Economy (national bodies); establish a legal basis for sharing information from the national bodies with ACER, according to their requests; enable the participation of ACER in the preparation of the network codes; enable the monitoring of electricity and natural gas markets,

wholesale and retail, by ACER. Preparation of a new Law on Energy is underway; in order the national legislation will align with and implement Regulation (EU) 2019/942.

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2019/943 on the Internal Market for Electricity and Directive (EU) 2019/944 on Common Rules for the Internal Market for Electricity.

National legislation is aligned with several provisions introduced by Regulation (EU) 2019/943

North Macedonia needs to align with the following provisions of the Directive 2019/944: possibility of public intervention in the price for vulnerable and energy-poor consumers and for small enterprises; definition of vulnerable consumers' needs to be expanded, to include energy poverty and energy poor consumers. A criterion for poor energy efficiency should be established; enable the deployment of smart meters for electricity, requirements for the functionalities of smart systems, data management and interoperability; expand the existing "Rulebook on the method and conditions for determining the regulated maximum income and regulated average tariffs for electricity transmission, organization and management of the electricity market and electricity distribution" to include the obligations of the operators of the transmission and distribution systems arising from the Directive; add provisions for the integration of electro mobility in electricity networks; add provisions on the ownership of energy storage, which should not be in the hands of the operators of the electricity distribution systems and the electricity transmission system; expand the transmission system operator's obligations for system services, to include demand response and energy storage; set a legal basis for ERC to have an obligation to monitor investments in electricity storage and production; and enable the creation of citizen energy communities and active customers. North Macedonia stated that these aspects will be part of the new Energy Law which is planned to be adopted by the end of 2024.

On electricity network codes, North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with:

- Regulation (EU) 2015/1222 establishing a Guideline on Capacity Allocation and Congestion Management (CACM Guideline);
- Regulation (EU) 2016/631 establishing a Network Code on Requirements for Grid Connection of Generators;
- Regulation (EU) 2017/2195 establishing a Guideline on Electricity Balancing;
- Regulation (EU) 2016/1388 establishing a Network Code on Demand Connection;
- Regulation (EU) 714/2009 on Conditions for Access to the Network for Cross-Border Exchanges in Electricity;
- Regulation (EU) 543/2013 on Submission and Publication of Data in Electricity Markets and amending Annex I to Regulation (EC) no. 714/2009 of the European Parliament and Council;
- Regulation (EU) 2017/2195 establishing a Guideline on Electricity Balancing;
- Regulation (EU) 2016/1719 establishing a Guideline on Forward Capacity Allocation (FCA Guideline);

North Macedonia is **not aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2016/1447 establishing a Network Code on Requirements for Grid Connection of High Voltage Direct Current Systems and Direct Current-Connected Power Park Modules, since the country does not have high voltage direct current systems and direct current-connected power park modules in the national power system.

North Macedonia is **aligned** with Regulation (EU) No 838/2010 laying down Guidelines Relating to the Inter-Transmission System Operator Compensation Mechanism and a Common Regulatory Approach to Transmission Charging North Macedonia.

b. Commission assessment

On **electricity**, North Macedonia has made no progress to align and implement Electricity Integration Package for which the deadline was 31 December 2023, apart from earlier implementation of the Third

Energy package through unbundling and certification of the TSO, establishment of the NEMO and launch of day-ahead market. However, key steps for the establishment of a competitive electricity market are still missing, this includes full alignment with the Electricity Integration Package, which includes transposition of Directive 2009/944, Regulation (EU) 2019/943, Regulation (EU) 2019/942 and Regulation (EU) 2019/941 as well as the Capacity Allocation and Congestion Management, Electricity Balancing and Forward Capacity Allocation Guidelines, System Operation Guidelines and Emergency and Restoration Network Code. Full alignment with Directive 2009/944, Regulation (EU) 2019/943, Regulation (EU) 2019/942 and Commission Regulation (EU) 2015/1222 are of key importance to allow for further day-ahead and intraday market integration of the North Macedonia electricity system with the countries in the region and the EU.

V.B GAS MARKET

a. Country presentation

Regarding gas, national legislation **is largely aligned** with Regulation (EC) 715/2009 on Conditions for Access to the Natural Gas Transmission Networks and Directive 2009/73 concerning Common Rules for the Internal Market in Natural Gas mainly through the Energy Law and secondary laws. Since January 2023, a new Transmission System Operator for Natural Gas - NOMAGAS JSC Skopje - started working. This is the result of a merging process of the previous TSO GA-MA and NER JSC. The new company is fully state-owned and is certified. Some of the provisions of the Regulation are incorporated in the Agreement on Interconnection between the transmission system operator, NOMAGAS JSC Skopje, and the natural gas transmission system operator of Bulgaria, Bulgartrans EAD, such as: the right to access, control of flow, allocation, operative balance sheet, smoothing operative balance sheet, reports on daily and monthly allocation, communication and online data transmission, and notifications on processed quantities.

On network codes for gas, North Macedonia stated that **is fully aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2017/460 establishing a Network Code on Harmonized Transmission Tariff Structures for Gas. The national legislation is partially **aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2017/459 establishing a Network Code on Capacity Allocation Mechanisms in Gas Transmission Systems, with exception of provisions referring to the intra-day capacity allocation. This provision is not regulated, because there is still no developed gas market in the country. National provisions **are mostly aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2015/703 establishing a Network Code on Interoperability and Data Exchange Rules, since the Inter-Connection Agreement with Bulgratransgaz was signed in 2022, and partially aligned with Regulation (EU) 312/2014 establishing a Network Code on Gas Balancing of Transmission Networks.

Regarding the Regulation (EU) 1227/2011 on Integrity and Transparency of the Wholesale Energy Market (REMIT), North Macedonia is **partially aligned**. National legislation is not aligned with Art. 8, 9 and 10, 19, of REMIT: this concern data collection, registration of market participants and sharing information between ACER and other relevant institutions. These provisions are only applicable to members of ACER. Full alignment with REMIT would need a decision by the Ministerial Council of the Energy Community. On enforcement, in 2016 ERC with the support of Norway developed its own software for market monitoring.

b. Commission assessment

On **gas**, while North Macedonia has made some efforts to align the national legislation with the EU legislation, implementation remains weak. More efforts are needed to align and implement the gas network codes, implement transparency provisions, and new tariff methodology, in line with the NC TAR.

Further work and efforts are needed to align national law with Regulation (EU) 1227/2011, in particular concerning the implementation of the “full-REMIT” model. Likewise, consistent efforts are required for the alignment to Regulation (EU) 2019/942.

V.C SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – INTERNAL MARKETS

The legislation of North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with the EU *acquis* on internal markets. Legislation on gas and electricity markets needs to be further aligned to allow for future integration of the North Macedonia energy markets with the countries in the region and the EU.

VI. NUCLEAR ENERGY

a. Country presentation

North Macedonia has no nuclear power plant, no research reactor and no nuclear installation operating in its territory. North Macedonia has a **high level of alignment** with the provisions of the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom Treaty) regarding health and safety, safeguards and external relations. In addition, North Macedonia participates in the Agreement between the Euratom and non-member States of the European Union on the participation of the latter in the Community arrangements for early exchange of information in the event of radiological emergency (Ecurie) and in the European Radiological Data Exchange Platform (EURDEP). North Macedonia also participates in the Incident and Trafficking Database (ITDB) and the IAEA Unified System for Information Exchange in Incidents and Emergencies (USIE).

North Macedonia has also ratified key conventions, treaties and agreements, these include: Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); Convention on Early Notification in a case of Nuclear Accident; Convention on Assistance in Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency; Convention on Nuclear Safety; Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the Application of Safeguards in Connection with the Agreement on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; Small Quantity Protocol; Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear material; and Joint Convention on the safety of the spent fuel management and on the safety of radioactive waste management.

As regards Directive 2014/87/Euratom on Nuclear Safety of Nuclear Installations (Nuclear Safety Directive), North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with it, through the Law on Ionizing Radiation Protection and Safety, Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interests, Law on Administrative Servants, Law on Inspection Supervision, and Law on Organization and Work of State Administration Bodies. These laws establish a regulatory body with its duties and responsibilities, the training of the administrative servants in the Radiation Safety Directorate (RSD), responsibility on inspection supervision by the RSD, transparency of the work of the RSD and public information and prevention of conflict of interests. Future plans for alignment, end goal is in 2027, include updating national legislation to include additional definitions, inclusion of additional roles and responsibilities of the RSD regarding the nuclear safety, and inclusion of a special chapter for all stages in licensing of nuclear installations (siting, design, construction, commissioning and operation or decommissioning). In 2017, at the request of the Government of North Macedonia a peer review of the national regulatory framework for radiation safety was performed.

North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with Directive 2013/59/Euratom laying down Basic Safety Standards for Protection against the Dangers arising from Exposure to Ionising Radiation (Basic Safety Standards Directive), through the Law no. 48/02 on Ionizing Radiation Protection and Safety, Law no 135/07 on Amending the Law on Ionizing Radiation Protection and Safety; Regulations issued by the RSD with details on implementation of the requirements; and management of emergency exposure situations prescribed in the Plan on Protection of the Population in case of Radiation Emergency. This legal framework lays down definitions, the system of radiation protection, the requirements for radiation protection education, training and information, justification and regulatory control of practices, occupational, medical and public exposure, and general responsibilities. Future steps to address existing gaps by the end of 2027 include: Harmonizing the use of the Directive's definitions across sectoral legislation, laying down requirements on training of workers, graded approach to regulatory control, justification of new practices, dose limits and reference levels, outside workers, radon reference level in houses and workplaces, non-medical imaging exposures,

radiation protection experts, consumer products, as well strengthening the administrative capacities of the RSD, updating the Plan on Protection of the Population in case of Radiation Emergency and complementing their national radon action plan.

North Macedonia is **broadly aligned** with Directive 2006/117/Euratom on the Supervision and Control of Shipments of Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel (Shipment Directive). North Macedonia has provisions on import/export/transit of radioactive and nuclear material (including radioactive waste and disused radioactive sources); prohibition of import of radioactive waste and/or nuclear waste on the territory of the Country; licensing for import/export/transit of radioactive and nuclear material, which might be done through the electronic system EXIM (web-based system used by 16 institutions with responsibilities in the foreign trade); and applications for license to the RSD. Future plans include the update of the national legislation by the end of 2027 with objective of harmonization with the latest EU and IAEA standards.

On Directive 2013/51/Euratom laying down Requirements for the Protection of the Health of the General Public with regard to Radioactive Substances in Water intended for Human Consumption (Euratom Drinking Water Directive), North Macedonia is **fully aligned**. This is achieved through the Rulebook on special requirements for safety and quality of drinking water and the national annual public health program, which is adopted by the Minister of Health. Different institutions are involved in the implementation of this Directive, these include the public utilities that supply drinking water; the Food and Veterinary Agency (FVA); the Institute of Public Health (IPH) together with the Centers for Public Health; and the municipalities (with the exception of the municipalities of Skopje - the city of Skopje). Future plans include strengthening the capacities of the FVA and strengthening the capacities of the IPH.

North Macedonia is **broadly aligned** with Directive 2011/70/Euratom establishing a Community Framework for the Responsible and Safe Management of Spent Fuel and Radioactive Waste (Waste Directive). In North Macedonia the main use of radioactive sources is medicine and industry. There is historical waste in the country with low and intermediate level of radioactivity. For this waste the national policy includes provisions on on-site storage; export of the disused radioactive sources to the manufacturer/supplier; decay and discharge; clearance from regulatory control; and long-term storage in National Storage Facility.

Overall, North Macedonia aims to strengthen the administrative capacity of the RSD for the areas described in this chapter.

b. Commission assessment

Overall, North Macedonia has made significant efforts to align its legislative framework with the Euratom *acquis* and is currently part of all key conventions concluded under the auspices of the IAEA and participates in the ECURIE and EURDEP.

North Macedonia is a non-nuclear country and there is no intention for future implementation of nuclear program, therefore the following provisions of the Nuclear Safety Directive will not be applicable: Art. 6 (Licence holders), 8a (Nuclear safety objective for nuclear installations), 8b (Implementation of the nuclear safety objective for nuclear installations), 8c (Initial assessment and periodic safety reviews) and 8d (On-site emergency preparedness and response).

The existing nuclear safety-related legislation needs to be complemented to cover, for example, additional roles and responsibilities to the RSD regarding the nuclear safety and adding special chapter for all stages in licensing of nuclear installations. On the Euratom Drinking Water Directive, further efforts need to focus on improving the implementation on the ground, by increasing the number of staff and capacity in the FVA and in the laboratories carrying out the checks. At the same time, North Macedonia radiation protection legal framework should also be strengthened by adopting national provisions meeting the requirements of the Basic Safety Standards Directive that have not been addressed yet, including the revision of their national emergency plan and the national radon action plan. North Macedonia would need to start adapting the existing systems of accountancy and control of nuclear materials in order to accommodate for the

safeguards provisions (Chapter 7) of the Euratom Treaty in the future (and at least one year before the accession).

C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – NUCLEAR ENERGY

The legislation of North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with the Euratom *acquis*, additional efforts need to be undertaken to fully align national legislation and increase administrative capacity.

VII. FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION - ENERGY

a. Country presentation

North Macedonia has in place several laws, bylaws and rulebooks to prevent corruption. Among these, there is a law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest and a National strategy for prevention of corruption and conflict of interest 2021-2025.

On energy, through different audits and the work of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), different risk factors were pinpointed for the energy sector: strong political influence in setting up management structures; absence of integrity; abuse of discretionary powers for new hires and taking over employees from other institutions; non-transparency in public procurement procedures; influence of politically exposed persons, who are simultaneously owners of companies that participate in the energy market, for example during the adoption of the Law on Energy.

During the 2022 energy crisis, several measures have been adopted to mitigate the effects of price increases, which the institutions at the central and local level have not fully applied and have not established control mechanisms for their monitoring. The large deviations/imbalance made in October 2021, when AD MEPSO Skopje invoiced 77.8 GWh from AD ESM Skopje, indicated an incomplete readiness of institutions to deal with crisis.

Lack of appropriate legislation on treatment of underground natural resources and deposit reserves for minerals. In case of damage, there are no compulsory insurance policies provided for minimum coverage; for protection during the discovery of archaeological sites; analysing the history of investors – whether it is a new investor or an investor who already has experience in the energy market; for the mandatory obligation of investors to prepare a disaster management plan – caused by a natural accident, e.g. earthquake, flood, fire, etc., or caused by a human factor – fire, serious theft, robbery, etc; for waste management, nor are there any landfills for waste disposal; establishing a system for measuring harmful emissions on the environment.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia has made some progress to put in place anti-corruption measures, however further actions need to be taken across all fields and institutions that deal with energy, including AD MEPSO and AD ESM. More efforts should focus on digitalisation, transparency of public procurement and other procedures, planning of activities and investments, and strengthen the legislation for the gaps identified.

C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

North Macedonia has some measures to prevent corruption in the field of energy. However, further actions need to be taken across all fields and institutions that deal with energy.

D) CHAPTER 21 – TRANS-EUROPEAN NETWORKS

This chapter covers the Trans-European Networks policy in the areas of transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructures, including the Community guidelines on the development of the Trans-European Networks and the support measures for the development of projects of common interest. The establishment and development of Trans-European Networks and the promotion of proper interconnection and interoperability of national networks aim to take full advantage of the internal market and to contribute to economic growth and the creation of employment in the European Union.

The **Trans-European Networks (TENs)** policy in the **Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)** is governed by **Title XVI**, which includes **Articles 170 to 172**.

Trans-European energy networks (TEN-E) covers the transport and storage facilities of hydrogen and renewables gases as well as electricity transmission, energy storage and smart electricity grids and make a significant contribution to the electricity and gas market. TEN-E responds to the growing importance for securing and diversifying the EU's energy supplies, incorporating the energy networks of the Member States and candidate countries, and ensuring the coordinated operation of energy networks in the EU and in neighbouring countries. The security of energy supply and the functioning of the internal energy market are key policy goals. Axes for priority projects and projects of common interest have been identified in this regard.

The Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) policy aims at building an effective, EU wide and multimodal transport network across the EU. It comprises railways, roads, inland waterways, short sea shipping routes, maritime and inland ports, airports and terminals. The TEN-T policy also sets requirements that infrastructure must comply with, including on safety, quality for performing transport and alignment with environmental objectives. This policy has been a centrepiece in the projection of the EU transport policy to third countries and it was integrated into the Economic and Investment Plan of the Western Balkans. The extended TEN-T covers the Western Balkans, Türkiye, and Eastern Partnership countries. Furthermore, the recently revised TEN-T regulation includes a dedicated Western Balkans Eastern Mediterranean Corridor, covering all the Western Balkan partners, with the aim of significantly improving transport connections with the EU.

A strong and well-equipped administration at national and local level is imperative for the implementation and enforcement of EU TENs *acquis*.

I. TRANS-EUROPEAN NETWORKS FOR ENERGY

a. Country presentation

National legislation is **not aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2022/869 on Guidelines for Trans-European Energy Infrastructure (TEN-E Regulation). Alignment with TEN-E Regulation is due by 2024. The Ministry of Economy is responsible for the alignment of the national legislation with this Regulation and will prepare a gap analysis, to pinpoint the provisions that need to be adopted. to ensure compliance with the EU framework.

North Macedonia had previously several projects with the Project of Mutual Interest and Project of Energy Community Interest status under the TEN-E Regulation. For electricity this includes the 400 kV interconnection transmission line Bitola-Elbasan between North Macedonia and Albania and for gas three natural gas interconnectors have been included: Serbia, Kosovo, and Greece. The transmission system operator every two years prepares the 10-year network development plan and contributes to the development of the 10-year network development plans of the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity (ENTSO-E).

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is **not aligned** with the TEN-E Regulation, but alignment is planned by the end of 2024. In addition, North Macedonia should carry out necessary strategies and assessment to investigate the potential for the decarbonisation of industry and transport that might trigger infrastructure investment needs, notably in hydrogen and biomethane.

North Macedonia has yet to reflect on any infrastructure needs that might derive from the decarbonization of its industry.

C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – TRANS-EUROPEAN NETWORKS FOR ENERGY

The legislation of North Macedonia is **not aligned** with the EU *acquis* on Trans-European Networks for Energy. North Macedonia should focus on transposing the TEN-E Regulation through its Law on Energy and the Law on Strategic Investments, strengthening its administrative capacity and carry out relevant assessment for decarbonisation of the industry.

II. TRANS-EUROPEAN NETWORKS FOR TRANSPORT

II.A TEN-T GUIDELINES AND CONNECTING EUROPE FACILITY

a. Country presentation

In the **railway** sector, the national legal framework is composed of the National transport strategy 2018-2030; the Law on Railway System; the Law on Safety in the Railway System and the Law on Interoperability in the Railway System. There is **partial alignment** with TEN-T standards on Corridor X. In connection with Corridor VIII-eastern part towards the Republic of Bulgaria, the detail design complies with the required TEN-T standards.

In **combined transport**, the national legal framework is composed of National transport strategy 2018-2030 and the Law on Railway System.

In **aviation** sector, the national legal framework is composed of National transport strategy 2018-2030 and the Aviation Law. Instrument for Pre-Accession III (IPA) project for the preparation of a National Strategy for Development of the Aviation in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2023-2032 is ongoing. Air transport legislation which is related to TEN-T networks is harmonised in Art. 25 with Regulation 300/2008/EC related to the Manner of Provision of Air Navigation Services as well as the Special Conditions regarding the Necessary Personnel, Equipment and Other Special Conditions Necessary for Safe and Orderly Operation.

North Macedonia **is aligned** with the Regulation (EC) No 552/2004 on the Interoperability of the European Air Traffic Management Network with the Decree on the rules and conditions for the interoperability of systems, their components and related procedures for the provision of air navigation services in the European Air Traffic Management Network. The country stated that it is also aligned with the Regulations (EC) No 551/2004 on the Organisation and Use of the Airspace in the Single European Sky, (EC) No 549/2004 laying down the Framework for the Creation of the Single European Sky and (EC) No 550/2004 on the Provision of Air Navigation Services in the Single European Sky. In the **inland waterway** transport sector, the national legal framework is composed of National transport strategy 2018-2030 and the law on inland navigation.

Regarding the **future plans**, the objective is to finalise the road and railway sections of Corridor VIII and X in terms of infrastructure (construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation). Additional goals are the modernisation through digitalisation, introduction of Intelligent Transport Systems, decarbonisation, introduction of safe, sustainable transport and introduction of smart mobility. For these sections of the core network, the ambition is to complete by 2030, and for the extended core network by 2040.

b. Commission assessment

On **TEN-T Guidelines and Connecting Europe Facility**, North Macedonia has progressed in aligning with the TEN-T legislation, emphasising that the Transport Community Treaty framework is a leading factor in TEN-T implementation. However, it seems that it is focusing mostly on infrastructure aspects, and it is difficult to assess to what extent TEN-T legislation has been applied and to what extent national legislation is aligned. It is to be noted that the TEN-T Regulation 1315/2013/EU has been revised. The revised Regulation (EU) 2024/1679 entered into force on 18 July 2024 and introduced new and reinforced old TEN-T infrastructure standards for all transport modes. It also included now operational rail freight targets. Most importantly, North Macedonia has been integrated on the Western Balkans-Eastern Mediterranean European Transport Corridor. As such, it should cooperate with the European TEN-T Coordinator in the elaboration of a work plan for this corridor, which sets the priorities for the development of the corridor in North Macedonia. Such priorities should then also be translated in a high-level understanding which is based on the work plan of the European Coordinator.

Some pan-European corridors no longer exist in EU legislation. It should be clearly stated that nothing else apart from the TEN-T network should be considered as valid basis for the future. Any infrastructure planning at national level (as part of the application of the TEN-T Regulation) should correspond to the TEN-T networks.

II.B PUBLIC SERVICE OBLIGATIONS

a. Country presentation

Regarding public services obligations, the national legislation is **aligned** with Article 3 (1) on public service contracts and general rules, of Regulation 1370/2007/EC on Public Passenger Transport Services by Rail and by Road. It is partially aligned with Article 5 on the award of public service contracts.

Amendments have been initiated to the Law in Government sessions and the market should be opened soon for new entries.

North Macedonia has no tramways, and buses have no public service obligations, except from Skopje which issues PSO for students and retired people.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding public services obligations, Regulation 1370/2007/EC concerns also public transports like tramway, metro and buses. Competitive awards for bus and tramways should already apply. North Macedonia seems to make a link between rail liberalisation (open access) and the competitive award of public service contract for rail service despite the fact that these processes are distinct (competitive award can take place without open access in place). Bus services in Skopje which are under control of municipality, would fall within the scope of the Regulation and thus be subject to specific obligations.

II.C SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – TRANS-EUROPEAN NETWORKS FOR TRANSPORT

North Macedonia has **partial alignment** on Trans-European Transport Network. The country has an understanding of challenges ahead. In terms of institutional framework, the country needs to strengthen its institutional framework for the management and development of Trans-European Transport Network. In addition, the country needs to speed up the implementation of the TEN-T investment action plan of the Transport Community Treaty, which is still at low rate.

III. FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION - TRANS-EUROPEAN NETWORKS

a. Country presentation

North Macedonia has a vision on fighting against corruption on Chapter 21; the general policy framework is the National Strategy for the Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest 2021-2025.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications implements the main elements of this Strategy, it has signed an integrity policy, nominated a person to implement it and established an internal audit sector.

In this regard, the National Transport Strategy 2018 – 2030 is willing to apply the principles of good governance, focusing notably on professionalism and transparency.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications implements specific activities to support the fight against corruption, such as digitalization of procedures, increasing transparency by publishing all significant acts, documents and information on its official website.

The Ministry developed a Corruption Prevention Plan. It identified the risks of corruption and made assessment to prevent each risk including public procurements, employment and promotions of employees.

b. Commission assessment

Progress was made by North Macedonia to set up the institutions and legislative framework in place to effectively fight corruption.

C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

North Macedonia has the institutions and legislative framework in place to fight against corruption.

E) CHAPTER 27 – ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

EU environment and climate policy promotes strong climate action, sustainable development and protects the environment for present and future generations. It is based on preventive action, the 'polluter pays' principle, the precautionary principle, rectifying environmental damage at source, shared responsibility and the integration of environmental and climate change considerations into other EU policies, according to Articles 191-193 of the TFEU. This integration is at the core of the European Green Deal, which is the new EU growth strategy, aiming at turning the interrelated environmental challenges (climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, the unsustainable consumption and production) into opportunities while making the EU climate neutral by 2050, based on a systemic and coherent approach under the “do no harm” principle.

The Chapter 27 *acquis* comprises over 200 major legal acts covering both horizontal and sectoral legislation (air quality, waste management, water quality, nature protection, industrial pollution and risk management, chemicals, noise, civil protection and climate change). Compliance with the *acquis* covered by this chapter requires significant investments and a structured co-operation among all stakeholders including local authorities, industry and civil society. Furthermore, transition towards the climate neutral and resilient economy as per the Paris Agreement and in line with EU Climate Law require robust reforms in all economic sectors, particularly energy, transport, agriculture and forestry, among others, and a coordinated effort to reach these ambitious objectives. Moreover, a strong and well-equipped administration at national and local level is imperative for its implementation and enforcement.

I. ENVIRONMENT

IA HORIZONTAL LEGISLATION

a. Country presentation

The Agreement for the Association of North Macedonia to the **LIFE Programme** has been signed on 3 July 2023.

Regarding **environmental assessments of plans, programmes and projects**, North Macedonia stated that it is **partially aligned** with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive 2014/52/EU and **fully aligned**, since 2010, with the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive 2001/42/EC. There are seven employees dealing with EIA in the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MOEPP). There is no specific agency dealing with environment in North Macedonia. North Macedonia is aware of the challenges ahead in terms of further alignment and implementation. It is a party to the Convention "on environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context (ESPOO Convention)".

In terms of **Aarhus Convention** related *acquis*, North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with both Directive 2003/4/EC on Public Access to Environmental Information and Directive 2003/35/EC on Public Participation and Access to Justice. There is one Aarhus centre in Skopje. The Macedonian Environmental Information Centre of the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MOEPP) has developed an Environmental Information System where information about the environment is actively shared. Public participation in decision-making is ensured. A Council on cooperation with civil society has been established.

North Macedonia stated that it is at an early stage of aligning with the Directive 2004/35/EC on **Environmental Liability** (ELD). Full alignment with the Directive is foreseen at the time of accession to the EU. Competent authorities have been identified. Implementation has not started yet.

North Macedonia stated that it is at an **advanced stage of alignment** with Directive 2008/99/EC on **Environmental Crime**, notably through the Criminal Code, the Law on environment and the Law on inspection supervision. A public prosecutor is specifically in charge of environmental crime. Relevant

judicial bodies are in place. North Macedonia is an active member of the European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL). Further capacity building is planned, notably through twinning. Full implementation is foreseen by 2027.

North Macedonia stated that it is at an **advanced stage of alignment** with the Directive 2007/2/EC establishing an Infrastructure for the Spatial Information in the European Community (**INSPIRE**). A Law on National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) as well as two Regulations on Metadata Standards and Network Services have been adopted. Governance is ensured through a tri-partite agreement between NSDI Council, NSDI Committee and working groups. A national geoportal is in place since 2015. Full alignment is expected by 2027.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia is the first Western Balkan country and the fourth non-EU country after Iceland, Ukraine and Moldova, to join the **LIFE** Programme. This is an important achievement, which will support the country with concrete projects, to further prepare with *acquis* implementation.

In terms of **environmental assessments** of plans, programmes and projects, some progress can be observed with regard to practical implementation. Efforts are still needed to achieve full alignment with the provisions of the EIA Directive, in particular its 2014 amendment, and ratification of the amendments to the Espoo Convention on transboundary EIA. Additionally, strengthening the quality of environmental assessments is especially needed in the case of investments projects in infrastructure, mining and hydropower sectors. Particular attention should also be paid to safeguarding of rights and access to court. Strengthening of administrative capacity is needed.

Regarding **Aarhus *acquis***, there is good progress made on alignment, in particular on access to information, but there is space for improvement as concerns public participation. Future capacity building activities are considered relevant. However, substantive efforts are needed to implement the third pillar, access to justice, especially when it comes to ensuring that the public concerned including NGOs can challenge plans and regulatory acts.

North Macedonia is at an early stage of aligning with the **ELD** with only some elements of the system in place. The concept of remediation for the damage in kind (as opposed to punishment, or financial compensation) has not yet been aligned or implemented. The full alignment is meant to take still several years and would require close monitoring.

North Macedonia has a relatively good level of legislative and institutional alignment with the requirements of the **Environmental Crime Directive**. The main challenge lies in the implementation, linked to the need to further strengthen administrative capacities, including inspection ones. It is also important for North Macedonia to follow the revision of the Environmental Crime Directive, which would notably increase the number of offenses and strengthen the enforcement chain.

North Macedonia has a good understanding of the complex requirements of the Directive 2007/2/EC establishing an Infrastructure for the Spatial Information in the European Community (**INSPIRE**), which are well reflected in the legal and institutional frameworks. It is important for North Macedonia to further monitor other EU data legislation such as the open data one.

I.B AIR QUALITY

a. Country presentation

North Macedonia stated that it is **partially aligned** with Directive 2008/50/EC on **Ambient Air Quality (AAQ)** and the 4th "daughter" Directive 2004/107/EC (relating to arsenic, cadmium, mercury, nickel and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in the ambient air). Full alignment is expected by 2026. Competent authorities have been established. Strengthening the administrative capacities at the central and local level is needed. North Macedonia is divided into three air quality zones: one agglomeration and two regions. There are 21 fixed and one mobile air monitoring stations. Air quality assessment is regularly carried out,

public information is provided in real time and some local air quality plans have been prepared. Some further air quality improvement measures should be implemented at the central and local levels, in order not to exceed the limit values.

North Macedonia is party to the Gothenburg Protocol but amendments to the last three protocols have not been ratified yet. North Macedonia stated that it has a **low level of alignment** with the Directive 2016/2284/EU on the Reduction of National Emissions of Certain Atmospheric Pollutants (NEC). In order to achieve full alignment, it will build on its full alignment with the “old” Directive, by amending the existing legislation. The institutional framework for inventory preparation, reporting of air emissions and inspection is in place. It should be strengthened for planning and monitoring. Implementation is partial. A national emission reduction commitments plan for 2020-2029 and 2030 compared to 2005 as well as a national air pollution control programme are to be established. Monitoring of air pollution impacts has not been established.

North Macedonia stated that it is **fully aligned** with Directive 2016/802/EU relating to a Reduction in the **Sulphur Content of Certain Liquid Fuels**, through a Rulebook on the quality of liquid fuels. An Annual Plan for monitoring the quality of extra light household oil and fuel oil and an inspection system are in place. The Commission Implementing Decision 2015/253/EU concerning the sampling and reporting as regards the sulphur content of **marine fuels** is not relevant for North Macedonia.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia **has low level of alignment** with the *acquis* on air quality. Major efforts are needed in the process of implementation, as this will require large scale investments, including from privately owned companies. The existing monitoring system and structures in charge of the collection and processing of data and of future reporting to the Commission also require reinforcement. Particular attention should be paid to transboundary pollution. Further strengthening of administrative capacity is necessary. A clear table outlining the necessary human resources, the financial commitments, as well as a schedule of implementation would provide good guidance to that end.

I.C WASTE MANAGEMENT

a. Country presentation

North Macedonia stated that the recent package of Laws in the field of waste management is in accordance with the principles of the **circular economy**: the Law on Waste Management, the Waste Management Plan (2021-2031) and the Waste Prevention Plan (2022-2028). There is no implementation of the requirements of the Directive 2019/904/EU on the Reduction of the Impact of Certain Plastic Products on the Environment, except for the ban on the use of single-use plastics in protected areas and restaurants and the mandatory use of biodegradable bags for carrying goods, which include a EUR 0,25 cent fee, feeding in a recycling scheme. The use of plastic bags has decreased by 80% since this ban and this fee has been applied in 2021. Full alignment is expected by 2030.

North Macedonia stated that alignment with the 2008 **Waste** Framework Directive (WFD) is well advanced through several laws and secondary legislation, with the exception of Annex III. A National Waste Management Strategy is planned to be adopted by the end of 2025. Full alignment with the WFD, as amended in 2018, is foreseen by 2028. A system set up by collective operators for the extended producer responsibility (EPR) scheme comprising public utilities and licenced private operators for the separate collection of plastic, paper and glass from households and businesses is operational. A public utility company is responsible for collection and transportation within municipalities. In order to ensure adequate financing and economy of scale, five management regions have been established. The national Waste Management Plan includes cost estimates and plans for financing the necessary investments. Funds are planned through IPA, WBIF, EBRD and national budget contribution for the set-up of five waste management regions by 2030 and for an amount of approximately EUR 170 million.

North Macedonia stated that it is **largely aligned** with the Directive 1999/31/EC on **Landfill of Waste**. Relevant authorities and responsibilities, including inspections, are in place at national and municipal levels. 42 existing non-standard landfills should be closed, and further funding is required. The estimated costs for closing non-standard landfills amount to around EUR 28,314,165. A technical assessment for all non-standard landfills will be prepared by end of 2026.

North Macedonia stated that it is **largely aligned** with the **Sewage Sludge Directive** 86/278/EEC. Few important legal gaps are diagnosed, such as the legal base for the full alignment. Secondary legislation needs to be revised for correct implementation and to put in place the appropriate means (e.g., establishing laboratories) with a view to ensuring that the legislation is operational and can be adequately enforced. There are currently 25 wastewater treatment plants, which represents 27.5% of the required capacity. Two main Sludge Management Scenarios are considered, which imply landfilling in the short term and then incineration. By 2025, full alignment, appropriate institutional setting and suitable financial instrument are expected.

North Macedonia stated that there is **partial alignment** with the **Batteries Directive** 2006/66/EC. Full alignment is expected by the end of 2030. Targets for collection and treatment are not yet fully aligned. Revision of targets is planned to start in 2024. Competent authorities, including customs, have been identified. Systems for separate collection of batteries and accumulators have been established, for removal and recycling. Extended responsibility of producers (EPR) for batteries and accumulators is in place.

North Macedonia indicated that there is **partial alignment** with Directive 2012/19/EU on **Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment** (WEEE). Collection and treatment objectives are not fully aligned, the deadline to be aligned with EU ones is 2030. In 2022, 30% of the equipment put on the market has been collected. Extended Producer responsibility system is in place. North Macedonia issued three permissions licences for collective handlers for WEEE management activities, two for individual handlers for WEEE management and five waste management permits which cover mostly pre-treatment for export.

North Macedonia stated that it is **largely aligned** with Directive 2011/65/EU on the Restriction of the Use of Certain **Hazardous Substances in Electrical and Electronic Equipment** (RoHS). It is ensured that the electric and electrical equipment (EEE) placed on the market (including cables and spare parts for its repair and reuse) does not contain hazardous substances listed in the Directive, in line with EU requirements. North Macedonia has also a list of exemptions which corresponds to previous versions of the Annex III and IV of the Directive, but which will be updated with a new law. EEE falling under the RoHS Directive is placed on the market of North Macedonia by importers, who need to comply with the obligations laid in Article 9 of that Directive.

North Macedonia stated that it is **partially aligned** with Directive 94/62/EC on **Packaging and Packaging Waste**, through the Law on packaging and packaging waste management from 2021 and several secondary legislations. Provisions on collection, recovery and recycling targets as well as on calculating methodology and reporting are missing. A secondary legislation on these matters is planned. Deadline for full alignment is 2027. An Extended Producer Responsibility scheme is in place. In 2022, 57% of packaging waste has been collected. Carrier bags (over 15 microns to 50 microns) are charged 0.25 cents and funds collected are allocated to waste sorting programmes.

North Macedonia stated that it has a **partial level of alignment** with the **End-of-Life Vehicles Directive** 2000/53/EC (ELV), through the Law on Additional Waste Streams from 2021. Main provisions relating to placing on the market, collecting, registering and deregistering as well as treating ELV are in place. Competent authorities have been identified. The collection and treatment targets are not fully aligned. An Extended Producer responsibility scheme is operational since early 2024. There are two licences for collective handlers for vehicles and five permits for management of ELVs (dismantling, pre-treatment).

North Macedonia is a party to the Basel Convention on the Control of the Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal, since 1997. North Macedonia stated that national legislation is **highly**

aligned with Regulation 1013/2006/EC on **Shipment of Waste**. A permitting and consent regime is in place and operational. North Macedonia has oriented its waste shipment regime towards exchanging waste with the EU. Full alignment is expected by end of 2025.

Regarding Regulation 1257/2013/EU on **Ship Recycling**, North Macedonia stated that full alignment with main provisions on nomenclature is expected by end of 2024, through secondary legislation.

With regard to Regulation 850/2004/EC on Persistent Organic Pollutants (**POPs**), North Macedonia stated that it is **partially aligned**, through the support of various projects. A National Implementation Plan on POPs management has been prepared. Implementation is at an early stage. Substantial financial resources are required - but not planned - to clean up the landfills in OHIS site (lindane waste and contamination) and in Pelenica.

Regarding the Regulation 96/59/EC on **the Disposal of Polychlorinated Biphenyls and Polychlorinated Terphenyls** (PCB/PCT), North Macedonia stated that it is **fully aligned**. PCB treatment facility is regularly monitored. There is regular reporting to the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention. Future plans include identification of transformers containing PCBs and their subsequent decontamination, strengthening analytical facilities (laboratories) and establishing a continuous system for monitoring.

North Macedonia stated that it is **fully aligned** with Directive 2006/21/EC on the Management of **Mining Waste**, through the Law on Mineral Resources and secondary laws. A Strategy for Geological Exploration and Sustainable Utilization of the Mineral Resources for the period 2025-2045 is under preparation. Geological explorations are conducted by awarding concessions. The concession for the exploitation of mineral resources is granted for a period of up to 30 years. 346 concessions for the exploitation of mineral resources have been granted so far. Full implementation is foreseen by end of 2027, which will require new assistance and funding.

b. Commission assessment

On **circular economy**, North Macedonia is in the process of aligning with relevant legislation. However, the integration of circular economy aspects into national legislation is for now limited to the end-of-life stage of products, not taking into consideration non-waste related aspects of products' lifecycles. There are promising developments regarding some provisions of the Directive in **Single Use Plastics** and discussion on a dedicated plastic strategy. More work needs to be done regarding setting up necessary strategic and regulatory framework for the plastics and further aligning with the *acquis*.

Regarding the **Waste Framework Directive**, the legislative alignment with the Directive from 2008 is relatively advanced, with the exception of annex III relating to hazardous waste. Alignment with the amended Directive from 2018 - which pushes further waste prevention and circular economy policies - is still pending and is only planned for 2028. The current legal framework defines an integrated waste management system, which includes the waste hierarchy as well as a list of waste types. Implementation remains a significant challenge across the waste management sector. The establishment of integrated waste management systems with functional waste management structures and cost reflective tariff methodology is needed. A system set up by collective operators for the extended producer responsibility (EPR) scheme comprising public utilities and licenced private operators for the separate collection of plastic, paper and glass from households and businesses is operational, but capacity is limited. Activities aimed at further improving the EPR system have begun. Legislative and institutional frameworks for most of the waste streams are in place. Efforts on closing non-compliant **landfills** need to be pursued.

On **sewage sludge**, two management scenarios are set up and rely to a greater or lesser extent on landfilling of sewage sludge from urban wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs). This counters the objectives of reduction of biodegradable waste going to landfills required by the Landfill Directive. As investments in wastewater treatment are ongoing, sufficient progress in full transposition of the respective Directive needs to be ensured.

On **waste shipment**, the new EU Waste Shipment Regulation (EU) 2024/1157 should be taken into account. The same goes for the new **Batteries** Regulation (EU) 2023/1542, which establishes stricter sustainability and waste management requirements over time.

To conclude, overall, North Macedonia has **low level of alignment** with EU *acquis* on waste. North Macedonia is well aware of future timing and financing required for further implementation of the *acquis*, which is still partial.

Some further efforts are needed in the implementation process of the *acquis* across the entire sector. Implementation will require large scale investments, and further strengthening of the technical and administrative capacity at national and local level.

I.D WATER QUALITY

a. Country presentation

North Macedonia stated that it is **largely aligned** with the **Water Framework Directive** 2000/60/EC, through the Law on Waters and secondary legislation. Full alignment with the Directive and determining the relevant institutional setting is expected by the end of 2025. Four river basins have been identified and are all transboundary. Good cooperation with the neighbouring countries is in place. The development of river basin management plans (RBMPs) and associated Programme of Measures (PoM) are at different levels of maturity and have been consulted with stakeholders within the three River Basin Councils that have been established in 2021. None of the draft RBMPs has been adopted. Adoption of the first cycle of RBMPs and implementation of the related PoM is expected by end of 2027. Preparation of a Directive Specific Implementation Plan is planned. Financial and human capacities to implement and enforce the WFD needs to be further strengthened.

North Macedonia stated that it is **largely aligned** with the Directive 91/271/EEC on **Urban Wastewater Treatment (UWWTD)**, through the Law on Waters, the Law on Environment, the Law on Communal Services, the Law on Water Supply and Urban Wastewater Collection and Treatment and other secondary legislation. Full alignment with the UWWTD Directive and determining the relevant institutional setting is expected by end of 2025. The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning is the main responsible authority for implementation of the UWWTD (in coordination with other Ministries), but the collection, drainage and treatment of waste waters is an exclusive competence of the local self-government units (municipalities) under the Law on Local Self Government. There are 25 urban wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs), which represents 27.5 % of required capacity. The UWWTD Directive Specific Implementation Plan of 2017 identifies 173 agglomerations with more than 2 000 population equivalents (about 85% of the total population). A great leap forward will be made with the commissioning of the Skopje WWTP, which is planned for 2025. By end of 2025, a suitable financial instrument is expected to be established. Investment needs concerning the building or upgrading of wastewater treatment plants set out in the Directive Specific Implementation Plan are being assessed.

North Macedonia stated that it is **partially aligned** with the **Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)**. North Macedonia is a land-locked country and its contribution of inland water to pollution of Mediterranean and Black Sea is minimal. Full alignment with the Directive and determining the relevant institutional setting is expected by the end of 2025. Main challenges have been identified: lack of legal basis and lack of adapted legislative framework, needs for an assessment of the environmental impact of human activities. By the end of 2025, a suitable financial instrument will be established.

North Macedonia stated that it is **largely aligned** with the 1998 Directive on the Quality of Water Intended for Human Consumption (**Drinking Water Directive**). The alignment with the provisions of the revised Directive from 2020 (2020/2184/EU) has not started yet and is not foreseen at this stage. Municipalities are responsible for planning, building and maintaining the infrastructure used to provide drinking water services. The Food and Veterinary Agency (FVA) is responsible for the preparation of the legislation, but also for the official controls and the information of the population in case of non-compliance. The agency

also plays a key role in the establishment and implementation of the Water Safety Plans. 82% of the population is served by one of the 67 Public Utility Company established by municipalities to provide the service on their territory, 11% through local communal schemes, and 6% by using individual self-supply. Investment needs, which concern both the distribution networks and the water treatment plants, are well assessed and significant.

North Macedonia stated that it is **partially aligned** with the Directive 91/676/EEC concerning the Protection of Waters Against Pollution Caused by **Nitrates** from Agricultural Sources (Nitrates Directive), through laws and secondary laws. National legislation is **fully aligned** with some of the Directive's annexes, while only **partially** with other annexes. North Macedonia intends to align with remaining parts of the Directive with the adoption of the Law on plant nutrition in the second half of 2024. According to the Law on Quality and Safety on Fertilizers, Biostimulators and Improvers of the Soil, 82 samples a year were taken since 2018. Further implementation through further legislative alignment, strengthening of capacities, improving financing and monitoring is foreseen for the period from 2025 to 2030.

North Macedonia stated that it is **fully aligned** with Directive 2006/7/EC concerning the Management of **Bathing Water Quality** (Bathing Water Directive), through several laws and secondary legislation. Ministry of Health and local self-government units have been identified as the main responsible institutions. The local level is responsible for marking the bathing zones, bathing period, season and number of bathers in one day, informing the public about the quality of bathing water. Implementation is at a satisfactory level.

North Macedonia indicated that it is **partially aligned** with the Directive 2006/118/EC on the Protection of **Groundwater** against Pollution and Deterioration (Groundwater Directive). Few important legislative gaps have been identified. A water information system providing maps and information on quality and quantity is in place and maintained by the government. Monitoring of groundwater quantitative and chemical status is partially in line with WFD and Groundwater Directive. The groundwater monitoring network is run by Hydrometeorological service and suffers lack of resources and capacities. A national register of groundwater and a national research programme for groundwater is to be established. Full implementation is expected by end 2027. Preparation of a Directive Specific Implementation Plan is needed.

North Macedonia stated that it is **partially aligned** with the Directive 2008/105/EC on **Environmental Quality** Standards in the Field of Water Policy. Full alignment is planned by end of 2024 by amending the Law on Water resources. Water monitoring network is run by Hydrometeorological service and suffers lack of resources and capacities. Currently there are 20 monitoring sites covering three out of the four river basins. From the list of priority substances covered by the Directive, only nickel, cadmium and lead are included in the monitoring, while the rest of pollutants will be progressively added to the monitoring network until 2030, when full implementation is planned. Preparation of a Directive Specific Implementation Plan is needed.

North Macedonia stated that it has a **low level of alignment** with the Directive 2007/60/EC on the Assessment and Management of **Flood Risks** (Floods Directive), through several laws. Full alignment is expected by 2027. The institutional set-up is the same with that for the WFD. Some Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment and Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMP) have been conducted with external support for several major sub-basins but are not in line with the Directive. Future plans include developing all FRMPs by end of 2027, setting-up and strengthening institutional capacities by 2028 and establishing of a suitable financial instrument by end of 2030.

North Macedonia stated that it is at a **low level of alignment** with Regulation (EU) 2020/741 on Minimum Requirements for **Water Reuse** (Water Reuse Regulation). Full alignment and setting the relevant institutional framework is planned for 2027. A Groundwater Programme will be developed by the end of 2027.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia has a **partial level of alignment** with the **Water Framework Directive** 2000/60/EC

(WFD). Finalising all river basin management plans (RBMPs) and securing the funding for their implementation is needed.

North Macedonia needs to further align with the **UWWT**. The upgrade of the collection and treatment infrastructures of North Macedonia requires a strong institutional framework with solid governance: prioritisation of investments at river basin level, planning of the investments, implementation of procurement procedures and follow-up of the works. Operation and maintenance of the infrastructures (including sewage systems with obligation for households to connect) also require capacities and an adapted regulatory framework at local level. The cost concerning the collection system is not included in the assessment of investments needed. Finally, the current revision of the UWWT Directive should be closely monitored by North Macedonia: it foresees new areas of actions, e.g., smaller agglomeration, tertiary treatment.

North Macedonia needs to further align with the **Marine Strategy Framework Directive**.

The alignment with the provisions of the revised Directive on the Quality of Water Intended for Human Consumption (**Drinking Water Directive**) from 2020 is pending. National law has no indication concerning the parameters and parametric values included in the revised Directive. FVA plays a key role in the institutional framework. Its mission concerns mainly the adaptation of the legislation and quality monitoring. The calendar of progressive implementation of the Water Safety Plans (outside of Skopje) is yet to be established. The institutional framework does not include a planning and implementation level between policy makers and municipalities. The significant investment needs prioritisation. The fact that the municipalities are in charge of the planning of the infrastructures probably explains this lack of prioritisation at national level. To conclude, North Macedonia needs to further align with the Drinking Water Directive.

Further efforts are also needed regarding alignment with the **Nitrates Directive**. North Macedonia is planning to implement the Directive before 2030 and establish a new monitoring program for nitrate sensitivity of the soil and water during that period. The setting of a suitable monitoring network and of a monitoring programme is a key step for the implementation of the other obligations of the Nitrates Directive (identification of polluting waters, designation of Nitrate Vulnerable Zones).

While North Macedonia stated that it is **fully aligned** with the **Bathing Water Directive**, the information provided regarding implementation showed that there is some confusion in terms of scope of the Directive (e.g. water bodies covered by the WFD, swimming pools not covered by the Bathing Water Directive). Institutional system is in place but needs to be strengthened. Methods used for reporting data available from monitoring (including data format) should be further aligned with those used by the European Environment Agency (EEA). Active involvement of the public in the process of the identification of bathing sites requires further attention and improvement. Alignment with Commission Implementing Decision 2011/321/EU, on a symbol for information to the public on bathing water classification and any bathing prohibition or advice against bathing, is pending. North Macedonia needs to further align with the Bathing Water Directive.

On **Groundwater Directive**, alignment and implementation are at initial stages. Basic information about groundwater bodies (number, delineation) is not available. Administrative and technical capacities should be strengthened.

Alignment with the Directive 2008/105/EC on **Environmental Quality Standards in the field of Water Policy (EQS)** is also at initial stage, since the national legislation is aligned only with one article and part of an annex. Further alignment is required. As for now, only the ecological status of water bodies is assessed while the chemical status is not determined. The list of priority substances should be extended, beyond metals. The monitoring system needs to be improved and extended to all types of water bodies (lakes). Administrative and technical capacities should be strengthened.

Regarding the **Floods Directive**, North Macedonia is at a **low level of alignment** an early stage of implementation. The institutional setting needs to be improved, in order to clarify responsibilities and have a dedicated civil protection authority. Further progress on implementation seems dependent on donors'

assistance.

Despite the fact that the irrigated area of the total of agricultural area counts almost for 30%, North Macedonia is at a **low level of alignment** and early stage of implementation with the **Water Reuse Regulation**.

Generally, there is a **low level of alignment** with the water related *acquis*. The river basin management plans and the infrastructure for wastewater treatment are at an early stage of development. North Macedonia needs to make efforts in its alignment with the *acquis*, its implementation and in strengthening administrative capacity, including the enforcement system and expertise. North Macedonia needs to adopt Directive-specific implementation and investment plans. Large scale investments will be required.

North Macedonia is encouraged to monitor the developments of the proposal for a Directive amending the WFD, the Groundwater and EQS Directives.

I.E NATURE PROTECTION

a. Country presentation

For both Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of **Wild Birds** (Wild Birds Directive) and Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats Directive), a new draft Law on nature, which is **fully aligned** with the requirements of both Directives, is under preparation. 12 sites for Natura 2000 have been identified. A new software has been developed for collecting data on habitats and wild birds. Full implementation is expected by 2030.

Regarding **Wild Birds**, the Law on Hunting requires further alignment with the provisions of the Directive. A draft national list of birds from Annex I (subject of special conservation measures) has been prepared. Five sites have been identified as potential Special Protected Areas (SPAs).

Regarding **Habitats**, a new draft Law on forests is under preparation, which will **fully align** with the requirements of the Directive. The Law on Pastures requires further alignment with the provisions of the Directive. A draft reference list of habitat types from Annex I and a draft Reference List of plant and animal species listed in Annex II have been developed. Nine sites of community importance (SCI) have been identified.

North Macedonia stated that there is **partial alignment** with the Directive 1999/22/EEC relating to the Keeping of Wild Animals in **Zoos** (the Zoos Directive). There are currently two larger and several “mini” zoos, which need improvement. North Macedonia is working towards compliance of its zoos with European Association of Zoos and Aquaria standards. The country also aims to increase the administrative capacity for proper implementation, in particular in relation to the zoo inspectorate, and to build national rescue centres. The country aims at full implementation of the Zoos Directive by 2030.

Regarding Regulation 3254/91/EEC Prohibiting the Use of Leghold Traps in the Community (**Leghold**), leghold traps are already prohibited under national legislation. The competent institutions are in place. Role and duties of customs will be clarified to guarantee a proper enforcement of the Regulation. Full implementation is envisaged by 2030.

North Macedonia stated that there is **no alignment** with Regulation (EC) No 1007/2009 on Trade in Seal Products (**Seals**). So far, trade in seals and their products has not been identified in North Macedonia's market. The competent institutions are in place. Role and duties of customs will be clarified to guarantee a proper enforcement of the Regulation. Full implementation is envisaged by 2030.

North Macedonia stated that it is **fully aligned** with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (**CITES**) but the alignment with the Regulation 338/97/EC on CITES is partial. Full alignment will be achieved through the adoption of a Law of CITES and relevant secondary legislation, for which drafts are under preparation. Competent authorities have been identified. North Macedonia is currently analysing the introduction of a stricter domestic regime implying import permit

requirements for the Annex B species (Appendix II of the Convention). Full implementation is expected by 2030.

Alignment with Regulation 511/2014/EU on Compliance Measures for Users from the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization in the Union (**ABS Regulation**) has not started yet in North Macedonia. The Nagoya protocol has not been ratified. North Macedonia stated that it is at an initial stage of establishing administrative and legislative provisions related to access to genetic resources and fair sharing of the benefits resulting from their use. A gap analysis will be prepared. Full implementation is expected by 2030.

North Macedonia stated that it has a good understanding of the Proposal for a Regulation on **nature restoration** (COM/2022/304 final). The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning is the competent and responsible institution for future alignment and implementation. The Proposal will be analysed and then the Nature Protection Act will be aligned, accordingly. A mapping of ecosystems and their services has been done.

Regarding Regulation 995/2010/EU laying down the Obligations of Operators who Place Timber and Timber Products on the Market (**Timber**) and Regulation 2173/2005/EC on the Establishment of a Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (**FLEGT**) Licensing Scheme for Imports of Timber into the European Community, North Macedonia stated that it is **partially aligned**. A new law on forest and on forest agency will enable full alignment by 2027 with both Regulations, on the basis of an analysis to be done by 2024. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, together with the Customs Administration, are the competent authorities. North Macedonia has a dedicated forest police and a dedicated website (EXIM), which is used for import/export control. An IT Forest system which will follow the timber from logging to end user will be established.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia's efforts to further align and implement the requirements of the **Habitats and Birds Directive** should continue, starting with the adoption of the Law on nature. Progress on identifying potential Natura 2000 sites and on digitalisation is welcome. The lack of sustainable financing and of administrative capacity to manage protected areas remains a major challenge.

Efforts on further aligning and implementing the **Zoos Directive** should continue. Strengthening the role of zoos in the conservation of biodiversity should be the overarching goal. Just completing an EIA will not be sufficient for a zoo to be licenced under the Directive.

Alignment with the **Leghold Regulation** would imply a ban on imports from third countries of fur products from the wild animal species listed in the Annex of the Regulation, if these animals have been caught with leghold traps or other trapping methods, which do not meet International Humane Trapping Standards. Since it is quite unlikely that many fur products from those species would enter the market in North Macedonia in the medium term, there is no real urgency for the full alignment.

Alignment with the Regulation on **Seals** may take some time, but this is not a problem as it is unlikely that seal products (not covered by the "Inuit or other indigenous communities" exception), would enter (land locked) North Macedonia and then be placed on the EU market.

North Macedonia has made good efforts on aligning with Regulation on **CITES**. Further efforts need to be pursued for full alignment and implementation.

North Macedonia needs to ratify the Nagoya Protocol and starts the work to align with **ABS Regulation**. The ABS Regulation does not require to have a register of users, as it is the case in North Macedonia. However, a register of users could indeed be useful to identify potential users of genetic resources, who may be subject to due diligence obligations and to checks, under the Regulation.

North Macedonia has some level of alignment with the **Timber and FLEGT Regulations** and efforts

should be pursued. Focus should not only be about placing on the market but also internal trade until end user. North Macedonia is encouraged to monitor developments related to and ultimately align with the EU **Deforestation-free Products Regulation**.

I.F CHEMICALS

a. Country presentation

North Macedonia stated that it is **partially aligned** with Regulation 528/2012/EU concerning the Making Available on the Market and Use of Biocidal Products (**biocides**). Biocidal products are an integral part of the Law on Chemicals. Competent authority is the Ministry of Health, which issues approvals for placing these products on the market. The Ministry faces financial, material and institutional limitations. On average, about 150 biocidal products are registered annually. Currently, the fee requested to companies for an application for product authorisation is around EUR 500.

North Macedonia stated that it has a **high level of alignment** with Regulation 1907/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (**REACH**). This is done through the Law on Chemicals and secondary laws. Competent institution in implementing the Law on Chemicals is the Ministry of Health through the Department of Chemicals. It faces financial, material and institutional limitations. Chemical industry plays an important role in the economy of North Macedonia. Establishing an effective inspection system, an integral Register of chemicals as well as help desk is planned by 2026.

North Macedonia also stated that it has a **high level of alignment** with Regulation 1272/2008/EC on Classification, Labelling and Packaging of Substances and Mixtures (**CLP**). The same legal and institutional frameworks as that for REACH are in place, with similar challenges, notably on inspection. Establishing a Helpdesk, and safety information and inspection systems as well as strengthening institutional capacity is planned by 2026.

North Macedonia stated that it has a **high level of alignment** with Regulation 649/2012/EU concerning the Export and Import of Hazardous Chemicals (**PIC Regulation**), through the Law on Chemicals and secondary laws. North Macedonia is a party to Rotterdam Convention since 2010. The Designated National Authority is the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning. A procedure of giving consent based on prior notification of a specific hazardous chemical (PIC procedure) is being implemented. The control of the import and export of dangerous chemicals is also carried out through EXIM system, which enables the electronic submission of requests for import permits by the business community, as well as the electronic issuance of permits by the Ministry of Health. Further alignment is planned for 2026.

North Macedonia indicated that it is **partially aligned** with Directive 2010/63/EU on the Protection of Animals Used for Scientific Purposes (**Animal Experiments**). Full alignment is planned through secondary legislation to be adopted by 2024. The Food and Veterinary Agency is the competent authority. A National committee for protection and welfare of animals is in place. There are two Registered Institutions for performing experiments with animals and two projects have been approved in the past five years.

North Macedonia stated that it is **partially aligned** with Regulation 850/2004/EC on Persistent Organic Pollutants (**POPs**). North Macedonia is a party to the Stockholm Convention since 2004. In line with the Convention, national implementation plan (NIP) is in place. There is no dedicated law or institution. POPs management was considered in the past and further activities related to POPs identification in products and articles are planned between 2024 and 2025. Significant financing is needed to clean up landfills. A continuous monitoring system of POPs is yet to be set up.

b. Commission assessment

On **biocides**, North Macedonia has made efforts to align with the Regulation but seems closer to the old legislation (Directive from 1998). Further alignment with the latest Regulation is needed. Sufficient resources need to be allocated to implement the Regulation. Further analysis needs to be made on the fees

requested to applicants for product authorisation, which needs to be set up at a level to ensure the recovery of costs linked to the assessment of dossiers. Resources for inspection and enforcement need to be reinforced.

National legislation is **partly aligned** with the EU REACH acquis. North Macedonia adopted a basic act that implements the basis of **REACH** in 2009 and several secondary legislations to implement the technical parts of REACH. However, some gaps have been identified in particular related to the need to have a registry of substances placed on their national market, the obligation for industry to perform a chemical safety assessment of their substances, update significantly the list of substances subject to restriction. Significantly strengthening resources capacity for a proper implementation of the REACH legislation and its enforcement is needed. A strong effort on IT security of databases should be done.

National legislation is **partly aligned** with the EU *acquis* on CLP. North Macedonia adopted a basic act that implements the basis of **CLP** in 2009 and several secondary legislations to implement the technical parts of CLP. Very few gaps have been identified but the list of harmonised classification of substances should be updated more frequently. Significantly strengthening resources capacity for a proper implementation of the CLP legislation and its enforcement is needed.

Regarding the **export and import of hazardous chemicals**, further efforts are required to comply with EU requirements and PIC procedure. North Macedonia is not exporting any chemicals, only importing some. There seems to be a confusion between obligations falling on the importer and obligations on the exporter of chemicals. It is not clear if proper reporting of Import Responses for substances of Annex III is done to the Convention's Secretariat. Further strengthening of administrative capacities, including customs, is needed.

Regarding **Animal Experiments**, key concepts and institutional framework are in place. Further alignment should be pursued with the adoption of the secondary legislation. The number of approved projects seems rather low.

Regarding **POPs**, North Macedonia is at an early stage. Further efforts need to be done on further alignment, implementation and enforcement. This should take into account the new POPs covered by the Convention.

I.G INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION AND RISK MANAGEMENT

a. Country presentation

North Macedonia stated that it is **partially aligned** with Directive 2010/75/EU on Industrial Emissions (**IED**), through various laws (on environment, air quality, waste and waters) and secondary legislation (emission in air, water and noise). A draft Law on Industrial Emissions Control will be approved by end of 2024. The system of Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) recognises two types of integrated permits according to capacity production and industry. Requirements for public participation and access to justice are fulfilled. North Macedonia stated that it is **partially aligned** with Regulation 166/2006/EC on European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (**E-PRTR**), through the Law on Environment and secondary legislation. Full alignment will be achieved by 2028 through new amendments to secondary legislation, notably on IPPC. The competent authority and the relevant stakeholders for the implementation of the EPRTR system have been established. A portal has been developed and was publicly available but is not anymore due to technical issues.

North Macedonia stated that it is **partially aligned** with Directive 2012/18/EU on the Control of Major-Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances (**Seveso-III Directive**). The Directive has not been implemented yet in the Law on Industrial Emissions Control. Since 2010, North Macedonia is a party to the UNECE Convention on Transboundary effect of Industrial Accidents (TEIA) and is also a member of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) since 2013. Administrative capacities at national and local levels need to be strengthened. Full implementation is planned after 2027.

North Macedonia stated that alignment with Directive 87/217/EEC on the Prevention and Reduction of

Environmental Pollution by Asbestos (**Asbestos Directive**) is **partial**, through the laws on waste as well as the law on safety and health at work. Asbestos is banned in the country since 2011 and its import is banned since 2013. Full implementation is planned by 2026. Asbestos as hazardous waste is managed only in Skopje, by storage in an IPPC A-type landfill. Asbestos (not mixed with cement) has been removed from all public buildings in Skopje and all municipalities. There are still some asbestos in the pipes for water supply.

North Macedonia stated that it is **partially aligned** with Directive 2004/42/CE on the Limitation of Emissions of **Volatile Organic Compounds** due to the Use of Organic Solvents in Certain Paints and Varnishes and Vehicle Refinishing Products (VOCs in paints). Full alignment and compliance are foreseen by 2026. Administrative capacities and inspections are planned to be improved in the coming years.

Regarding Directive 94/63/EC on the Control of Volatile Organic Compound Emissions Resulting from the Storage of petrol – Stage I and Directive 2009/126/EC on Stage II Petrol Vapour Recovery during Refuelling of Motor Vehicles at Service Stations (**VOC emissions**), North Macedonia indicated that alignment and implementation are **partial**. Full alignment and compliance are planned for 2027-2030. The major challenge identified by North Macedonia is the identification of the installations falling under the scope of the Directives.

North Macedonia stated that it is **partially aligned** with Regulation 1102/2008/EC on the Banning of Exports of Metallic **Mercury** and Certain Mercury Compounds and Mixtures and the Safe Storage of Metallic Mercury (Mercury Regulation). Full alignment is planned for 2025 and compliance by 2027. A National Plan for the Minamata Convention on Mercury will be adopted by 2025. The main challenge is the identification of locations contaminated with mercury.

According to North Macedonia, Regulation 66/2010/EC on the **EU Ecolabel** is **partially aligned** and partially implemented. There is a lack of administrative capacities, as well as not enough promotion of incentive instruments for the introduction of green practices. An assessment needs for full alignment need to be prepared. Full compliance is expected by date of accession.

Regarding Regulation 1221/2009/EC on the Voluntary Participation by Organisations in a Community Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (**EMAS**), North Macedonia stated that **alignment is partial**. Implementation remains at an early stage. Several voluntary compliance instruments encourage companies to put sustainable practices in place. The Law on Environment provides a range of these instruments. Full compliance will be achieved with the accession into the EU.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding **IED** and **E-PRTR**, further efforts on alignment, implementation and enforcement are needed, to reach a fully integrated approach. North Macedonia is encouraged to closely monitor the revision of both legislations.

Regarding the **Seveso III Directive**, the ratification of the TEIA convention and the participation to the UCPM are key steps leading to a consistent implementation of the Seveso-III Directive requirements. North Macedonia needs to take several more steps to achieve a full implementation of the Seveso-III Directive requirements: i) the consideration of major industrial accident hazards within the land use planning policies; ii) reporting in eMARS² the major industrial accidents that happened in North Macedonia and iii) the citizen's rights to information, in particular regarding the availability of information for the public concerned on how to behave in case of a major accident, consultation in the decision making for the setting-

² eMARS contains reports of chemical accidents and near misses provided to the Major Accident Hazards Bureau (MAHB) of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) from EU, EEA, OECD, and UNECE countries (under the TEIA Convention). Reporting an event into eMARS is compulsory for EU Member States when a Seveso establishment is involved and the event meets the criteria of "a major accident" as defined by Annex VI of the Seveso III Directive (2012/18/EU). For non-EU OECD and UNECE countries, reporting accidents to the eMARS database is voluntary. The information of the reported event is entered into eMARS directly by the official reporting authority of the country in which the event occurred.

up of Seveso establishment and access to Justice.

North Macedonia has reached some level of alignment and implementation of the **Asbestos Directive**. Given that the Directive is quite old, North Macedonia is encouraged to also look at other relevant EU legislations (REACH, hazardous waste, IED).

On **VOC in paints**, further efforts are needed to ensure compliance with the Directive, including alignment with the limit values set in Annex II of the Directive (limit values). On **VOC emissions**, further efforts are needed to continue alignment and ensure compliance with both Directives.

Regarding **Mercury**, the ratification of the Minamata Convention is a good step forward. North Macedonia should pursue its efforts to comply with Mercury Regulation and the Convention. Further North Macedonia is encouraged to monitor the revision of the Regulation.

On **Eco-label**, North Macedonia has created a duplicate national label. It should be ensured that this national label would become the EU Eco-label, after accession. North Macedonia is encouraged to follow the developments on the Green Claims Directive. Beyond the set-up of the legislative and institutional framework managing the label, it is very important for the Ecolabel to benefit in North Macedonia from pro-active support, active communication policies as well as incentives to make sure that the scheme is taken up by the private sector.

On **EMAS**, North Macedonia should pursue its efforts. Having financial incentives already in place is a good step. Since EMAS is a voluntary scheme, the uptake will depend on the incentive set up by North Macedonia. In line with the Regulation, North Macedonia needs to assist companies to adopt EMAS and also needs to conduct communication campaigns.

Overall, alignment in the industrial pollution and risk management sector is still at low level. Capacity and financial constraints are hampering progress in implementing legislation.

I.H NOISE

a. Country presentation

North Macedonia stated that it is **partially aligned** with the **Noise Directive 2002/49/EC**, notably through the Environmental Noise Protection Law. Full alignment would require alignment with Art. 6 of the Directive, which refers to the methods for evaluating the harmful effects of noise. Institutional responsibilities are identified, and a state monitoring system is in place. Implementation is at an early stage. The development of strategic noise maps and plans is foreseen by 2027.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia has achieved a partial level of legislative alignment with the **Noise Directive** and is mainly dependent on external assistance for further alignment and implementation.

I.I CIVIL PROTECTION

a. Country presentation

North Macedonia stated that it is **largely aligned** with the *acquis* on **civil protection**, through several laws and secondary legislation. The new national protection and rescue strategy for 2022-2025 is yet to be adopted. North Macedonia is a party to the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) since 2013 and the agreement has been renewed and updated in 2023. North Macedonia has continuous interaction with the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) in receiving and offering assistance and participates regularly to the Training Program of the Union Mechanism. North Macedonia also participates in the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network and is working on establishing civil protection modules to be dispatched at very short notice, following a request for assistance through the ERCC. North Macedonia has sent assistance (to Ukraine) through the UCPM. Full implementation of the EU *acquis*, connection with the

European Commission's Common, Emergency, Communication and Information System (CECIS) and strengthening administrative capacity are planned to be done by 2027.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia has a **high level of alignment** with the *acquis* on civil protection. North Macedonia is a longstanding and active member in UCPM. However, linking its national emergency communication system to CECIS still needs to be done. In line with the recommendations of the peer review held in 2018, the institutional framework needs to be further streamlined to avoid overlaps, by amending the relevant laws.

I.J SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – ENVIRONMENT

North Macedonia has **partial level of alignment** on environment. Further efforts are needed to fully align, implement and enforce this complex and substantive *acquis*, which includes some heavy-investments Directives. In terms of institutional framework, a dedicated environmental agency needs to be set up and the state inspectorate needs to be reinforced. North Macedonia has a good understanding and vision of challenges ahead, with concrete plans, timing and budget associated to most of future steps to align with the EU *acquis*.

II. CLIMATE CHANGE

a. Country presentation

North Macedonia stated that its national legislation **is not yet aligned** with Regulation 2018/1999/EU on Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Change (**Governance Regulation**). Alignment will be done by amending to the Energy Law and adopting a Law on Climate action in 2024, as well as relevant secondary legislation within three years after the adoption of the Law on Climate Action, notably on monitoring, reporting, verification and accreditation (MRVA). Implementation has however already started. North Macedonia is a contracting party to the Energy Community and a party to the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change). Under the UNFCCC framework, North Macedonia has adopted: i) an Enhanced Nationally Determined Contribution to the Paris Agreement (eNDC) in 2021, ii) a Third Biennial Update Report (3rd BUR) on climate change in 2021, and iii) a Long-term Strategy on Climate Action and Action Plan in 2021. Additionally, in alignment with its obligations as a contracting party to the Energy Community, North Macedonia adopted an Integrated energy and climate plan (NECP) in 2022. Other strategic documents, including on financing, are being prepared. On that basis, a Roadmap for the implementation of the eNDC of North Macedonia has been developed. In net emissions, the objective is to reach 82% in 2030 reduction compared to 1990 levels. A national inventory process is in place, including a verification team. North Macedonia is reporting both to UNFCCC and EEA. The main challenge is institutional, for updating inventory, reporting and reporting on projections. An Action Plan for administrative capacities will be implemented. Future investments have been budgeted and are significant. North Macedonia is **partially aligned** with Regulation 525/2013/EU on a Mechanism for Monitoring and Reporting Greenhouse Gas Emissions and for Reporting Other Information at the National and Union Level Relevant to Climate Change (**MMR**).

North Macedonia stated that it is **partially aligned** with Directive 2003/87/EC establishing a System for Greenhouse Gas Emission Allowance Trading within the Union (**ETS Directive**). It developed a Roadmap for the introduction of Monitoring Reporting and Verification of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions under EU ETS in 2012, which brought some significant advancements, which need now to be updated since they are obsolete: i) a roadmap for institutional setup for ETS implementation, ii) identification of ETS installations, iii) building of expert capacity of all stakeholders, iv) GHG permits issuing, v) accreditation of Verification Bodies, vi) establishment of a Registry for GHG emission allowances, vii) one-year monitoring of GHG emissions by installations, viii) preparation of annual GHG emission reports by operators of installations and ix) verification of annual GHG emissions. The Law on Climate Action planned for 2024 will update this work, including the identification of ETS installations and requirements

for GHG emissions permits. Mapping of installations will start end of 2023. In the context of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), a carbon tax is also under preparation. North Macedonia will further analyse the proposal on **ETS shipping/maritime**. Its priorities are CBAM sectors, then stationary installations outside CBAM, then aviation.

North Macedonia stated that there is **no alignment** with Regulation 2017/2392/EU to Continue Current Limitations of Scope for Aviation Activities and to Prepare to Implement a Global Market-Based Measure (**ETS aviation**). However, aviation has been included into national inventory report. All UNFCCC reports (BUR) include aviation emissions.

North Macedonia stated that it is **partially aligned** with Directive 98/70/EC relating to the Quality of Petrol and Diesel Fuels (**Fuel quality Directive**). Full alignment will be achieved through adoption of various laws and secondary legislation. Current legislation covers all fuels placed on the market, regardless of vehicle type. Due to the pandemic and aggression against Ukraine, some two thirds of the state funding on fuel quality control was reallocated, which means that less sampling of the fuels was done. No bioethanol is consumed in North Macedonia, only biodiesel (with two license holders).

North Macedonia indicated that it is **fully aligned** with Regulation 1005/2009/EC on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (**ODS Regulation**), except for the provision which is not applicable until the entry into the EU. There is no production and no destruction of ODS in North Macedonia and the use of ODS as foam blowing agent is phased out. A system for certification and licensing on refrigerants management will be established by 2027. Phasing down of hydrochlorofluorocarbon-22 (HCFC-22) will be done by 2027 and total elimination by 2028.

Regarding Regulation 517/2014/EU on Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases (**F-gases Regulation**), North Macedonia stated that it is **partially aligned**. Full alignment is expected by 2025. The Kigali amendment has been ratified in 2020 and a licensing system for hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) has been set up (EXIM). There are a few cases of illegal trade of HFCs successfully managed by the Customs Administration. There is a good cooperation with neighbouring countries.

North Macedonia stated that it **has not aligned** with Regulation 2018/842/EU on Binding Annual Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions by Member States from 2021 to 2030 Contributing to Climate Action to Meet Commitments under the Paris Agreement (**Effort sharing Regulation**). Expressed in net emissions, NDC of North Macedonia set a target of 82% reduction in 2030, compared to 1990 levels. North Macedonia has a set of mitigation policies and measures. Compliance on effort sharing is expected by the date of accession.

North Macedonia indicated that it is at a **low level of alignment** and implementing Regulation 2018/841/EU on the Inclusion of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Removals from Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry in the 2030 Climate and Energy Framework (**LULUCF**). Forestry and agriculture are part of national climate documents adopted so far (NDC, BUR etc.). North Macedonia started to submit LULUCF inventories through its recent National Inventory, based on 2006 IPCC guidance. As for now, there are five inventories, available online. A Directive Specific Implementation Plan will be prepared on LULUCF. Full implementation is expected by 2030.

North Macedonia stated that it is **largely aligned** with Directive 1999/94/EC relating to the Availability of Consumer Information on Fuel Economy and CO₂ Emissions in respect of the Marketing of New Passenger Cars (**CO₂ emissions from cars and vans and Heavy-Duty Vehicles legislation**) but not with EU secondary legislation, for which more analysis, time and support is required. A fines system is in place.

According to North Macedonia, alignment and implementation of Directive 2009/31/EC on the Geological Storage of Carbon Dioxide (**Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) Directive**) have not started. North Macedonia keeps the possibility for not implementing this Directive due to sensitivity of storage.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding **Governance Regulation**, North Macedonia has made some good efforts on delivering on its UNFCCC and Energy Community obligations. North Macedonia should proceed with the adoption of its Climate law and the strengthening of capacities in monitoring, reporting and verification of GHG.

North Macedonia is at a **low level of alignment** as regards the implementation of **MRV** and **ETS** Directive. Main issues are the lack of administrative capacity and the lack of a clear vision on the way forward to implement MRV and carbon pricing, including its sectoral scope. In any case, North Macedonia needs to implement a robust MRV system. North Macedonia is encouraged to monitor the 2023 revision of the EU ETS Directive, which will result in the creation of a new and separate ETS for road transport and building. It will be important that the modalities of the transition phase before joining the EU ETS are discussed with the EU.

On **ETS aviation**, North Macedonia is at early stage. Efforts should be pursued.

On **Fuel quality**, North Macedonia is well advanced with alignment with old legislation. It should pursue efforts in further aligning with consolidated Directive and all relevant Regulations.

On **ODS**, alignment is advanced but should be pursued. Indeed, North Macedonia still allows for import of hydrochlorofluorocarbon-22 (HCFC-22) for refilling of refrigeration equipment. There is still a slightly positive consumption of HCFCs, which the EU phased out in 2000. North Macedonia is encouraged to monitor the current revision of the Ozone Regulation, which will lead to a change the licensing process.

On **F-gases**, the ratification of the Kigali amendment and the setting up of a licensing system are good steps forward. Plans for future alignment is clear. North Macedonia is encouraged to monitor the new F-Gases Regulation, that foresees an even more ambitious phase-down of HFCs compared to the current Regulation from 2014.

North Macedonia has no piece of legislation comparable to the **Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR)**, the key purpose of which consists in regulating the sharing and distribution between Member States of climate change mitigation efforts in the sectors formed by domestic transport (excluding aviation), buildings, agriculture, small industry, and waste. The ESR is not susceptible of being implemented in a single country, and therefore North Macedonia should not be required to adopt, before accession, an equivalent piece of legislation.

North Macedonia has a good understanding of considerations needed to introduce a robust greenhouse gas inventory, and to support policy implementation in the **LULUCF** sector. North Macedonia is steadily making progress towards the goal of full inventories. However, it still does this of course as a non-Annex I country and the scope is somewhat more limited. It should take into consideration latest EU developments on LULUCF, including the current revision. Focus would be on the 2030 objectives and the framework needed, based upon a robust greenhouse gas inventory for the sector. A solid start should be made by addressing enhancements of annual estimates of activity data and monitoring, and applicable emission factors. Regional cooperation could be a way to facilitate this progress.

North Macedonia **is largely aligned** with Directive 1999/94/EC relating to the Availability of Consumer Information on Fuel Economy and CO₂ Emissions in respect of the Marketing of New Passenger Cars (**Car Labelling Directive**). A fines system is already in place. North Macedonia has not yet started aligning its national legislation with the Regulations on the **CO₂ Emission Standards from Cars and Vans and Heavy-Duty Vehicles** and the related EU secondary legislation. It will be important for North Macedonia to make sure its registration system is fit for purpose, i.e. that: i) the parameters needed can be retrieved through an appropriate IT system, ii) scope is covered and iii) first registrations can be identified. North Macedonia is invited to explore the provisions in Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/392 concerning the Collection and Reporting of Real-World Data.

Since it has been recently acknowledged in the EU that climate neutrality would not be reached without CCS, it would be useful for North Macedonia to start reflecting on a potential permitting system.

C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – CLIMATE CHANGE

North Macedonia has been making efforts for more than a decade and has a good understanding of the climate acquis. In general, North Macedonia has some level of preparation in that area, sometimes with old non-updated acquis. There is sometimes a lack of a strategic vision. Further alignment and implementation are required. Administrative, technical and inspectorate capacities need to be strengthened. Climate policy should be considered as a whole-of-government policy.

III. FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION - ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

a. Country presentation

Relevant laws and national strategy are in place. One of the fields covered by the strategy is environment. A strategy for Risk Management is in place. Internal audits and training are in place. A special software has been set up to monitor integrity policies implementation at central and local level institution. A State Commission for Prevention of Corruption is in place, covering 13 sectors including environment as well as urbanism and spatial planning. One of its recommendations was the establishment of Regional Centres for waste management, which was done through external donor support. An Analysis of the risks of corruption was done through an OSCE mission in Skopje. As an outcome, four areas of the environment sector have been identified as particularly exposed to the influence of the decisions and actions of the competent institutions and where the ways in which the applicable legal and strategic documents are implemented have provoked reactions or were considered controversial by the public (and especially the affected public) and civil society organizations:

- Air quality and air pollution;
- Utilization of water resources and water law;
- Forest management;
- Protected areas and landscapes that need to be protected (there are three National parks and two areas declared as protected areas).

Three processes that affect all four areas of the environment, are sensitive:

- Issuance of licenses for use or exploitation;
- Inspection control;
- Public participation.

A total of 34 recommendations have been defined, systematized in 10 areas: Mineral resources, Forestry, Hunting, Pastures, Nature protection, Urban planning, Waste management, Agricultural land, Ambient air and Quality of liquid fuels.

Recommendations are partially implemented. The national strategy will be amended to put recommendation in motion.

b. Commission assessment

North Macedonia has a system in place to prevent corruption in the field of environment. North Macedonia should however further implement recommendations from the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption.

C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

North Macedonia has the institutions and legislative framework in place to fight against corruption.

