**ANNUAL REPORT 2023**

**FORUM FOR REASONABLE POLICIES**

Forum for Reasonable Policies is a think-tank organization, founded in 2017 with the aim of:

• Creating a basis for sustainable development in the domain of democracy, culture and economy;

• Promoting a society and political system grounded on democratic principles and values that continuously and relentlessly create fundaments for better common living

• Launching a platform for the affirmation of real, tangible, common sense policies and principles, regardless of whether they are popular and "trendy" at the time of their utterance;

• Opposing compromises and false consensuses that offer palliative solutions, but in their essence deepen the discord in society and threaten long-term prosperity;

• Challenging and critically questioning the positions, policies and attitudes of any political and economic establishment, especially those that are openly undemocratic or problematically democratic.

In 2023, Forum for Reasonable Policies implemented the following projects:

**1. Title of the project: "Support to Electoral Reforms in North Macedonia" - Academy for Public Policies (third generation)**

Implementation period: 01.08.2022 to 01.06.2023

Donor: Government of Switzerland, implemented by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)

The Academy for Public Policies is intended for representatives of the youth of the political parties in North Macedonia with the aim of educating and raising future political and social leaders, equipped with general and specific values and knowledge about the political processes in the country.

Activities carried out within the project:

• Four modules (comprehensive three-day workshops);

• Mentoring and training for the preparation of a short public policy document;

• Engaging with local communities and stakeholders on relevant issues through thematic debates and discussions;

• Study visit to the Republic of Croatia;

<http://frp.mk/en/article?id=84>

**2. Title of the project: "Support to electoral reforms in North Macedonia" - Alumni activities**

Implementation period: 01.08.2023 to 31.12.2023

Donor: Government of Switzerland, implemented by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)

FRP organized activities with the alumni of three generations of the Academy for Public Policies, to promote the achieved results of the work with the party's youth through the Academy for Public Policies.

In the period from August 2023 to December 2023, the following activities were realized:

**Activity 1: APP** **Alumni Brunch - “Warm up: Elections are coming!”**

The first activity intended to promote achieved results within the framework of the “Support to Electoral Reforms in North Macedonia” program, with a particular focus on the work with party youths through the Academy for Public Policy and other initiatives implemented so far. The event took place on 30th September 2023, at Hotel Panoramika Skopje

At this **“**Bring a friend” event, alumni participants were invited to bring a colleague from their political party that would be interested and/or potentially eligible for the fourth generation of APP. The event was promoted as a great networking opportunity and a unique chance to engage in discussion with relevant journalists, particularly beneficial for those who have not previously been part of the APP. The event was accompanied by an introduction/promotion of the on-line compendium of public policy documents developed by participants from the third generation APP, for which the organizer dedicated a separate session.

**Activity 2: Vodcast series “Whose turn is it?"**

Production of 5 vodcast episodes related to policy documents and community engagements of the APP Alumni.

Policy briefs are tools that ensure that the conducted research reaches most impact with a purpose to shape opinions and influence decision makers to change the way they approach a given issue, especially with issues where changes tend to happen rather slowly. The idea behind this activity was to diversify and widen the reach towards the general public and influence policymakers in a more popular way, as an alternative or in addition to the written policy briefs, thus providing the government and other decision makers with the necessary information to adopt new approaches and devise relevant policies. In each episode two alumni from the APP were guests to the vodcast hosts and talked about their community engagements and their approaches. The discussions covered various topics, such as issues with stray dogs in Gazi Baba, Struga, and Tetovo, parking solutions in the Municipality of Aerodrom, the possibility of reopening a cinema in Radovis, the success story of a youth center in Ohrid, the need for a daily care center in Bitola for people with intellectual disabilities, protecting women and girls with disabilities from violence in the Municipality of Prilep etc. After sharing their community engagement *stories*, APP alumni communicated the current status of the project and *whose turn it is* for implementation. The guests also discussed their preparations and expectations for the upcoming elections, shared their views on world politics, and suggested ways to encourage young people to get more involved in society.

**Activity 3: APP** **Alumni Weekend - “Ethics and integrity in public sphere”**

The third proposed activity – a two-day workshop (plenary session and debate under the Chatham house rule) with the alumni of the three generations of the Academy for Public Policy took place on 2-3 December, 2023 in Shtip, at Hotel Oaza.

Participating panellists:

* Lenche Ristoska, Public Prosecutor at the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office
* Jovan Ananiev, Professor at the Faculty of Law, University Goce Delchev Shtip
* Nevenka Longurova Girova, Executive Director of Local Community Development Foundation, Shtip

The panellists discussed various aspects of ethical behaviour in the public sphere using examples from real life (personal versus group integrity, is there justice without morality, ethics during the electoral process, how to deal with the unethical behaviour of a political opponent, the essence of resignation as an ethical principle, corruption/nepotism/cronyism, sustainability of election promises, evidence-based policies, etc.).

The session proved to be intriguing and thought-provoking, participants had a great number of questions, especially for the public prosecutor Lenche Ristoska. According to the evaluations, participants expressed an affirmative impression of the entire session, and feedback highlighted the positive perspective by participants regarding the approach of the topic.

The subsequent session was titled "Encounters – Students vs. Young Politicians," moderated by Stole Naumov from Radio Kanal 77, an experienced journalist in political debates. Four selected students from the University Goce Delcev in Shtip engaged in a debate with four APP alumni in a moderated discussion focused on topics related to political engagement in the social sphere. The discussion centred around the challenges, perceptions, and expectations associated with political involvement. Students expressed their views on politics and the political process, engaging in an argumentative exchange with the young politicians.

The first day of the training finished with a special public lecture on the topic “Ethics in times of war” with Prof. Metodi Hadzi Janev, security expert and professor at University “Goce Delcev” – Stip and the Military Academy “General Mihailo Apostolski” – Skopje. The public lecture addressed the ethical dilemmas the world is currently facing and the potential implications for the country and the Balkans. The lecturer delivered an attention-grabbing presentation that engaged the general audience.

The second day began with a presentation of a research study on the importance of educating citizens about their civic duties and voting rights, entitled “The Imperative of Informed Citizenship: Discourse on Civic Duties and Voting Rights”, by Elena Ognenovska from TIM Institute who presented a report with facts and figures about civic and voter education in North Macedonia.

The presentation was followed by the last session – a moderated discussion and group work with the APP alumni titled "Assessing ethical standards in thy own political camp." The session started with the presentation of the video “30 years later: the ethics of resigning” (produced in 2022 by FRP and supported by IFES) followed by a group work (discussion on a given topic, brainstorming on specific questions, and determining the most important ethical standards that were included in the produced brochure).

Subsequently, the key takeaways from the discussions were summed up and systematized in a brochure named “Ethical Standards for Self-Assessment.” This document was prepared using references from international and domestic experts on ethics, transparency, and accountability in politics.

**3. Title of the project: "Political Party Transparency Index "**

Implementation period: 01.08.2023 to 31.12.2023

Donor: Embassy of Great Britain, implemented by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD)

Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), in collaboration with Forum for Reasonable Policies, proudly presents the Political Party Transparency Index (PPTI) conducted in North Macedonia.

This continuous initiative seeks to assess the transparency, achievements, and challenges of political parties. The Index delves into three key pillars: internal party democracy, financial transparency, and accessibility to the public, utilizing over 80 indicators for a comprehensive evaluation of participating political parties. This index provided a comprehensive assessment of several political parties from North Macedonia, providing invaluable findings on their transparency and contributing to political parties improving their transparency and openness, and to the democratic processes.