

## **Normative power interrupted: the EU, BRICS and the Republic of Macedonia**



**Goran Ilik**

*Faculty of Law, University of St. Clement of Ohrid, Bitola*  
[goran.eu@gmail.com](mailto:goran.eu@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

The main inspiration for writing this paper was the call for “changing the course” of the Republic of Macedonia from the European Union to the BRICS (the association of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). I have thus investigated both the European Union and the BRICS and related their qualities to the integration objectives of the Republic of Macedonia. The online survey conducted for this research served as an additional useful source for acquiring statistical data, for “feeling out” the situation concerning the name dispute, the EU integration processes and the BRICS. This paper presents the operative aspects of the normative power of the European Union and investigates the interruption of that power due to Greek opposition in the European Council, as well as the consequences for the EU integration path of the Republic of Macedonia. The paper concludes this situation and its consequences, including the stagnant status of the Republic of Macedonia in relation to the EU accession processes, have provoked a Eurodefeatist mood within a small part of the Macedonian public.

**Key words:** EU, BRICS, Macedonia, normative power

## **Introduction**

This is a work of combined research based on the content analysis method, comparative analysis and the snowball-sampling method, aimed at investigating the consequences of the interruption of the European Union's normative power, with regard to the EU integration process of the Republic of Macedonia. The interruption of the EU's normative power in its procedural aspect has provoked some politicians, journalists and intellectuals to call for "changing the course" of the Republic of Macedonia from the EU to the BRICS. This situation has been the main inspiration for creating this paper.

The research for this paper has been conducted to answer the following questions: a) *What are the main features of the EU and the BRICS?* and b) *What are the consequences of the interruption of the EU's normative power in the case of Macedonia?* This paper will try to investigate the interruption of the EU's normative power caused by the Greek blockage in the European Council, though without entering into discussion about the causes behind that blockage. In the text below, I will present the main features of both the EU and the BRICS, the operative aspects of the EU's normative power, its interruption, and the consequences of this interruption for the Republic of Macedonia.

### **The European Union and BRICS**

Here I will try to investigate the main features of the European Union (EU) and the group of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) in order to create a critical framework *à la carte* for the political determinism of the Republic of Macedonia and its future perspectives.

#### *A) What are the main features of the EU and the BRICS?*

As the most suitable structural model for extracting the main features of both the EU and the BRICS, I will use the typology of the theorists Bretherton and Vogler, while putting a special emphasis on the following components:

1. Shared commitment to a set of *overarching values*;
2. *Domestic legitimation* of decision processes and priorities relating to external policy;

3. *The availability of and capacity to utilize* policy instruments, i. e. diplomacy and negotiation, economic tools and military means (Bretherton and Vogler 1999: 30).

With regard to the EU, the Lisbon Treaty prescribed the systematized *axiological (value) framework* that requires the EU and its Member States to affirm and to respect its values. Such values are not always named as “values” but sometimes referred to by terms such as “objectives”, “tasks”, “principles”, “duties” and so on, which have an indisputable axiological essence.

The *Treaty on European Union* (TEU) specified the EU values in Article B, stating that the EU shall set for itself the following objectives: “to promote economic and social progress which is balanced and sustainable, in particular through the creation of an area without internal borders, through the strengthening of economic and social cohesion and through the establishment of economic and monetary union, ultimately including a single currency in accordance with the provisions of this Treaty” (TEU 1992). Likewise, the *Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe* (TeCE) listed the following *values* in Article I-2: respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities (TeCE 2004). This Treaty also confirmed the values of the previous *Treaty establishing the European Community* (TeEC), such as: the promotion of scientific and technological development, opposition to social exclusion, the promotion of social justice and social protection, equality between men and women, solidarity, the promotion of economic, social and territorial cohesion, and respect for cultural and linguistic differences (TeEC 2002). Article 21 of *the Lisbon Treaty* (LT) noted that the European Union's actions on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired “its own creation, development and enlargement, and which it seeks to advance in the wider world: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the UN Charter and international law” (LT 2008). Article 21 of the Lisbon Treaty confirms that the EU shall define and pursue its common policies and actions and shall work for a high degree of cooperation in all fields of international relations, in order to achieve the following objectives:

“(a) safeguard its values, fundamental interests, security, independence and integrity; (b) consolidate and support democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the principles of international law; (c) preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter” (LT 2008).

Unlike the EU, BRICS is a relatively young grouping of states. At first, the foreign ministers of the initial four BRIC states (Brazil, Russia, India and China) “met in New York City in September 2006, beginning a series of high-level meetings” (First BRIC Summit 2009). The BRIC diplomatic meetings focused on international challenges and “on joint efforts to fight the global economic crisis” (Lukin 2011). The leaders of the BRIC nations got together for the first time “on the side-lines of a G8 summit at Tokyo, Japan, in July 2008, and soon after that [...] Russian President Medvedev said during a visit to Rio de Janeiro that BRIC leaders would like to have a separate summit in Russia” (Lukin 2011). The Republic of South Africa (RSA) joined the group in December 2010 and BRIC finally became BRICS. As a curiosity, Jim O’Neill, a senior economist at Goldman Sachs, proposed the very acronym BRIC, using it “to denote the four major fast-growing economies, the combined power of which might exceed that of the West sometime in the future – Brazil, Russia, India, China [and later the RSA]” (BRICS: Multi-format Cooperation 2011). However, BRICS does not possess any systematized axiological (value) system similar to the EU. Moreover, in the BRICS there are many differences and divergences, making it impossible to treat the association as an integral group with a systematized axiological system. Likewise, one part of the BRICS nations affirms their national value systems that are in contradiction with the other part of the BRICS. Some of them fully appreciate the western liberal values (identical to those of USA and EU), while the other part, and appreciate more autocratic and illiberal value systems. Only Brazil, India and the Republic of South Africa can be considered as states that highly appreciate today’s liberal international system of values.

Russia and China are different from the other states. Both states seek to improve their political, economy and military performance, aiming to gain power to impose their influence on the international political scene. Moreover, the creation of a BRICS liberal value system would appear to be a luxury for Russia and China and an obstacle to the intensification of their political, economic and military power. The Director of the EU-Russia Centre in Brussels, Fraser Cameron, emphasized: “two democracies, Brazil and India [and later the RSA], a democracy

with authoritarian leanings [Russia] and an outright authoritarian state [China] cannot rally around the ‘shared values’ that such gatherings like to espouse” (Cameron 2011: 3). Whereas the grouping of India, Brazil and South Africa is a “much more natural grouping”, (Stern 2013) compared to Russia and China, as stressed by the former Ambassador of India in Brazil, Amitava Tripathi. On this basis, I can conclude that BRICS seriously lacks a systematized value system, even in a rudimentary form. BRICS today represents a “heterogeneous lot, consisting of energy exporters and importers, democracies and autocracies, aspiring hegemons and demographic disasters. This is not an easy group to keep together, and the evidence suggests that they don't have much of a common policy agenda” (Loose BRICs 2009). The political scientist Robert Gilpin emphasized that as a nation's power increases, it “will be tempted to try to increase its *control* over its environment. In order to increase its own security, it will try to *expand* its political, economic, and territorial control, it will try to *change* the international system in accordance with its particular set of interests” (Zakaria 2008: 114). The more BRICS become part of the “globalised world the more they want to keep their distance from western values. It is both a matter of identity and interest because they fear that the infringement of sovereignty might be used against them” (BRICS keep distance, 2012). BRICS thus looks like a club that seeks to protect only the political sovereignty of its states - in relation to the West - in order to gain more political and economic influence in world affairs.

Considering the *domestic legitimation* of decision processes, the EU again seems far ahead of BRICS. Maybe not ideally so, but the EU in its own development has succeeded in establishing domestic legitimation of decision processes. The EU constitutive documents – such as the Lisbon Treaty – that constitute the political, juridical and financial institutions, decision-making processes, authentic legal order, foreign affairs service, security and defence structures, free and open market, all confirm this conclusion. In contrast, BRICS lacks any of the previously mentioned structural components. This does not mean that BRICS are less important than the EU. On the contrary, they are a quite significant group emerging on the international political scene, but predominantly characterized by economic and financial and not axiological, political or juridical attributes. The political integration of BRICS is something that will have to wait a while, considering the evident political and ideological diversities inside.

Furthermore, concerning the availability of and capacity to utilize, policy instruments – diplomacy (negotiation), economic tools and military means, I can unambiguously say that the EU differs from the BRICS in this component also. Namely, BRICS still has not defined any policy-instruments, diplomacy (negotiation) tools, economic tools (maybe in future with the creation of the International Monetary Fund counterpart) or military means. While the EU already possesses the attributes of international political power, implying the capacity to influence the world around it in a desired direction. In practice, this “would mean encouraging people in other parts of the world to embrace a political and economic system compatible for them” (Grant 2009: 2). Therefore, I will present the essence of the EU’s normative power, because this research requires it. Professor Ian Manners, the creator of the EU normative power concept, stated that the “EU represents neither a civilian power of an intergovernmental nature utilising economic tools, nor a military power of a supranational nature using armed force, *but a normative power of an ideational nature characterised by common principles*” (Manners 2000: 29). This kind of international power has its own *basis* (Table 1), directly derived from the EU axiological (value) system “developed over the past fifty years through a series of declarations, treaties, policies, criteria and conditions” (Manners 2000: 33), which comprises the EU *acquis communautaire* and the *acquis politique*. In this context, it is crucial to stress that the most powerful tool for imposing the EU’s normative power is *membership itself*. The norms listed in the table “are not simply declaratory aims of a system of governance (...) but represent *crucial constitutive features of a polity* which creates its identity as being more than a state” (Manners 2000: 33). On this basis, the *procedural diffusion* of the EU’s normative power appears as an extraordinary channel for the diffusion of EU values and norms to other international actors. This channel of norms and diffusion of values concerns the “institutionalization of relationship” (Manners 2000: 33) between the EU and other international actors, in this case the Republic of Macedonia. Or, as Ian Manners emphasized, procedural diffusion “involving symbolic and substantial normative power involves the institutionalisation of a relationship between the EU and a third party, such as an interregional cooperation agreement, membership of an international organisation or *enlargement of the EU itself*” (Manners 2000: 35).

**Table 1.**

<b>Founding Principles</b>	<b>Tasks and Objectives</b>	<b>Stable Institutions</b>	<b>Fundamental Rights</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liberty</li> <li>• Democracy</li> <li>• Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms</li> <li>• Rule of law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social progress</li> <li>• Non-discrimination</li> <li>• Sustainable development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guarantee of democracy</li> <li>• Rule of law</li> <li>• Human rights and fundamental freedoms</li> <li>• Protection of minorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dignity</li> <li>• Freedoms</li> <li>• Equality</li> <li>• Solidarity</li> <li>• Citizenship</li> <li>• Justice</li> </ul>
Treaty Base - set out in Article 6 of the Treaty on European Union	Treaty Base - set out in Article 2 of the TEC and of the TEU, &Articles 6 and 13 of the TEC	Copenhagen Criteria - set out in the conclusions of the June 1993 European Council	Draft Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union
Source: <i>Manners 2002:33</i>			

The EU integration processes, and consequently the accession of Macedonia to the EU, involve a series of accepted and implemented declarations, policies, criteria and conditions, aimed at achieve the full consistency of the Macedonian normative and value system with that of the EU. The procedural diffusion of normative power means *the capacity of the EU to impose its norms and values through procedural or institutional means*. It is very important to stress that this type of diffusion can only be activated by the consensus of the EU Member States. Considering this, the Macedonian case emerges as a precedent of interruption of the EU normative power (in its procedural aspect) because of the Greek blockage in the European Council.

### **The EU Enlargement Strategy and Macedonia**

The European Commission (Commission) officially launched ‘The Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2012–2013’ in order to deal with the key challenges of the EU,

“maintaining the enlargement and reform momentum, progress in the enlargement countries and the way forward 2012–13 (the Western Balkans, Turkey and Iceland), and supporting and assisting the enlargement countries (financial assistance, benefits of closer integration before accession) and conclusions and recommendations” (EU Enlargement Strategy 2012: 4–22).

Based on this Strategy, the EU confirmed its determination to enhance its enlargement process, emphasizing the importance of the Western Balkans and the integration of each country from this region in the EU. The Strategy has an overall optimistic and declarative tone in its introduction, wherein the Union mostly confirms the success and significance of its enlargement policy, claiming that: “at a time when the EU faces major challenges and significant global uncertainty and gains new momentum for economic, financial and political integration, *enlargement policy* continues to contribute to peace, security and prosperity on the [European] continent” (EU Enlargement Strategy 2012: 2). Through this policy, the EU, since its inception, responded to the “legitimate aspiration of the peoples of the [European] continent to be united in a common European endeavour (...) [Stressing that] *the enlargement process is a powerful tool to that end*” (EU Enlargement Strategy 2012: 22). Considering the Republic of Macedonia, the Strategy confirmed “positive results have been achieved in the Republic of Macedonia, where the High Level Accession Dialogue has led to a sharper focus on reforms by the authorities” (EU Enlargement Strategy 2012: 3). The EU particularly highlighted the success of the *High Level Accession Dialogue* (HLAD) between the Commission and the Macedonian authorities. The Strategy emphasizes that the HLAD has “put the EU integration process again to the forefront of the domestic agenda, giving it a new boost by ensuring a structured, high level discussion on the main reform challenges and opportunities” (EU Enlargement Strategy 2012: 11). Nevertheless, all of this sounds very optimistic, despite the major obstacle embodied in the name dispute with Greece, which, generally speaking, is the crucial factor for achieving full Macedonian membership of the EU. In this context, the Republic of Macedonia has already received four recommendations for starting EU accession negotiations. Or, as stated on the *EurActive* portal: “[i]t is the fourth time that the Commission has recommended the start of accession negotiations with Macedonia, and *each time the efforts were blocked by Greece*” (Bulgaria vetoes 2013). The EU Commission acknowledged: “[Macedonia] was granted candidate status in 2005. In 2009, the Commission assessed that the country sufficiently met the political criteria and recommended the



opening of negotiations. This recommendation was reiterated by the Commission in 2010 and 2011 and now in 2012” (EU Enlargement Strategy 2012: 13). In addition, the EU Commission stressed the importance of a “negotiated and mutually acceptable solution, under the auspices of the UN, to the dispute over the name of the country [which] remains essential” (EU Enlargement Strategy 2012:7). However, regardless of this suggestion, it is obvious that the problem continues to exist and make trouble for the EU and Macedonia. Therefore, the name dispute evidently appears as a crucial factor for the advancement of the Macedonian EU accession process. Despite this evident obstacle, the Strategy manifests an overall positive attitude towards the Republic of Macedonia, taking into account the *political (Copenhagen) criteria*, claiming that:

“[Macedonia] continues to fulfil its commitments under the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA). The Commission maintains its proposal to move to the second stage of the association and encourages the Council to act on this without further delay, in line with the relevant provision of the SAA” (EU Enlargement Strategy 2012: 13).

Considering the *economic (Copenhagen) criteria*, the Republic of Macedonia “continues to be well advanced” (EU Enlargement Strategy 2012: 39). As far as the ability to take on the obligations of membership, *as a legislative alignment*:

“[Macedonia] has achieved a good level of alignment with the *acquis* at this stage of the accession process. It has also continued to implement smoothly its obligations under the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) and the Commission has proposed to pass to the second stage of the Association.” (EU Enlargement Strategy 2012: 39)

Regardless of the EU Strategy provision, the lack of consensus in the European Council has again blocked the Macedonian accession process. This is because, in order to join the EU, the applicant country needs to gain a unanimous vote in the Council, or as Article 49 (Title VI) of the Lisbon Treaty stipulates:

“Any European State, which respects the *values* [of the EU] and is committed to promoting them, may apply to become a member of the Union (. . . ) The Applicant State shall address its application to the Council, *which shall act unanimously* after consulting the Commission and after receiving the consent of the European Parliament, which shall act by a majority of its component members.” (The Lisbon Treaty 2008).

Considering the fulfilment of the political, economic and legal (*acquis*) criteria (Table 2) and other institutional instruments, according to the Strategy the Republic of Macedonia has already reached the level for starting accession negotiations with the EU. Moreover, the Republic of Macedonia accepts the EU values as a crucial precondition for EU membership. The abuse of the unanimity principle by Greece does not allow Macedonia to proceed further on the EU integration path. Namely, *the procedural diffusion is blocked, and thus the EU's implementation of normative power towards the Republic of Macedonia is interrupted as well.*

**Table 2.**

<b>Copenhagen criteria</b>	<b>Fulfilment</b>
Political criteria	sufficiently met
Economic criteria	continues to be well advanced
Legislative alignment	good level of alignment with the <i>acquis</i> at this stage of the accession process
Source: <i>own depiction, based on the EU Enlargement Strategy 2012–2013</i>	

This behaviour of Greece not only prevents Macedonian membership of the EU but also blocks the EU enlargement process, which is an extremely important aspect of the European unification process noted in the Strategy. Frustrated by this situation, Macedonian Foreign Minister Nikola Popovski stressed that Macedonia has spent an “unjustifiable period in the waiting room” (Hinton-Beales 2012), attributing this to a lack of consensus (unanimity) in the European Council due to Greek opposition.

### **The consequences**

Following the failure of several Commission recommendations for starting negotiations on Macedonian accession to the EU, negative criticism of the EU began to arise amongst the Macedonian public, further stimulated by certain intellectuals, political commentators and journalists aimed at diverting Macedonian public opinion away from the EU in favour of BRICS.

B) *What are the consequences of the interruption of EU normative power in the Macedonian case?*

To answer this question, I conducted an online survey to collect data about the respondents' opinion, considering their stances about the EU, the name dispute and BRICS. In doing so I applied the snowball method (chain-referral sampling), which is a special "non-probability method for developing a research sample where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances" (Katz 2006: 4). Snowball sampling "is hardly likely to lead to a representative sample" (Crossman 2013), but it can provide *indicative data* for research. This method uses a small pool of initial informants "to nominate, through their social networks [in this case the *internet* and social networks], other participants who meet the eligibility criteria [in this case the *ideological views* of the respondents] and could potentially contribute to a specific study. This method reflects an analogy to a snowball increasing in size as it rolls downhill" (Morgan 2008: 816–817). I used *internet social networks* (as opposed to social networks used in everyday life) for conducting this *on-line survey*: Facebook, LinkedIn, Yahoo and Gmail mailing groups (covering the respondents registered on the Macedonian internet network), in order to obtain data from *people of a specific ideological view which is difficult to recognize or to categorize in a formal sense*. This includes people who are not publically declared / labelled as Europhiles, Eurosceptics, pro-BRICS or nationalists, and thus, *the majority of them could not be labelled easily in a formal sense, or they just do not want to be labelled with any of the aforementioned labels, but they could contribute to this research with their opinions and ideological views*. The online survey was carried out from 31 August to 25 September 2013, initiated with 4 initial informants (one informant for each of the aforementioned labels) who managed to recruit a small sample of 78 respondents. Considering this method and the time framework provided for the implementation of this online survey, the sample size seems sufficient for extracting indicative results. This method is often used in *exploratory studies*, which "can be extremely valuable in social research. [Explorative studies] are essential when a researcher is breaking new ground and they typically yield new insights into a topic for research" (Crossman 2013). With this method: "the researcher is 'feeling out' a topic or population to study further in-depth at a later time. Exploratory studies are typically done for three purposes: to satisfy the researcher's curiosity and desire for better understanding, to test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study, and to develop the methods to be employed in any subsequent studies" (Crossman 2013). The *results obtained from this research are indicative* and can be used to implement more complex and more comprehensive research in the future. This online survey started with a question about the importance of the name of the Republic of Macedonia for the Macedonians. From the given answers, I can stress that 57.1% of the respondents qualified the name issue as extremely important (Table 3). 31.2% of the respondents answered that Macedonian EU integration is an extremely important issue, and 31.2% answered

as very important (Table 4), which can be interpreted as relatively high support for the EU aspirations of Macedonia.

**Table 3.**

<b>How important is the name of the Republic of Macedonia for the Macedonians?</b>		
	<b>Response percent</b>	<b>Response count</b>
<b>Extremely important</b>	<b>57.1</b>	<b>44</b>
Very important	31.2	24
Moderately important	6.5	5
Slightly important	2.6	2
Not at all important	2.6	2
		Answered: 77 Skipped: 1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>78</b>

**Table 4.**

<b>How important do you think is the integration of the Republic of Macedonia in the European Union?</b>		
	<b>Response percent</b>	<b>Response count</b>
<b>Extremely important</b>	<b>31.2</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Very important</b>	<b>31.2</b>	<b>24</b>
Moderately important	24.7	19
Slightly important	6.5	5
Not at all important	6.5	5
		Answered: 77 Skipped: 1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>78</b>

Subsequently, the online survey requested a response about the “fairness” of EU policy towards Macedonia, indicating how respondents treated this topic. 83.8% of respondents answered that the EU policy towards Macedonia is unfair regarding the name issue (Table 5). I can conclude that the name issue not only blocks Macedonian integration in the EU but has also provoked a more critical stance towards the EU (which was not the case previously), qualifying it as ignorant and insufficiently interested in solving the Macedonian integration problems. This

marks the “scream” due to the discriminatory attitude of the EU towards the Republic of Macedonia, while giving privileges to Greece and an opportunity to abuse its membership benefits with the right to vote in the European Council. 44.1% of the respondents answered that the main culprit for blocking Macedonian accession is Greece itself, but 29.4% of respondents answered that they see the EU as a culprit, because the EU does not do anything to discipline Greece as a Member State (Table 6). A smaller number of respondents (26.5%), meanwhile, answered that the main obstacle is the principle of unanimity itself. Considering EU decision-making, I can conclude that the unanimity principle is the greatest obstacle for furthering Macedonia’s accession to the EU and for future EU developments. This shows that the “empty chair” policy is still present—perhaps in a different form now, but still functional. This is another argument for the harmfulness of intergovernmental decision-making in vital areas of the EU such as enlargement policy.

**Table 5.**

<b>In your opinion, do you think that the EU policy towards the Republic of Macedonia is unfair considering the “name issue”?</b>		
	<b>Response percent</b>	<b>Response count</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>83.8</b>	<b>62</b>
No	9.5	7
I don’t know	6.8	5
		Answered: 74 Skipped: 4
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>78</b>

**Table 6.**

<b>In your opinion, what is the biggest obstacle for the Republic of Macedonia integration in the EU?</b>		
	<b>Response percent</b>	<b>Response count</b>
The EU as a whole	29.4	20
<b>Greece</b>	<b>44.1</b>	<b>30</b>
The principle of unanimity	26.5	18
		Answered:68 Skipped:10
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>78</b>

After several blockages in the European Council, caused by Greece, the EU finds itself for the first time in its existence in a state of uncertainty, accompanied by a fourth rejection of accession negotiations with the Republic of Macedonia, despite the positive evaluation previously given in the Commission reports and the abovementioned Strategy. Based on the online survey results (Table 7), 71.8% of the respondents think that this behaviour of the EU contributes to the creation of a (soft) Eurosceptic mood in Macedonia. Thus, soft Euroscepticism is where “there is NOT a principled objection to European integration or EU membership but where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas [the enlargement policy in this case] lead to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU” (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2002: 8). This mood is mostly driven by the reaction of Macedonian public opinion to the Greek provocations and the feeling of being discriminated against by the EU. This could be better qualified as *Euro-defeatism, describing the stagnant condition of the Republic of Macedonia in relation to the EU accession process caused by the blockage of Greece and the interruption of EU normative power*. Contrary to this, the Macedonian Foreign Minister Nikola Popovski stated that “Macedonian public opinion is not interested in a condemnation of Greece’s actions, *but merely wants the chance to be an active contributor to the European family*” (Hinton-Beales 2012).

**Table 7.**

<b>After several rejections of the start of accession negotiation between the Republic of Macedonia and the EU, do you think that this contributes to the Eurosceptic mood in the Republic of Macedonia?</b>		
	<b>Response percent</b>	<b>Response count</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>71.8</b>	<b>56</b>
No	16.7	13
I don’t know	11.5	9
		Answered: 78 Skipped: 0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>78</b>

On the question about “changing the course” of the Republic of Macedonia because of the accession blockage, the online survey collected very interesting data (Table 8). 36.4% of the respondents agree that the Republic of Macedonia should give up its candidate status and move towards BRICS if the accession negotiations process does not start in due time. This indicates the present Eurodefeatist condition, which may infect the majority of the Macedonian public unless it is prevented promptly (Table 9). This problem can easily be overcome only by *unblocking the EU accession negotiations*. In addition, it is important to stress the obvious lack of knowledge about BRICS and its functioning. This group of nations does not recognize membership or any systematized value system similar to that of the EU. Membership in this group can be activated only by sending an invitation to a particular state from BRICS, not through the unilaterally expressed will of the interested (applicant) state, as is the case with the EU.

**Table 8.**

<b>If the Republic of Macedonia does not become a full member of the EU in the near future, should it give up its candidate status and move towards BRICS?</b>		
	<b>Response percent</b>	<b>Response count</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>36.4</b>	<b>28</b>
No	26.0	20
This would be a very hazardous decision	22.1	17
I don't know	15.6	12
		Answered:77 Skipped: 1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>78</b>

**Table 9.**

<b>Response percent</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>I don't know</b>	<b>That is very hazardous decision</b>
In your opinion, do you think that the EU policy towards the Republic of Macedonia is unfair considering the “name issue”?	83.8%	9.5%	6.8%	-
After several rejections of the start of accession negotiations between Macedonia and the EU, do you think that this contributes to the Eurosceptic mood in Macedonia?	71.8%	16.7%	11.5%	-
If the Republic of Macedonia does not become a full member of the EU in the near future, should it give up its candidate status and move towards BRICS?	36.4%	26.0%	15.6%	22.1%

I decided to put a question about BRICS and its importance. 42.1% of respondents answered that this cooperation is very important, while 27.6% evaluated this as moderately important (Table 10). However, this may be related to the present Eurodefeatism or only support for the creation of a new club consisting of fast-growing economies as a step towards a plural (polycentric) international order. Taking into account both the extreme importance of the name issue for the Macedonians and the importance of Macedonian EU integration, the answers about the importance of BRICS appear relatively benign, and thus do not indicate a threat to the Macedonian EU integration process in favour of BRICS (Table 11).

**Table 10.**

<b>How important do you think is the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) cooperation?</b>		
	<b>Response percent</b>	<b>Response count</b>
Extremely important	10.5	8
<b>Very important</b>	<b>42.1</b>	<b>32</b>
Moderately important	27.6	21
Slightly important	14.5	11
Not at all important	5.3	4
Answered: 76 Skipped: 2		
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>78</b>



**Table 11.**

<b>Response percent</b>	<b>Extremely important</b>	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Moderately important</b>	<b>Slightly important</b>	<b>Not at all important</b>
How important is the name of the Republic of Macedonia for the Macedonians?	57.1%	31.2%	6.5%	2.6%	2.6%
How important do you think is the integration of Macedonia in the EU?	31.2%	31.2%	24.7%	6.5%	6.5%
How important do you think is BRICS cooperation?	10.5%	42.1%	27.6%	14.5%	5.3%

The answers given to the questions about the knowledge of EU values (Table 12) and the values of BRICS (Table 13) are qualitatively different, in favour of the EU, where 55.1% of the respondents answered that they know a lot about the EU values, versus 3.8% of responses concerning the values of BRICS values (Table 14). These results indicate the substantial inclination towards EU values and their obvious convergence with the Macedonian value system.

**Table 12.**

<b>How much do you know about the EU values?</b>		
	<b>Response percent</b>	<b>Response count</b>
A great deal	17.9	14
<b>A lot</b>	<b>55.1</b>	<b>43</b>
A moderate amount	24.4	19
A little	2.6	2
Nothing at all	0.0	0
Answered:78 Skipped:0		
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>78</b>

**Table 13.**

<b>How much do you know about BRICS values?</b>		
	<b>Response percent</b>	<b>Response count</b>
A great deal	1.3	1
<b>A lot</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3</b>
A moderate amount	26.9	21
A little	38.5	30
Nothing at all	29.5	23
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>78</b>

**Table 14.**

<b>Response percent</b>	<b>A great deal</b>	<b>A lot</b>	<b>A moderate amount</b>	<b>A little</b>	<b>Nothing at all</b>
How much do you know about EU values?	17.9%	55.1%	24.4%	2.6%	0.0%
How much do you know about the values of BRICS?	1.3%	3.8%	26.9%	38.5%	29.5%

### **Conclusion**

The Greek opposition in the European Council block the EU accession process of Macedonia and thus interrupts the (procedural) diffusion of EU normative power. This situation provoked negative reactions amongst the Macedonian public, which launched various calls for changing the geopolitical course of Macedonia towards the BRICS, engendering a defeatist mood with regard to the EU.

Considering the BRICS, I can conclude that this group of states is useful for changing the international political milieu in a polycentric (multipolar) way, but is not useful for the integration objectives of the Republic of Macedonia. Unlike the EU, this group does not offer any attractive value system, nor does it have any institutions for their achievement. The BRICS also does not recognize membership in a similar way as the EU. Membership can be activated

only by sending an invitation to a particular state from the BRICS, not through the unilaterally expressed will of the interested (applicant) state, as in the case of the EU. Perhaps the Republic of Macedonia should begin to develop bilateral relations with particular BRICS states in order to improve mutual relations in economy, trade or energy security, and to raise them to a higher level. The only path for the political integration of the Republic of Macedonia is the EU. The BRICS is not an alternative in this case. Moreover, the BRICS consists of more or less autocratic and illiberal states such as Russia and China, who are restlessly seeking to increase their political, economic and military power and thus to “occupy” a part of the international political scene. Unlike the BRICS, the EU offers an axiological (value) set, stable institutions, and global relevance for each EU Member State. Or as Mark Leonard emphasized in his book “Why Europe Will Run the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” (2005): “By giving national governments a voice in the world, the EU has saved national democracy from becoming a mere talking shop that comments on global events while the real decisions are taken elsewhere” (Leonard 2005: 92). In this sense, Mark Leonard acknowledged that the “EU is the only way that small countries can have a measure of control over global markets. This allows nation–states to make their own choices about what to do with their affairs” (Leonard 2005: 92). Consequently, if you are “outside the EU you must fight tooth and nail to get access to other people’s markets, pay huge tariffs for your exports and try to compete by trimming welfare provisions, employee protection, and tax rates” (Leonard 2005: 92).

As indicated in the research results, the feeling of discrimination and subordination due to the Greek blockages in the European Council provoked for the first time a ‘Eurodefeatist’ mood amongst the Macedonian public. This Eurodefeatist mood describes the stagnant condition of the Republic of Macedonia in relation to the EU accession processes, caused by the interruption to the EU’s normative power by Greek opposition in the European Council. Consequently, this problem can easily be overcome solely by unblocking the EU accession negotiations. This should not be discouraging for the EU-integration processes of the Republic of Macedonia, but should serve as an incentive to undertake additional activities in the integration processes and deepening of the partnership with the EU as a whole, as well as individual Member States, until the name dispute is finally resolved.

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