



Pro Peace



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## North Macedonia, 25 Years after

**An exchange organised by Pro Peace, the Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft and the University of Duisburg-Essen**

**When:** Monday, 23 February 2026, 12:00–14:00 (CET)

**Where:** University of Duisburg-Essen, Institute of Political Science, Room LF 156, Lotharstraße 65, 47057 Duisburg

**Notice:** The event will be streamed online. Further details are provided below.

### Background

In 2001 tensions escalated in North Macedonia into an armed conflict, beginning near Tetovo and later spreading toward Skopje and Kumanovo, causing over 200 deaths and mass displacement. Explanations differ: some stress regional spillover and border dynamics after the 1999 Kosovo war, while others emphasise domestic exclusion of Albanians in language, education, policing, employment, and political participation.

The Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA) introduced non-discrimination, proportional representation, language rights, decentralisation, and double-majority decision-making. Implementation, however, remained uneven, while transitional justice largely narrowed to the 2002 Amnesty Law, leaving accountability contested. Over time, “ethnizenship” normalised ethnicised politics and polarised OFA perceptions. Using the 25th OFA anniversary, this event will assess achievements and gaps, examine how memory and institutions reproduce division, and develop recommendations to strengthen credibility, address grievances, and rebuild trust.

**Objective** of the exchange is to update a German audience, the diaspora community, and interested Western Balkans experts on the situation in North Macedonia 25 years after the violent conflict in 2001, with a focus on themes of dealing with the past and transitional justice.

**Rationale** for the exchange is the strategic partnership between North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) and the Republic of North Macedonia, which is entering its fifth year. This is marked with a series of events across the region of NRW with an emphasis on the entire Western Balkans region.

**Basis** for the exchange will be a Position Paper produced by a team of authors commissioned by Pro Peace. The paper contains an analysis of the status quo as well as several recommendations for various actors in North Macedonia and Germany.

**Outcomes** of the exchange will be:

- Better informed and updated general and expert audiences, and a better understanding of German positions by local partners and Pro Peace;
- A heightened sense by regional decision makers from the NRW region about the issues raised by Pro Peace and its partners, leading to them raising these issues with their Macedonian counterparts.

The exchange will take the following form:

12:00–12:10	<b>Opening of the event</b> by Harald Schenker (Pro Peace) and Dr Oliver Schwarz (SOG / UDE)
12:10–13:20	<b>Panel discussion</b> with two of the authors of the position paper, Dr Albulena Halili and Dr Veli Kreci (South East European University, Tetovo), as well as Boris Georgievski (editor for North Macedonia at Deutsche Welle, Cologne) and Harald Schenker (country director for North Macedonia, Pro Peace). Moderation: Dr Oliver Schwarz (SOG / UDE).
13:20–13:50	<b>Audience Q&amp;A</b>
14:00	<b>Close of the event</b>

The event will take place in a hybrid format.

Limited space is available for in-person participation. If you would like to attend on site, please register in advance by contacting Carla Cingil (University of Duisburg-Essen) via email at [carla.cingil@stud.uni-due.de](mailto:carla.cingil@stud.uni-due.de).

Participants who wish to join online are kindly asked to register using the following link:

<https://uni-due.zoom-x.de/meeting/register/jSExXZtWTGuzVieWObFdZQ>.