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# ANNUAL REPORT

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## SUMMARY

Our year through numbers!

In 2022, our third year, we continued to grow, excel and doubled the number of activities compared to 2020!

🌀 In terms of PUBLICATIONS, our experts...

- ...published two original publications - one research paper and one toolkit for policymakers
- ...co-authored three research papers and three policy analyses with other think-tanks
- ...published two academic papers

🌀 In terms of EVENTS, our team...

- ...organized seven events, five of them public
- ...attended ten events as speakers, six of them - international conferences
- ...organized nine presentations in primary schools

🌀 In terms of CAPACITY building, our experts...

- ...delivered two trainings
- ...mentored three civil society analysts, journalists and research fellows to prepare eight policy papers and articles
- ...delivered EU contents in high-school classes
- ...certified sixteen professors who are able to include EU contents in their classes
- ...certified over two hundred students who participated in EU-related activities

🌀 In terms of MEDIA, we...

- ...were interviewed in five national and six international outlets
- ...published two op-eds in foreign outlets
- ...prepared and published six videos summarizing and disseminating research findings

## CHINA-RELATED PROJECTS

### *Understanding the tools, narratives and impact of China's soft power in North Macedonia*

In cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation – Skopje Office, we designed, implemented and published landmark empirical research on China's soft power in North Macedonia. The [research report](#) provides a detailed account of the tools, tactics and narratives that China puts forward, as well as an attempt to assess the impact of China's soft power, based on primary data collected through a survey, interviews and focus groups.

We also organized a panel discussion to promote and discuss the findings, featuring Christopher Nehring from the KAS media programme at Sofia University, Macedonian MP and member of the Interparliamentary Alliance on China, Antonio Miloshoski and professor Hristina Runceva-Tasev as moderator.



### *Promoting a values-based approach in North Macedonia's cooperation with China*

During the second year of the project supported by the Democracy Commission Small Grants Program of the US Embassy in Skopje, we published a Toolkit for Policy-makers: How to cooperate with China? The Toolkit was based on a collaborative and participative approach which involved representatives from around 15 state institutions, including the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Parliament, line ministries, as well as key civil society associations and business chambers.



We also supported and mentored three civil society analysts and three journalists to publish policy briefs and articles on China's presence in North Macedonia and disseminated their key findings through short videos. The topics they covered range from China's [development aid during the pandemic](#), [paradiplomacy](#) – or twin/sister cities, the [deployment of 5G networks](#), [publication of Chinese books](#) translated in Macedonian, [cooperation on scientific projects](#) and [Chinese language learning/teaching](#). In order to disseminate the findings to a broader audience, we conducted short interviews with the authors who explained in several minutes the key points of their research. All the videos are available on our Facebook page.



## EU RELATED PROJECTS

### *Introducing EU-related contents in high schools*

We wrapped up the activities in the project aimed to introduce EU contents in the bilingual (French language) sections supported by the French Embassy and the French Institute in Skopje. Having organized altogether thirty classes in four high-schools in three cities across the country, we organized certificate-awarding ceremonies for all the teachers (a total of 16) and all the students (a total of 200). We also prepared a short [video](#) that summarizes our work in the past two years.



### *Building Better Together: Improving the Governance of Large Infrastructure Projects*

With the support of the French Embassy, we launched a project aimed to examine how to improve the governance of large infrastructure projects by increasing the involvement of civil society and local authorities. We started to develop a Toolkit that should provide the main guidelines on how to achieve these objectives and we're looking forward to finalizing and publishing it in 2023!

## WESTERN BALKANS RELATED PROJECTS

### *Boosting the French language teaching in the education system of the Western Balkan countries*

With the support of the French Embassy and French Institute, we started a project aiming to boost the French language teaching in the education system in the Western Balkan countries. This regional project follows on from the French Strategy for the Western Balkans and the French President's Language Plan. Aiming to promote French language as an asset for further education, professional career and mobility, we organized presentations in 9 primary schools throughout the country (6 in Skopje, 1 in Kumanovo and 1 in Veles).

### *Enhancing Regional Cooperation through Regional Fellowship for Young Researchers on Migration & Development*

We also completed a regional fellowship project together with our partners GERMIN from Kosovo and the Centre for Support of Local and Regional Development (CeP) from Montenegro. This pilot initiative allowed six first-generation fellows to complete a fellowship program on migration and development issues at a partner organization based in another Contracting Party. We welcomed two fellows in our organization who prepared research reports on [medical brain drain](#) and the trends before and after visa liberalization in North Macedonia. The other researchers focused on [human rights-based migration](#) in Kosovo, [youth migration](#) in Montenegro, and [migration governance](#) in Kosovo. Finally, we attended the closing regional conference where all six research papers were presented and mobility and exchange opportunities were discussed. This project was funded by the "Support to Civil Society Regional Actions in the Western Balkans" a joint grant scheme of the Western Balkans Fund and the European Union.

## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND CONSULTANCY ACTIVITIES

In the framework of the National Platform for Women Entrepreneurship, we continued our cooperation with the Foundation for Management and Industrial Research from Skopje and prepared the second Women Entrepreneurship Barometer in North Macedonia which can be accessed [here](#).

In November, we organized a joint PAVE (Preventing and Addressing Violent Extremism through Community Resilience in the Balkans and MENA) event in Skopje. The first day we had a policy roundtable on How to Strengthen the Resilience of Communities against Radicalization and Violent Extremism together with the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP). The Policy Roundtable gathered representatives from various types of institutions (central and local), international organizations based in the country, religious institutions, academia, civil society, and P/CVE practitioners. Our President who was part of the PAVE research team, together with the other researchers, presented the results and recommendations of the fieldwork research the team conducted in the municipalities of Tetovo and Kumanovo in July 2021, published in the form of a policy brief available [here](#).

The second day, a practitioners' pilot training on Community Resilience and Multi-stakeholder Collaboration to Support Reintegration to society and Disengagement from Violent Extremism was organized together with the Finn Church Aid. In addition to its informative and engaging content, the participants greatly appreciated the diversity of stakeholders coming from various backgrounds (state institutions, education sector, civil society, religious commission) that enriched the debate from different perspectives.

*Our experts cooperated with like-minded organizations on the production and publication of various policy documents...*

[China's Secret Charm](#): China's Hidden Influence in South-East Europe – with the Sofia Security Forum and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation

[China in the Western Balkans](#) – a chapter in *Politique Etrangère*, the journal of the French Institute for International Relations (IFRI)

[China's Role on the Kosovo Issue: Between an Inactive Past and Indistinct Future](#), a chapter in the book *Confronting Multiple Crises: Local and International Perspectives on Policy-Making in Kosovo*, published by the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society



[The chapter on North Macedonia](#) in the publication “Blue Connectivity: Maritime and Inland Waterways in the Balkans Peninsula”, by Cooperation and Development Institute and Konrad Adenauer Foundation from Albania

[China’s Influence in North Macedonia](#) – in cooperation with the Center for European Policy Analysis from Washington DC

[China’s Aid in the Western Balkans: Supporting Development, Undermining Good Governance](#) – a policy paper for the CHOICE network – China Observers in Central and Eastern Europe

## PUBLIC APPEARANCES

### *Events*



China in the World Summit 2022, organized in Berlin 2022. Our President appeared as a panelist at the European Dialogue panel, organized by the German Marshall Fund and featuring other prominent experts from MERICS, Sinopsis and SWP - the German Institute for International and Security Affairs. The topic was the future European policy vis-à-vis China look like - what can be expected in future and what can/should Europe do in order to get the outcomes it desires?

Workshop on Influence, Governance, Transparency & Accountability, hosted by the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA). Our Ana Krstinovska facilitated the session on in Europe - exploring Chinese foreign policy globally, in Europe and regionally, discussing presence and influence strategies, as well as the weaknesses of national political and economic institutions.





Workshop on China's presence in the Western Balkans and specifically its soft power, hosted for the participants in the Presidential Center for Political Education, in the module organized by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung North Macedonia.

A workshop at the Regional security academy organized by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation with participants from North Macedonia, Serbia and Bulgaria, where we discussed foreign influence operations, propaganda and disinformation by foreign state entities.



Tirana Connectivity Forum 2022, a new edition of the most important event for Western Balkans Connectivity Agenda where we moderated the session on institutional accountability.

A [panel discussion](#) on the EU-China relations against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine, organized by the French Institute for International Relations (IFRI) and the Centre Franco-Autrichien pour le Rapprochement en Europe (CFA), alongside the former EU Ambassador to China, Hans Dietmar Schweisgut, the former French Ambassador to China, Jean-Maurice Ripert, Marc Julienne from IFRI and moderated by Dominique David from the CFA.

### *Media appearances (a selection)*

An interview for Institut Français des Relations Internationales (IFRI) – [La Chine dans les Balkans Occidentaux](#)

An article for Les Echos based on an interview with our Ana Krstinovska (in French) - [La Serbie a tout fait pour attirer les investissements chinois](#)

An interview for World Geostrategic Insights – [Is the EU really willing to enlarge in the Western Balkans?](#)

Top Tema Debate Show – Telma Television – [Is the year 2030 as a deadline to join the EU realistic or is it the Government's wishful thinking?](#)

An article in the South China Morning Post - [Croatia's China-built, EU-funded bridge to open over troubled waters](#)

Op-ed in The Diplomat - [Will China Challenge the US on the Kosovo Issue?](#)

Op-ed in Kosovo 2.0 – [Kosovo-China relations. And where they might go.](#)

Article for Aktualne (in Czech) - [Lidská práva nezmiňujte. Čína buduje další elektrárnu na Balkáně, má to ale svou cenu](#)

Interview for Panda Paw Dragon Claw – [Governance, debt and war: reassessing Chinese aid in the Western Balkans](#)

Interview for Faktor (in Macedonian) – [How much will the 1bn EUR Chinese loan cost North Macedonia?](#)