

# Party Research and Analytical Centers in North Macedonia

## Between the Norm and the Practice:

In-Depth Study

September 2026



## About the document

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# Executive Summary

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*This study examines the legal framework, institutional design, and functioning of party research and analytical centers (PRACs) in North Macedonia, aiming to determine the nature of their role and potential.*

*The research is grounded in three methodological pillars: a normative analysis of relevant legislation; a review of available documents and studies; and empirical findings obtained through a structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews conducted with a sample of 21 informed stakeholders, comprising representatives from political parties and PRACs, state institutions, the academic community, the media, the civil society sector, and international organizations.*

*The normative analysis covers four legal levels: the Constitution, the Law on Political Parties, the Law on PRACs, and the Law on Financing Political Parties. An analysis of their interrelationships reveals several internal inconsistencies. Most significant is the normative tension between the principle of party equality established in the Law on Political Parties, the inclusive 1% vote threshold stipulated in the Law on Financing Political Parties, and the restriction of budgetary funding for PRACs exclusively to the four parties with the highest number of MPs. This arrangement creates a structural asymmetry embedded within the normative architecture itself. Furthermore, the financial transparency of PRACs is regulated only indirectly, without specific reporting standards tailored to these centers, which further limits their public accountability.*

*The 2013 Law on PRACs establishes a basic framework for their operation, stipulating that they be organized as part of the internal structure of political parties, without separate legal entity status, and serve a dual function: operational and project-based. This model allows analytical activities to be directly integrated into party operations. At the same time, embedding PRACs within the parties' internal structures can affect their degree of institutional autonomy and limit their capacity to conduct independent analyses and present findings that do not fully align with party priorities or viewpoints.*

*The empirical findings reveal a visible gap between the normative framework and the practical reality. Although the legal framework envisages a wide range of activities, from research and analysis to policy evaluation and the organization of public debates, in practice, PRACs operate at varying levels of development. Their work focuses primarily on providing internal analytical and programmatic support to the party, particularly regarding the preparation of public*

*policies and election platforms for national and local elections, while their influence on broader public debate and decision-making processes remains limited. The analysis of the empirical data also indicates insufficient public visibility of their analytical outputs, low to moderate transparency, and uneven activity levels that depend significantly on the capacities of the specific parties.*

*Despite these limitations, the study identifies a broad consensus among all categories of respondents, regardless of their institutional position, regarding three key points: the need for the continued existence and development of the PRACs; the need for further improvement; and the need for greater transparency and accountability. This consensus represents significant political and social capital for targeted, consensus-based legislative amendments.*

*Based on these insights, the study proposes concrete recommendations aimed at strengthening the PRACs' functional autonomy and staff capacity; reforming the funding model to ensure greater inclusivity, predictability, and project-based competitiveness; establishing clearer standards for operational and financial reporting and enhancing public transparency; institutionalizing inter-party and international cooperation; and strengthening the PRACs' long-term ties with the academic, expert, and civil society communities. Additionally, the study proposes establishing a framework for regular annual monitoring and self-evaluation of the PRACs' work as an integral part of their annual operational reporting.*

*More than a decade after the Law's adoption, the time is ripe to enhance this model. Currently, North Macedonia has established an innovative and distinctive model for institutionalizing analytical capacities within political parties. Therefore, **the question is no longer whether the system should continue to exist, since it has stood the test of time, but rather what type of institutional model, with what degree of transparency and what role, should shape the next chapter of its development.***

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# Introduction

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Party research and analytical centers (PRACs) represent a specific institutional tool of modern political parties in North Macedonia; their primary function is to contribute to the enhancement of the quality of political decision-making through the systematic collection, processing, and analysis of data, as well as through the development of evidence-based policies.

The legal framework governing their operations is established by the Law on PRACs<sup>1</sup>, which defines their status, organization, functions, and funding mechanisms. This law enables political parties to establish such centers as part of their internal organizational structure, without separate legal entity status, with the aim of fostering structured and informed debate regarding political processes.

In the Macedonian context, the normative solution positions the role of the PRACs as dual:

- On the one hand, they have an operational function aimed at supporting the party's ongoing political activities;
- On the other hand, there is a project function that entails public activities, research, analyses, and participation in broader social and political processes.

This dual nature opens up the key dilemma which is at the heart of this study: do PRACs function as genuine think tanks or primarily as extensions of party structures?

The aim of this study is to examine the normative model, its practical implementation, and the actual contribution of PRACs to public policy-making processes.

The study focuses on several key aspects: institutional setup, functional role, funding model, level of transparency, and the impact on political planning.

Methodologically, the study relies on a combination of normative analysis of relevant legislation, analysis of available documents and reports, and empirical findings obtained through a structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. These were conducted with a sample of 21 informed stakeholders selected via purposive sampling, comprising representatives from political parties and PRACs, state institutions, the academic community, the media, the civil sector, and international organizations. At the same time, the study draws upon international experience documented in other relevant publications, including the IFES

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<sup>1</sup> Law on Party Research and Analytical Centers, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, year: LXIX, no.: 23, Skopje, 14.2.2013, pp. 141–142.

study on political party assistance in Eastern Europe and Eurasia, which identifies the building of organizational and analytical capacities as a key dimension of party development in transitional democracies<sup>2</sup>.

The analysis that follows is organized into three interconnected sections. The first part examines the four key levels of normative regulation: the constitutional framework, the legal status of political parties, the specific regulations governing PRACs, and the provisions from the Law on Financing of Political Parties relevant to their operations. The second part analyzes empirical findings regarding the practical functioning of PRACs, focusing on their role, activities, visibility, transparency, funding, and prospects for future development. The final part synthesizes key normative and empirical insights and formulates recommendations for enhancing the legal and institutional framework.

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<sup>2</sup> IFES, *A Study of Political Party Assistance in Eastern Europe and Eurasia*, International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 2007. Available at: <https://www.ifes.org/publications/study-political-party-assistance-eastern-europe-and-eurasia>.

# 1. Regulatory Framework

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The regulatory framework of the party system in North Macedonia constitutes a multi-layered legal and institutional structure that starts with constitutional principles, is given concrete form through the legal regulation of political parties, and is further developed through specific mechanisms aimed at enhancing their programmatic and analytical capacity. In this context, the analysis of the regulatory setup seeks to determine the logic of their interconnections and their contribution to the functioning of the democratic system. Of particular importance is the question of whether the existing normative architecture creates conditions for political parties to develop into modern, policy-oriented actors capable of generating knowledge, analyses, and sustainable public policies.

The following section examines the constitutional framework, the legal setup of political parties, and the specific regulations governing PRACs, including their financing, as four key levels of normative regulation defining the space in which they operate.

**Table 1: Regulatory Framework of PRACs**

| Regulatory level | Level        | Legal act                                       | Function                          | Relevant provisions       | Role in relation to PRACs          |
|------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1                | Constitution | Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia | Fundamental values and principles | Articles 8, 9, 16, 20, 22 | Indirect, a basis for pluralism    |
| 2                | Law          | Law on Political Parties                        | Institutionalization of parties   | Articles 2, 3, 6, 9, 10   | Enables the establishment of PRACs |
| 3                | Special law  | Law on PRACs                                    | Operationalization of PRACs       | Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 6    | Direct regulation                  |
| 3                | Special law  | Law on the Financing of Political Parties       | Financial framework               | Articles 10-a, 26, 27     | Indirect regulation of financing   |

*Note: The order in the table is analytical rather than formal-hierarchical. The Constitution is the supreme legal act, whereas the listed laws are acts of the same formal legal rank that regulate various interconnected aspects of the party system and the functioning of the PRACs.*

## 1.1. Constitutional Framework

The constitutional framework of the party system in North Macedonia is based on the principle of political pluralism, which constitutes a fundamental value of the constitutional order. Article 8, paragraph 1, indent 5 of the Constitution establishes that “political pluralism and free, direct, and democratic elections” are among the fundamental values of the country’s constitutional order<sup>3</sup>. This provision lays the foundation for a multi-party system and free political competition.

The Constitution further guarantees the equality of citizens in the exercise of their rights. Pursuant to Article 9<sup>4</sup>, citizens are equal in their freedoms and rights, regardless of, among other factors, their political convictions. This provision is of direct significance to the political system, as it prevents discrimination based on political affiliation and ensures equal access to the political process.

Article 16 of the Constitution<sup>5</sup> guarantees freedom of conviction, conscience, thought, and public expression of thought. This guarantee encompasses freedom of political opinion, which serves as the basis for the existence of diverse political views and programs, as well as for their public articulation.

A key provision regarding the functioning of political parties is Article 20 of the Constitution<sup>6</sup>, which guarantees the freedom of association for citizens. In accordance with this provision, citizens are free to associate for the purpose of exercising their political, economic, social, and cultural rights and convictions. This right is exercised, among other ways, through the formation of and membership in political parties. The Constitution also guarantees that citizens may freely join and withdraw from such organizations. At the same time, Article 20 establishes limitations regarding the activities of political parties. Thus, the programs and activities of parties must not be directed toward the violent overthrow of the constitutional order, the incitement or instigation of military aggression, or the fomenting of national, racial, or religious hatred and intolerance. Furthermore, the formation of military or paramilitary associations that are not part of the country’s armed forces is prohibited. These limitations aim to ensure a balance between the freedom of political activity and the protection of the democratic constitutional order.

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<sup>3</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, year: XLVII, no. 52, Skopje, 1991, pp. 805–815.

<sup>4</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Article 22 of the Constitution<sup>7</sup> guarantees the right to vote, specifically, the right of citizens to elect and be elected in elections. This right is directly linked to the role of political parties as key actors in the electoral process, through which candidates are nominated and political platforms are articulated.

It arises from the cited constitutional provisions that political pluralism serves as an institutional guarantee for the existence of multiple political entities. Within the European constitutional tradition, parties are viewed as crucial intermediaries between citizens and the state; they are the vehicles through which interests are articulated, political competition is structured, and the legitimacy of government is secured. However, modern democracies are increasingly moving beyond the classical model of parties as organizations serving solely for elections and mobilization. Indeed, amidst complex public policies, rising citizen expectations, and heightened international interconnectedness, parties face the need to develop their own analytical and policy-development capabilities. In this sense, their role is gradually transforming from mere drivers of political competition into entities that actively participate in the design, formulation, and evaluation of public policies. This transformation is particularly pronounced in the European context, where the quality of democracy is increasingly linked to the ability of political actors to offer solutions based on evidence, expertise, and systematic analysis. In such an environment, the legitimacy of political parties is bolstered by their capacity for responsible and informed governance. Consequently, the institutionalization of analytical functions within political parties represents a logical and necessary step in the development of modern liberal democracy. Political party institutes and analytical centers emerge as instruments through which political parties can enhance their policy platforms, contribute to more informed public debate, and strengthen the link between political decision-making and expert knowledge. In this sense, their existence and operation should be viewed not only as an organizational feature of the parties themselves but also as part of the broader process of Europeanization and modernization of the political system. The more capable political parties are in integrating knowledge, analysis, and public accountability into their activities, the more political pluralism acquires substantive, rather than merely formal, value.

## 1.2. Law on Political Parties

In North Macedonia, although the constitutional framework for political pluralism was established by the 1991 Constitution, the legal institutionalization of the multi-party system proceeded gradually. During the transition period, specifically until 1994, the 1983 Law on

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Social Organizations and Citizens' Associations<sup>8</sup> remained in force; however, amendments made in 1990 enabled the formation of multiple political parties, thereby marking a departure from the previous one-party system<sup>9</sup>.

The first Law on Political Parties since independence was enacted on July 26, 1994<sup>10</sup>, establishing the fundamental rules for party operations within the new democratic context. A second, systemic Law on Political Parties was adopted on October 20, 2004<sup>11</sup>; between then and 2015, it underwent numerous amendments and insertions to align it with evolving democratic standards and practices<sup>12</sup>.

This law regulates key aspects of the legal status of political parties, including their establishment, registration, organization, operation, and dissolution. In this regard, the law gives concrete form to the constitutional framework and institutionalizes political pluralism as an operational component of the democratic system.

Article 2 of the Law<sup>13</sup> defines a political party as a voluntary organization of citizens formed to realize and protect political, economic, social, and other rights and convictions, as well as to participate in the political decision-making process through involvement in government. This definition confirms the dual nature of political parties: as entities of civic association and as actors wielding political power.

The Law further defines the boundaries of their operations by prohibiting activities aimed at the violent overthrow of the constitutional order, the incitement of hatred, or the instigation of aggression (Article 3)<sup>14</sup>, thereby striking a balance between the freedom of political organization and the protection of the democratic order.

Regarding the institutional structure, the Law guarantees the freedom and independence of political parties in their operations and internal organization (Article 6)<sup>15</sup>, establishes that

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<sup>8</sup> Law on Social Organizations and Citizens' Associations, Official Gazette of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, year XXXIX, no. 32, Skopje, 11.11.1983, pp. 625–630.

<sup>9</sup> Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Law on Social Organizations and Citizens' Associations, Official Gazette of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, vol. XLVI, no. 12, Skopje, 13.4.1990, pp. 237–239.

<sup>10</sup> Law on Political Parties, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, year L, no. 41, Skopje, 5.8.1994, pp. 1197–1200.

<sup>11</sup> Law on Political Parties, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, year LX, no. 76, Skopje, 27.10.2004, pp. 1–5.

<sup>12</sup> See: Law on Amendments to the Law on Political Parties, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, vol. LXIII, no. 5, Skopje, 16.1.2007, pp. 8–9; Correction to the Law on Amendments to the Law on Political Parties, vol. LXIII, no. 8, Skopje, 24.1.2007, p. 80; Law on Amendments to the Law on Political Parties, vol. LXIV, no. 5, Skopje, 11.1.2008, p. 2; Law on Amendments to the Law on Political Parties, vol. LXIX, no. 23, Skopje, 14.2.2008, p. 143.

<sup>13</sup> Law on Political Parties, op. cit.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

political parties are non-profit organizations (Article 9)<sup>16</sup>, and provides that their operations, including financial activities, must be public (Article 10)<sup>17</sup>, thus laying the groundwork for transparency and accountability.

**Of particular significance is Article 6, paragraph 3<sup>18</sup>, which enables parties to establish PRACs within their internal organizational structures. This provision creates a normative link between the general legal framework governing political parties and the specific legislation on PRACs, confirming the legislator's intent to institutionalize the parties' analytical and programmatic activities.**

Regarding establishment and registration, the Law sets forth relatively clear and formalized requirements, including the obligation for a political party to be founded by at least 1,000 citizens who have the right to vote (Article 11)<sup>19</sup>, to adopt a program and statute (Articles 15 and 16)<sup>20</sup>, and to be entered into the court register (Article 17)<sup>21</sup>. These requirements aim to ensure a minimum level of organizational seriousness and legitimacy for political entities.

With respect to the dissolution of political parties, the Law provides for several grounds, including voluntary dissolution, removal from the register, a ban on activities, or a Constitutional Court decision declaring the program or statute unconstitutional (Article 29)<sup>22</sup>. This establishes a legal mechanism for overseeing the legality and constitutionality of their activities.

It arises from the aforementioned legal framework that the Law on Political Parties represents the crucial link between the constitutional principle of political pluralism and its practical institutionalization. By precisely regulating the conditions for the establishment, registration, organization, and dissolution of parties, the legislator establishes a legal model aimed at ensuring the stability, predictability, and legitimacy of the political system.

Within the European liberal-democratic tradition, such legal provisions are understood as a necessary prerequisite for transforming parties into institutionalized actors of democratic governance. They create conditions for the development of political entities that participate in the electoral process and possess a clear capacity to formulate policies, manage institutions, and assume responsibility for public decisions.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

It is particularly significant that the law emphasizes their freedom and independence regarding internal organization and operations, which constitutes an essential element of democratic autonomy. At the same time, the principles of transparency, non-profit status, and legality establish the foundation for their accountability and responsibility to the public. Within this framework, political parties position themselves as entities that must balance their own political agendas with the broader public interest.

However, despite the relatively comprehensive regulatory framework, the Law addresses the issue of parties' analytical and programmatic capacities only indirectly. While the possibility of establishing PRACs is envisaged, there is no detailed elaboration regarding their role, function, and significance within policy-making processes. This indicates that the legislator recognizes the importance of the analytical dimension of party activity but leaves its concrete operationalization to a separate legal framework. Consequently, the Law on Political Parties can be understood as a normative foundation that establishes the formal position of parties within the political system, yet does not fully encompass their substantive role in modern democracy. In this sense, the adoption of the Law on PRACs represents a logical continuation of the process of institutionalization and professionalization of political parties.

### 1.3. Law on Party Research and Analytical Centers

The establishment, organization, functioning, and financing of PRACs are regulated by the 2013 Law on PRACs<sup>23</sup>.

Pursuant to Article 2, paragraph 1 of the Law<sup>24</sup>, political parties may establish PRACs to create a platform for structured and informed debate on political processes. Paragraph 2 of the same article stipulates that PRACs are established as part of a political party's internal organization and do not possess the capacity of a legal entity. This means they lack legal autonomy and instead function as organizational units within the party.

**Table 2: Key Characteristics of PRACs**

| Element      | Legal provision | Description                                      | Potential limitation |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Legal status | Article 2       | Part of the party, without separate legal status | Limited autonomy     |

<sup>23</sup> Law on Party Research and Analytical Centers, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, year LXIX, no. 23, Skopje, 14.2.2013, pp. 141-142.

<sup>24</sup> Law on Party Research and Analytical Centers, op. cit.

|                     |           |                                            |                                            |
|---------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Organization        | Article 3 | Operational and project component          | Blurred line between analysis and politics |
| Personnel structure | Article 4 | Minimum two employees, including a manager | Limited capacity                           |
| Cooperation         | Article 5 | Domestic and international cooperation     | Underutilized                              |
| Financing           | Article 6 | State budget funding for four parties      | Emphasized restrictiveness                 |
| Allocation of funds | Article 7 | Ban on funding the party                   | Complicated financial control              |

In Article 3, paragraph 1<sup>25</sup>, the Law regulates the functioning structure of PRACs, providing for their division into an operational section, which includes activities related to research, data processing, and support for the ongoing functioning of the party, and a project part, which includes public activities such as debates, public opinion surveys, publications, policy evaluation, and strategic political planning.

With this provision, the legislator establishes a formal division of the work of the PRACs into an operational and a project part. The operational part is oriented towards supporting the current functioning and policies of the party, while the project part encompasses public, research, and educational activities. However, the legal descriptions partially overlap, especially with regard to research, analysis, and strategic political planning, which is why the boundary between the two functions may be unclear in practice.

In terms of the personnel structure, Article 4<sup>26</sup> stipulates that the PRACs must have at least two full-time employees, one of whom is the manager. The manager is responsible for financial operations, organization, and coordination of activities, and must have at least a university degree. The manager is appointed and dismissed by the party (Article 4, paragraph 4), but is personally liable for misdemeanors for the use of funds in accordance with Article 9 (a fine between 2,000 and 4,000 euros). The current legal solution does not contain a protective provision for the manager in the event of a conflict between the orders of the party leadership

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

and the legal obligations for earmarked spending. This legal gap poses a risk because de jure the responsibility falls on the manager, but de facto control remains with the party.

The Law also provides for the possibility of mutual and international cooperation of PRACs. Thus, according to Article 5<sup>27</sup>, these centers can hold meetings and cooperate with each other, as well as be members of related international organizations and networks.

**The most detailed segment in the Law relates to the financing of PRACs. According to Article 6, paragraph 1<sup>28</sup>, the budget funds for financing the PRACs are allocated exclusively to the four political parties with the largest number of elected representatives in the Assembly, provided that they have established a PRAC.** Furthermore, paragraph 2 of the same article provides for a combined model of allocation of funds:

- 60% of the funds are distributed equally among the four parties;
- 40% are distributed proportionally according to the number of MPs, with detailed percentages of 35%, 30%, 20%, and 15%.

Additionally, Article 6, paragraphs 4 to 6<sup>29</sup>, establish that the funds are distributed between the operational and project parts (40% for operational and 60% for project), while paragraph 7 also provides for additional funds for employee training.

The existing funding model creates a conflict with the principle set out in Article 6, paragraph 1 of the Law on Political Parties, according to which political parties are equal before the Constitution and the law. Limiting budgetary funds only to the four parties with the largest number of elected representatives creates a structural asymmetry in the development of analytical capacities and may discourage smaller parties from developing their own policy-making capacities. Additional legal ambiguity arises in the case of pre-election coalitions. The law does not determine whether, when applying the criterion in Article 6, the coalition as an electoral entity or the individual political parties that comprise it are taken into account, nor which body and on the basis of what data determines the number of representatives belonging to each party elected from a joint candidate list. The absence of a clear procedure for determining this distribution may lead to different interpretations and unequal application of the legal criterion. The Venice Commission and the OSCE/ODIHR recommend that public funding models contribute to political pluralism and equal opportunities, do not set unreasonably high thresholds, and allow access to part of the funds also for political parties not represented in parliament, if they enjoy a certain minimum level of support<sup>30</sup>. The

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) and OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), *Guidelines on Political Party Regulation*,

Constitutional Court of the Republic of North Macedonia has not yet ruled on this issue<sup>31</sup>. Therefore, consideration should be given to the possibility of basing access to public funding on clearer and more inclusive criteria, such as the percentage of votes won and parliamentary representation, rather than solely on the position among the four parties with the largest number of elected representatives.

**Table 3: Current PRACs Funding Model**

| Element          | Solution         | Percent / rule | Implication                 |
|------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Coverage         | Four parties     | —              | Limited system              |
| Distribution (1) | Equally          | 60%            | Minimum balance             |
| Distribution (2) | Proportionately  | 40%            | Political dominance         |
| Operational part | Financing        | 40%            | Limited analytical function |
| Project part     | Financing        | 60%            | Public activities           |
| Training         | Additional funds | —              | Positive element            |

Regarding the intended use of the funds, Article 7<sup>32</sup> explicitly prohibits PRAC funds from being used for direct or indirect financing of the political party, thereby attempting to ensure a functional separation between analytical activities and party financing.

Supervision of the financial operations of PRACs is carried out in accordance with the Law on Financing of Political Parties (Article 8<sup>33</sup>), while misdemeanor sanctions are provided for irregularities (Article 9<sup>34</sup>).

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*Second Edition*, CDL-AD(2020)032, adopted by the Venice Commission at the 125th Plenary Session, December 2020.

<sup>31</sup> According to a search of the publicly available database of decisions and cases of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, conducted on 16.7.2026, no published decision was found in which the Court ruled on the constitutionality of the limitation of the budget financing of PRACs to the four political parties with the largest number of elected representatives. See: <https://ustavensud.mk/>.

<sup>32</sup> Law on Party Research and Analytical Centers, op. cit.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

It arises from the mentioned provisions that the Law on PRACs establishes a relatively precise organizational and financial framework for the functioning of these centers, but at the same time leaves open questions regarding their essential position in the political system.

**Table 4: Normative Model vs. Democratic Standards**

| Criterion     | Normative decision         | European standard             | Rating       |
|---------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Autonomy      | Part of a party            | Partially independent centers | Limited      |
| Inclusiveness | Four parties financed      | Open system                   | Limited      |
| Function      | Analysis and party support | Policy think tank             | Partial      |
| Financing     | State budget, selective    | Plural and balanced           | Unbalanced   |
| Transparency  | Partially regulated        | High standards                | Insufficient |

Within the framework of contemporary European liberal democracy, such institutions are expected to function as bearers of analytical autonomy and as a bridge between politics and expertise. However, the solution in Article 2, paragraph 2, which defines PRACs as part of the internal structure of the party without separate legal status, places them in a position of institutional dependence, which may limit their independence and ability to critically assess and review the party's policies and positions. In addition, the funding model set out in Article 6, which limits budgetary resources to four political parties, creates an asymmetric development of analytical capacities and raises questions regarding the equality of political entities in the democratic process. In this sense, PRACs appear as an institutional hybrid: normatively recognized as an instrument for advancing political debate and policy-making, but structurally embedded in frameworks that limit their autonomy and inclusiveness.

## 1.4. Law on Financing of Political Parties

In addition to the Law on PRACs, there are significant provisions that directly regulate the financial aspect of the functioning of these centers in the Law on Financing of Political Parties<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> Law on Amending the Law on Financing of Political Parties, Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, no. 294, Skopje, 11.12.2020, p. 1.

Article 10-a<sup>36</sup> of this law establishes the annual budget amount of 280,000 euros intended for financing PRACs, thus establishing the link between the general regime of party financing and the specific mechanism for supporting analytical capacities.

Article 26, paragraph 2<sup>37</sup>, stipulates that PRACs may have sub-accounts within the political party account, whereby they are obliged to submit consolidated financial reports, without there being any special financial reporting standards specific to PRACs.

Article 27<sup>38</sup>, on the other hand, includes the PRAC's sub-account in the party's annual financial report, making its financial activity part of the general oversight mechanism, but without special visibility and without the possibility of independent assessment.

This regulatory framework suggests that the financial transparency of PRACs is regulated only indirectly and within the broader regime of party financing, which constitutes a further limitation on their public accountability. Hence, their real contribution depends on the clarity of the legal framework and on their ability to establish themselves as credible bearers of knowledge and analysis in the processes of formulating party programs and public policy proposals.

## 1.5. Key Findings Regarding the Regulatory Framework

The analysis of the constitutional and legal framework shows that the normative system in North Macedonia creates a comprehensive structure for the existence and functioning of political parties as bearers of political pluralism.

The Constitution sets the value and legal foundations; the Law on Political Parties institutionalizes their role; the Law on PRACs represents an attempt to upgrade their functionality in the direction of developing analytical and program capacities, while the Law on Financing of Political Parties regulates the financial aspect of their operations. However, **the analysis of the interconnection of these four normative levels reveals relevant inconsistencies that directly affect the functioning of PRACs.**

The most significant is the normative tension between the principle of equality established in Article 6, paragraph 1 of the Law on Political Parties, the possibility of forming a PRAC provided for all parties in Article 6, paragraph 3 of the same law, the inclusive threshold of 1% of votes established in Article 10 of the Law on Financing, and the limitation of state budget financing exclusively to the four parties with the largest number of MPs provided for in Article 6,

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<sup>36</sup> Law on Amending the Law on Financing of Political Parties, op. cit.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

paragraph 1 of the Law on PRACs. This internal contradiction creates a structural asymmetry that does not arise from practice but is embedded in the normative framework itself.

Additionally, the financial transparency of PRACs is regulated indirectly, through the general regime of party financing provided for in Articles 26 and 27 of the Law on Financing of Political Parties. The data on their financial operations are included in the consolidated reports of the political parties, without the obligation for the activities and expenditures of PRACs to be presented in a separate, standardized, and publicly available section. Therefore, the existing model does not always allow for a clear determination of the sources of financing, the distribution of funds between the operational and project parts, the costs of individual activities, the projects implemented, and the results achieved. Specific reporting standards would imply an obligation for each PRAC to prepare a separate annual report or a separate annex to the consolidated party report, according to a single template. It would contain data on the funds received, expenditures by legally established categories, costs for employees and training, research and projects implemented, public activities organized, and available analytical products. Such reporting would enable greater comparability between PRACs, clearer public visibility of the use of state budget funds, and more effective external oversight. In this sense, the existing normative architecture is more developed in terms of the formal regulation and financing of PRACs than in terms of providing conditions for them to develop as credible analytical structures that contribute to the formulation of party programs, positions, and public policy proposals.

**PRACs represent a significant step towards developing a functional model of political parties, but their current setup, especially organizational dependence, selective funding, and limited financial transparency, shows that further improvement of their institutional framework is needed.**

## 2. Analysis of Practice: Empirical Insights and Testing the Regulatory Framework

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### 2.1. Analytical Assumptions

Through the prism of the conclusions drawn from the regulatory framework and its practical application from the first part of this study, three key analytical assumptions stand out for the functioning of this important subsystem of the party system, which are further subject to empirical verification.

1. The first assumption is that the existence of a regulatory framework does not in itself guarantee its effective implementation, i.e. that there is a measurable gap between what the law provides and what happens in practice. Hence, the analysis focuses on determining the degree of that alignment through the perceptions of relevant actors.
2. The second assumption is that PRACs in practice mostly provide intra-party support through analyses, preparation of programs, and formulation of policy proposals, and have significantly less influence on the broader public debate and decision-making processes.
3. The third assumption is that the selective funding model, limited to the four largest parties, creates a structural asymmetry that directly affects the development of analytical capacities and limits the inclusiveness of the system as a whole.

These assumptions together form the analytical axis of the empirical research. They complement and condition each other. Namely, if the regulatory framework is not applied effectively, if PRACs function predominantly as intra-party mechanisms, and if the financial model creates structural asymmetry, then the result is a system that formally exists, but essentially does not realize its full potential.

**Table 5: Normative Model and Research Questions Regarding the Functioning of PRACs**

| Criterion    | Regulatory model:<br>what the law provides        | Practical dilemma                                     | Key question                                        |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Legal status | Part of a party, without<br>separate legal status | Can PRACs ensure<br>independence within the<br>party? | Is it possible to have true<br>analytical autonomy? |

|                     |                                                                                             |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                           |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Function            | Analysis, research, development, and policy formulation                                     | Do PRACs create policies or mostly provide support?                                              | Do they function as actors proposing policies or as organizational support for parties?                   |
| Operational part    | Research and data processing                                                                | Are the researches continuous and methodologically structured or conducted ad hoc?               | To what extent are research findings used in the preparation of analyses, programs, and policy proposals? |
| Project part        | Debates, trainings, and public activities                                                   | Are the activities regular and impactful?                                                        | Do PRACs contribute to substantive public dialogue?                                                       |
| Personnel structure | At least two full-time employees, with the possibility of additional funding from the party | Do the legal minimum and available funds allow for the hiring of a sufficient professional team? | Is the basic personnel and financial capacity sufficient for comprehensive research and analysis?         |
| Financing           | State budget for four parties plus projects                                                 | Does selective financing create inequality?                                                      | Is the funding model fair and sustainable?                                                                |
| Inclusiveness       | Establishment available to all parties; state budget financing limited to four parties      | Do all parties really have equal access to resources?                                            | Is the system inherently inclusive?                                                                       |
| Transparency        | Indirectly regulated through party financial reporting                                      | Are the results of the work publicly available?                                                  | Is there real accountability towards the public?                                                          |
| Policy influence    | Participation in policy-making                                                              | Do PRACs really influence decision-making?                                                       | To what extent are their analyses integrated into political decision-making?                              |
| Collaboration       | Domestic and international                                                                  | Is cooperation systemic or formal?                                                               | Is the potential for transfer of knowledge and good practices being used?                                 |

## 2.2. Methodology

In order to provide an empirical test of the functionality of the regulatory model and to gain broader insight into the practical functioning of PRACs, the study conducted **qualitative-quantitative research based on a structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders from the political, institutional, academic, and civil society sectors**<sup>39</sup>.

The selection of respondents is based on the principle of purposive or expert sampling, an approach that is methodologically justified when the topic is institutionally specific and includes a limited number of directly involved stakeholders. Instead of full statistical representativeness, the goal is to include actors who know the model from the inside or follow it from a position of professional or institutional competence. As shown in Table 6, the most represented segment is political parties and PRACs. The first aggregate category, which includes representatives of parties whose PRACs are beneficiaries of state budget funding and representatives of the PRACs themselves, participates with 42.9%. An additional 14.3% are representatives of parties that have formed PRACs but are not beneficiaries of the state budget funding provided for by the Law. Such representation arises from the institutional nature of the topic and is supplemented by perspectives from the academic community, international organizations, the media, and state institutions. The results, therefore, should be read as qualitatively informed perceptions of relevant stakeholders, rather than as statistically representative findings.

The sample included:

- Representatives of political parties whose PRACs are beneficiaries of state budget funding, as well as representatives of the PRACs themselves;
- Representatives of parties with established PRACs that do not receive state budget funding in accordance with the Law;
- Representatives of international organizations and foundations working on the development of political parties and democratic processes;
- Representatives of state institutions;
- Representatives of the academic community;
- Media representatives and political analysts.

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<sup>39</sup> The research does not claim to be fully statistically representative, but rather to provide relevant and diverse perspectives from stakeholders who are directly or indirectly related to the functioning, regulation, monitoring, or analysis of PRACs.

This structure allows the analysis to capture the views of stakeholders who directly participate in the existing PRACs system, as well as the perceptions of stakeholders who act from the perspective of public accountability and democratic development. Additionally, in order to enable a deeper interpretation of the results, the respondents were also analyzed through the prism of their institutional position in relation to the existing model of financing and functioning of PRACs. By doing so, the analysis makes it possible to identify potential differences between:

- Actors directly involved in the functioning of PRACs that receive state budget funding;
- Actors from parties whose PRACs do not receive state budget funding;
- Actors who follow the topic from an institutional, expert, academic, or media perspective.

In the empirical part of the study, the results are presented through a combination of descriptive analysis, tabular and graphical displays, and analytical interpretation of the respondents' perceptions and attitudes. This methodological approach allows for the identification of the structural reasons for the gap between the normative potential and the practical value of PRACs, which constitutes a necessary basis for the formulation of concrete and feasible recommendations.

**Table 6: Institutional Structure of the Respondents**

| Respondent category                                                                                                                     | Representation |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Representatives of political parties and PRACs                                                                                          | 42.9%          |
| Representatives of political parties that have formed PRACs but do not receive state budget funding                                     | 14.3%          |
| Representatives of international organizations and foundations working on the development of political parties and democratic processes | 14.3%          |
| Representatives of state institutions                                                                                                   | 9.5%           |
| Representatives of the academic community                                                                                               | 9.5%           |
| Media representatives and political analysts                                                                                            | 9.5%           |

*Note: The sample consists of a total of 21 respondents selected according to the principle of purposive/expert sampling. The percentages reflect the representation of each category within the total sample.*

## 2.3. Results

### 2.3.1. Role and Significance

The first segment of the empirical research is aimed at analyzing perceptions of the role and significance of PRACs in the political system. In this regard, respondents were asked how they perceive the basic function of PRACs, in which areas they contribute most, and to what extent they contribute to the professionalization of the political debate and the formulation of party positions and policy proposals.

The aim of this segment is to determine whether PRACs are perceived as analytical structures focused on research and expert support in formulating public policy proposals or predominantly as organizational and political mechanisms within the parties.

The same respondents, through two separate questions with an identical list of areas, first assessed the roles that PRACs should have in the political system, and then the extent to which these roles, according to their perception, are actually realized in practice. The percentages show the proportion of respondents who identified the respective area as an expected role and, conversely, as an actual contribution made. The table, therefore, allows for a comparison between expectations and perceptions of practice within the same sample.

**Table 7: The Expected Role of PRACs Versus the Perceived Real Contribution**

| Area                                                                  | Expected role | Perceived real contribution |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Support for political parties through research and analysis           | 81%           | 71%                         |
| Improving the quality of public policies                              | 76%           | 48%                         |
| Professionalization and advancement of the political debate           | 67%           | 43%                         |
| Development of new political ideas and concepts                       | 52%           | 38%                         |
| Connecting politics with the academic, expert, and business community | 48%           | 29%                         |
| Reducing political polarization                                       | 19%           | 10%                         |

In order to identify any gaps between the normative expectations and the practical functioning of PRACs, respondents were asked what they believed should be the most important roles of PRACs, as well as in which areas they actually recognize the most significant contribution. This approach allows for a comparative analysis between the perceived desired function and the perceived practical effect of PRACs.

The results from Table 7 show that there is a relatively visible gap between the expected role of PRACs and their perceived real contribution in almost all analyzed areas. The smallest deviation is observed in support to political parties through research and analysis, which indicates that respondents recognize this function as the most consistently realized in practice. On the other hand, a significantly larger gap is noticeable in the areas related to improving the quality of public policies, the professionalization of the political debate, and the connection with the academic and expert community. Such results point to the conclusion that, although PRACs are perceived as structures that normatively have the potential to contribute to a more serious policy-oriented political system, their practical effect is still assessed as limited or moderate.

It is particularly indicative that the lowest level of real contribution recognized by respondents is in the area of reducing political polarization. This finding further confirms the perception that PRACs function predominantly as structures aimed at intra-party analytical and programmatic support, and significantly less as mechanisms for broader democratic dialogue and building political consensus.

Overall, the results from this segment show that there is a relatively high degree of agreement about the potential value and role of PRACs in the political system, but also a clear perception that their practical operationalization does not yet reach their normative and institutional potential.

**Table 8: Perceptions of the PRACs' Contribution to Political Debate and Policy Formulation**

| Degree of contribution | Professionalization of the political debate | Formulation of party positions and policies |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Not at all             | 5%                                          | 0%                                          |
| Little / Very little   | 24%                                         | 14%                                         |
| Moderate               | 43%                                         | 38%                                         |
| Significant            | 24%                                         | 33%                                         |
| To a large extent      | 4%                                          | 15%                                         |

The results from Table 8 show that respondents generally recognize a moderate to significant contribution of PRACs in the processes of formulating party positions and policy proposals. These data point to the conclusion that their policy and program function is more clearly recognized within the parties and within the processes of intra-party position formulation. On the other hand, the contribution to the professionalization of the political debate is assessed as more moderate. This finding indicates that PRACs are still not perceived as sufficiently strong factors in the broader democratic and public debate.

### 2.3.2. Functioning and Visibility

The second segment of the empirical research is focused on the issue of the practical functioning, as well as the visibility of PRACs in the political and public space. In this regard, respondents were asked how they assess the overall level of activity of PRACs in recent years, in which areas they consider them to have been most active, as well as how often their analyses and studies are publicly available to the wider public.

The purpose of this segment is to determine whether PRACs function as continuously active structures with visible analytical products and public activity or whether their work is predominantly perceived as limited, uneven, and concentrated within intra-party processes.

**Table 9: Perceptions of the Overall Level of PRACs' Activity in Recent Years**

| Assessment of activity level | %   |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Very low                     | 5%  |
| Low                          | 24% |
| Moderate                     | 43% |
| High                         | 24% |
| Very high                    | 4%  |

The results from Table 9 show that **the majority of respondents rate the level of PRACs' activity as moderate**. At the same time, a relatively significant proportion of respondents consider PRACs' activity to be low or very low, while a significantly smaller number rate their activity as high or very high. This distribution of responses indicates that PRACs are not perceived as inactive structures, but at the same time there is no perception of highly developed and continuously visible analytical and policy activity. This finding points to the conclusion of the

existence of relatively uneven activity that depends to a significant extent on the capacities of individual parties, the political context, and the availability of institutional and financial resources.

**Table 10: Perceptions of the Activity Level of the PRACs by Type of Respondents**

| Type of respondent                                                        | Dominant perception about the activity of the PRACs |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Representatives of political parties and PRACs                            | Moderate to high activity level                     |
| Academic community, media, civil society, and international organizations | Low to moderate activity level                      |
| State institutions                                                        | Moderate activity level                             |

*Note: For the purposes of interpretation, a low level of activity denotes occasional and mostly ad hoc activities, with limited production and public visibility; a moderate level implies relatively regular activities, mainly aimed at intra-party support, but without continuous analytical production and a broader public presence; a high level denotes continuous and structured work, regular research and analysis, preparation of program and policy documents, and greater public visibility. The categories reflect the assessments of the respondents, and not the results of an independent measurement of PRACs' activity.*

In Table 10, it is interesting to note that there are differences in perceptions of the level of PRACs' activity depending on the position of the respondents. While representatives of the parties and PRACs more often assess their activity as moderate or high, the remaining representatives have opposite perceptions. Such a gap can be interpreted in several ways. On the one hand, it points to a possible difference between the actual intra-party engagement of PRACs and their visibility in the public space. On the other hand, differences in perceptions may also arise from the limited public visibility of some PRACs' activities, such as internal research, the preparation of election programs, the training of holders of public office and party officials, as well as other activities related to the internal functioning of political parties. Additionally, the influence of the institutional position of the respondents cannot be ruled out: party representatives, especially those directly involved in the work of the PRACs, may have a more positive assessment of their activity and results, while external actors evaluate them primarily based on publicly available information and visible results.

**Table 11: Areas in Which the PRACs Have Been Most Active in Recent Years**

| Area of activity                                   | %   |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Support in creating policies and election programs | 71% |
| Communication and public activities                | 62% |
| Research and analytical products                   | 52% |
| Public events                                      | 48% |
| Public opinion polls                               | 43% |
| Training and capacity building                     | 33% |
| Other                                              | 5%  |

*Note: The question allowed for multiple choice. The percentage for each activity represents the share of the total number of respondents who indicated the corresponding area, which is why the sum of the percentages exceeds 100%.*

The results of Table 11 show that respondents recognize the greatest activity of PRACs in the area of support for policy-making and election programs, as well as in communication and public activities. This finding further confirms the perception that PRACs primarily function as structures related to intra-party policy and political support. At the same time, although a relatively significant number of respondents recognize activity in the area of research and analytical activities, their representation is lower in comparison to political-program and communication activities. This result indicates that the analytical and research function of PRACs is not yet fully institutionalized as their dominant and most visible activity. In addition, the relatively moderate representation of public events, public opinion surveys, and trainings indicates that PRACs have some potential for a broader policy and educational role, but their activity in these segments is still perceived as limited and uneven.

**Table 12: Public Availability of PRACs' Analyses and Studies**

| Public accessibility | %   |
|----------------------|-----|
| Never                | 10% |
| Rarely               | 38% |

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Sometimes  | 33% |
| Often      | 14% |
| Very often | 5%  |

The results from Table 12 show that PRACs' analyses and studies are rarely perceived as regularly and systematically publicly available. Most respondents believe that they are available occasionally, while a relatively small number assess that PRACs' analyses are often or very often made available to the public. This finding indicates limited public visibility of PRACs' analytical products and raises questions regarding their transparency, public accountability, and broader social impact. At the same time, this perception further confirms the assumption that a significant part of PRACs' activities remain concentrated within the framework of intra-party processes, rather than being directed towards broader public and policy debate.

Overall, **the results from this segment show that PRACs are perceived as structures with a moderate level of activity, whose work is predominantly concentrated in the area of party policy and communication support.** At the same time, the analysis points to limited public visibility and insufficiently developed continuous analytical production, which indicates the existence of a gap between the normative potential of PRACs and their practical operationalization in the public and political space.

### 2.3.3. Transparency

The next segment of the survey focused on perceptions of PRACs' transparency and public visibility. In this regard, respondents were asked how they assessed the availability of information about PRACs' activities, achievements, and use of funds. The purpose of this segment is to determine whether PRACs are perceived as sufficiently visible and accountable structures in the public space or whether their work remains predominantly concentrated within the framework of intra-party processes.

**Table 13: Perceptions of the Transparency of the Work of the PRACs**

| Transparency rating             | %   |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| They are not transparent at all | 14% |
| Slightly transparent            | 43% |

|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Moderately transparent   | 29% |
| Sufficiently transparent | 10% |
| Completely transparent   | 4%  |

The results from Table 13 show that **the majority of respondents rate the transparency of PRACs as low or moderate**. A relatively small number of respondents consider PRACs to be sufficiently or fully transparent in terms of the availability of information about their activities, achievements, and use of funds.

These findings significantly correspond to the previously established differences in perceptions of the level of PRACs' activity between representatives of political parties and representatives of the academic community, the media, the civil society sector, and international organizations, as can be seen in Table 10. Such a connection points to the conclusion that part of the gap in perceptions does not necessarily arise from a complete absence of activities, but also from their limited public visibility and accessibility. At the same time, such a perception may also be related to the very nature of some of the PRACs' activities, which are not always public in nature. In this sense, some of their activities relate to internal research, preparation of election programs, analyses for the needs of party bodies, training of holders of public office and party officials, as well as other activities related to the internal functioning of political parties. However, despite this nature of some of the activities, the results indicate that there is a perception of insufficient public availability of analytical documents and a limited level of accountability regarding the spending of funds and the public presentation of the results of the PRACs' work.

### 2.3.4. Financing

Building on the previous segment, which addressed the public visibility of PRACs' work and activities, this segment focuses on perceptions of their financial transparency<sup>40</sup> and model of funding. In this regard, respondents were asked whether the public has sufficient information about PRACs' funding and use of finances, how they assess the current funding model, and

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<sup>40</sup> For the purposes of the study, financial transparency refers to the public availability, clarity, and verifiability of information on the sources and amounts of funding, the allocation and purpose of funds, the realized expenditures, as well as the publication of financial reports and other relevant documents on the financial operations of PRACs. The assessment refers to the respondents' perceptions of the availability of this information, and not to an independent verification or audit of the financial operations of PRACs.

whether they believe that the number of political parties receiving state budget funding for PRACs should be expanded.

The purpose of this segment is to determine whether the existing model is perceived as sufficiently transparent, functional, and inclusive, as well as whether there are differences in perceptions depending on the institutional position of the respondents.

**Table 14: Perceptions of the Availability of Financing Information and the Use of PRACs' Funds**

| Answer                          | Total | Dominant group of respondents                                             |
|---------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Yes                             | 24%   | Representatives of political parties and PRACs                            |
| Partially                       | 33%   | State institutions and some political parties                             |
| No                              | 38%   | Academic community, media, civil society, and international organizations |
| I don't have enough information | 5%    | Mixed                                                                     |

The results from Table 14 show that there are significant differences in perceptions of PRACs' financial transparency depending on the institutional position of the respondents. While representatives of political parties and PRACs more often believe that the public has sufficient or partially sufficient information about the financing and use of funds, representatives of the academic community, the media, the civil society sector, and international organizations significantly more often assess that the public does not have enough information.

**Table 15: Assessment of the Existing Financing Model for PRACs**

| Model evaluation | Total | Dominant group of respondents                    |
|------------------|-------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Very good / Good | 48%   | Major parties with access to state funding       |
| Moderate         | 29%   | State institutions and part of the expert sector |
| Bad / Very bad   | 23%   | Smaller parties and the civil sector             |

The results from Table 15 show that **there are significant differences in perceptions of the quality and functionality of the existing PRACs funding model**. Respondents from parties that have direct access to state funding for PRACs are significantly more likely to rate the model as good or very good. On the other hand, representatives of smaller political parties and some representatives of the civil and expert sectors are significantly more likely to express critical views or rate the model as limited and insufficiently inclusive. Such differences point to the conclusion that perceptions of the existing financing model depend to a significant extent on the institutional position and the degree of direct access to state financing mechanisms for PRACs. At the same time, the results show that some of the actors who benefit from the existing model perceive it as stable and functional, while actors with limited or indirect access to the system more often emphasize the need for its review and expansion.

**Table 16: Perceptions of the Need for Expansion of the Number of Political Parties That Receive State Funding for the PRACs**

| Answer       | Total | Dominant group of respondents                    |
|--------------|-------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Yes          | 62%   | Smaller parties, academia, media, NGOs           |
| No           | 29%   | Large parties with existing access to the system |
| I'm not sure | 9%    | Mixed                                            |

The results of Table 16 further show that **the majority of respondents believe that the possibility of expanding the number of parties receiving state funding for PRACs should be considered**. There is particularly strong support for such an approach among smaller parties, representatives of the academic community, the media, the civil society sector, and international organizations. On the other hand, representatives of political parties that already have direct access to the existing financing model significantly more often express the view that the scope should not be further expanded.

Such differences in perceptions indicate the existence of a structural asymmetry within the PRAC system itself. Moreover, the results point to different political positions, but also to different institutional perspectives regarding the question of who and under what requirements should have access to state-supported analytical and policy capacities. At the same time, some respondents, in the semi-structured interviews and open-ended responses to the questionnaire, indicate that the possible expansion of the model could contribute to greater pluralism and inclusiveness in the political system, while other respondents warn that

such an approach could raise questions related to functionality, the allocation of funds, and control over their use.

### 2.3.5. Need for Reforms

The next segment of the empirical research is aimed at analyzing perceptions of the need for further improvement and reform of the PRACs' system. In this regard, respondents were asked whether there is a need to improve the legal framework, transparency, and effectiveness of PRACs, as well as whether the PRACs should have greater obligations regarding the public disclosure of their analyses and activities.

The aim of this segment is to determine whether, despite the different perceptions about the functioning of PRACs, there is a broader consensus on the need for their institutional improvement and adaptation to higher standards of effectiveness, transparency, and public accountability. At the same time, this segment aims to show whether the issue of PRACs' reforms is perceived as a topic of political confrontation or, on the contrary, as an issue on which there is a relatively broad consensus among the different categories of respondents.

**Table 17: Perceptions of the Need for Reforms of the PRACs' System**

| Question                      | Low/no need | Moderate need | Significant/very big need |
|-------------------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Improving the legal framework | 14%         | 29%           | 57%                       |
| Improving transparency        | 10%         | 24%           | 66%                       |
| Improving effectiveness       | 5%          | 19%           | 76%                       |

The results in Table 17 show a relatively high level of agreement among the different categories of respondents regarding the need to improve the PRACs' system. **Regardless of the institutional position of the respondents, the dominant perception is that the existing system needs further improvement, especially in terms of effectiveness and transparency.** It is particularly significant that in this segment there are no pronounced differences between representatives of political parties, the academic community, the media, the civil society sector, and international organizations. This finding points to the important conclusion that, despite the different perceptions regarding the activity, transparency, and financing of PRACs, there is a broad consensus on the need for their further institutional improvement.

**Table 18: Perceptions of the Need for Mandatory Public Disclosure of PRACs' Analyses and Activities**

| Answer    | Percentage |
|-----------|------------|
| Yes       | 57%        |
| Partially | 33%        |
| No        | 10%        |

The results from Table 18 show that the majority of respondents support greater public visibility and accountability of PRACs through public disclosure of their analyses and activities. At the same time, a significant proportion of respondents support a partial or selective approach, given the nature of certain activities that are related to intra-party processes, internal analyses, and strategy preparations.

### 2.3.6. Future of the System

The final segment of the empirical research focuses on perceptions of the future and long-term sustainability of the PRACs' system. The aim of this segment is to determine whether, despite the different perceptions about their transparency, effectiveness, activity, and the funding model, there is a broader consensus on the very need for the existence of analytical and policy structures within political parties. At the same time, this segment aims to show whether the criticisms and reservations that the different categories of respondents express regarding the functioning of PRACs are directed at the very concept of PRACs or, on the contrary, mainly relate to the manner of their practical organization, institutional setup, and operationalization in the political system.

**Table 19: Perceptions About the Future of the PRACs' System**

| Answer       | Total | Dominant groups of respondents      |
|--------------|-------|-------------------------------------|
| Yes          | 81%   | All categories of respondents       |
| No           | 9%    | Part of the civil and expert sector |
| I'm not sure | 10%   | Mixed                               |

The results from Table 19 show that **the vast majority of respondents believe that the PRACs' system should continue to exist in the future**. It is particularly significant that such support is present among almost all categories of respondents, including some actors who in the previous segments expressed critical views regarding the transparency, effectiveness, and financing model of PRACs. This finding indicates that criticism of the existing system is mostly directed not at the very existence of PRACs as a concept, but at the manner of their functioning, the degree of their institutional autonomy, public accountability, and practical effectiveness. At the same time, the results show that even among some respondents who have reservations about the current model, there is a perception that political parties need analytical, research, and policy capacities that would contribute to better policy formulation, professionalization of the political process, and advancement of the political debate.

It is particularly telling that the differences between the various categories of respondents in this segment are significantly smaller than those regarding questions related to the transparency, funding, and effectiveness of PRACs. This result points to the conclusion that, despite the different perceptions about the way the system functions, there is a relatively broad consensus on the need for institutionalized analytical and policy structures within political parties. In this sense, the results of this segment further confirm the thesis that the challenges related to PRACs in North Macedonia do not relate to the legitimacy of the concept itself, but primarily to the need for further institutional improvement, greater transparency, more balanced inclusiveness, and more effective practical operationalization of the system.

**Table 20: Analytical Interpretation of the Dominant Perspectives for the Future of the PRACs**

| Respondents' category          | Dominant perspective identified through analysis            |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Big political parties          | Emphasis on the policy and program function of PRACs        |
| Smaller political parties      | Emphasis on the need for greater inclusiveness of the model |
| Academic community and experts | Emphasis on analytical and professional capacities          |
| Media and civil society        | Emphasis on transparency and public accountability          |
| International organizations    | Emphasis on the professionalization of the political system |

Table 20 represents an analytical synthesis based on the broader interpretation of the responses and the trends identified within the empirical research, rather than a direct classification of the respondents' responses.

The analysis shows that, despite the relatively broad support for the continued existence of the PRACs system, different categories of respondents approach this issue from different institutional and policy perspectives.

- The perception of PRACs as structures that have an important policy and programmatic function, especially in the area of policy preparation, analysis, and election programs, dominates among big political parties. This approach corresponds to their direct connection with the existing model and the practical use of PRACs' capacities within party processes.
- Smaller political parties significantly more often emphasize the need for greater inclusiveness and broader access to the system of financing and institutional support. This perspective is related to their limited position within the existing model and the perception that analytical and policy capacities should not be concentrated only among the biggest political entities.
- The dominant approach in the academic community and among experts is that PRACs are seen as potential analytical and professional centers that could contribute to better quality in public policy formulation and greater professionalization of the political system. In this perspective, the focus is placed more on the quality of the processes than on the party dimension of the system.
- Media and civil society representatives, on the other hand, significantly more often highlight issues related to the transparency, public visibility, and accountability of PRACs, especially regarding the use of public funds and the availability of analytical products.
- International organizations most often approach PRACs from the perspective of professionalization and institutional development of the political system, recognizing their potential for improving capacities, political culture, and the quality of democratic processes.

Overall, the analysis shows that **the different categories of respondents do not differ on the question of whether PRACs should exist, but primarily on what type of institutional model, degree of transparency, and policy role they should have in the future.**

### **2.3.7. Key Findings from the Empirical Research**

The empirical research, which brings together findings from the structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, enables the key insights regarding the functioning, perceptions,

and future development of PRACs in North Macedonia to be grouped into four broader categories:

**Role and legitimacy of PRACs:** There is a relatively high degree of consensus that political parties need developed analytical and research capacities to formulate party platforms, positions, and policy proposals. PRACs are primarily perceived as structures for intra-party support through research, analysis, and preparation of election and program documents. Their contribution to the broader public debate, the reduction of political polarization, and the connection between politics and the academic and expert community is significantly less recognized.

**Effectiveness, activity, and public visibility:** The findings show a visible gap between the expected role of PRACs and their perceived real contribution. Their practical effectiveness is most often assessed as moderate and uneven and depends to a significant extent on the capacities of the specific political party, as well as on the available human, institutional, and financial resources. At the same time, there is a perception of limited public visibility of PRACs, especially in terms of the availability of their analyses, studies, and other work outputs. The difference between the more positive intra-party assessment of PRACs' activity and their lower visibility among the academic community, the media, the civil society sector, and international organizations is also noticeable. Part of this difference can be explained by the internal character of a significant part of their activities, but also by the different institutional position of the respondents.

**Funding and inclusiveness:** The research identifies a structural asymmetry in the existing funding model. Actors who have direct access to state budget-funded PRACs more often assess the model as functional and stable. Smaller political parties, as well as some representatives of the academic community, the media, and the civil society sector, more often emphasize the need for greater inclusiveness and expanding the number of parties that have access to publicly funded analytical capacities.

**Future development of PRACs:** Despite differing perceptions about transparency, funding, visibility, and effectiveness, there is a relatively broad consensus that PRACs should continue to exist and be further institutionally developed. Criticisms of the current model mostly relate to its practical organization, financial transparency, inclusiveness, and degree of institutional autonomy, rather than the need for the existence of analytical structures within political parties.

Overall, the results indicate that **North Macedonia has established an innovative model, but that practical implementation remains limited by issues related to the transparency, inclusiveness, and institutional autonomy of the PRACs.**

**Table 21: Synthetic Overview of the Key Findings from the Empirical Research**

| Dimension               | Dominant perception                                                        | Degree of consensus | Key gap                                                                     |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Role and significance   | PRACs are primarily perceived as structures for intra-party policy support | High                | Between the expected and real role in the public debate                     |
| Activity and visibility | Moderate activity level, unevenly distributed                              | Medium              | Between the internal party and the public perception of the activity        |
| Transparency            | Low to moderate transparency                                               | High                | Between parties and external actors                                         |
| Financing               | The model is functional for those with access, restrictive for the rest    | Low                 | Between the big and the small parties                                       |
| Inclusiveness           | The majority supports expanding the number of state-funded parties         | Medium              | Between users and non-users of the funding                                  |
| Need for reforms        | Broad support for improving effectiveness and transparency                 | High                | There is no significant gap between the categories of respondents           |
| Future of the system    | The majority supports the continuation of the system                       | High                | There is no gap in terms of the general concept, only in terms of the model |

# Conclusions and Recommendations

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The analysis of the regulatory framework and the empirical findings show that the PRACs' system in North Macedonia, established by the 2013 Law, has created a recognizable and fundamentally functional institutional framework.

More than a decade after its adoption, implementation reveals clear limitations that cannot be overcome by applying the existing provisions, but rather require targeted, consensual amendments and additions to the legal framework.

The majority of stakeholders in the system, regardless of their institutional position, recognize this moment as appropriate for improvement. In that regard, the following recommendations are proposed.

## 1. Institutional Setup and Autonomy

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1. To amend Article 2, paragraph 2, in order to more precisely normatively determine the functional autonomy of PRACs within the party structure. PRACs would continue to function as part of the internal organization of the political party, without the status of a separate legal entity, but with clearly defined program, analytical, and project responsibilities. In this regard, the Law and the acts of the political party should ensure that the PRAC adopts a separate annual working program and has clearly allocated funds for its implementation, within the framework of the legally established purposes. In this way, a clearer distinction would be established between the analytical and project function of PRACs and the current party activities, without disrupting their institutional connection with the political party.
2. In accordance with the functional autonomy from recommendation 1.1, Article 4 should be supplemented with a more precise separation between the responsibility of the head of the PRAC and the responsibilities of the political party's bodies regarding the use of funds allocated for the PRAC. The head should have clear legal authority to manage the funds within the framework of the approved annual program and financial plan of the PRAC and in accordance with the legally established purpose of the funds. Any amendment to the approved program or financial plan by the political party's bodies should be carried out according to a pre-established procedure and should be properly documented. In this way, the legal responsibility of the head would be accompanied by an appropriate degree of actual authority to manage the funds for which they are responsible.

3. To review the existing minimum personnel standard for PRACs in order to ensure that staffing capacity is adequate to the scope of activities, institutional obligations, and available public funding. Instead of a uniform increase in the legally established minimum for all PRACs, the possible introduction of higher personnel requirements should be based on a prior functional and fiscal assessment, taking into account the working program, the scope of the analytical and project activities, and the funding model. Political parties, within the framework of their acts and available funds, should ensure personnel capacity that allows for the continuous and professional performance of the functions of the PRACs.

## 2. Financing and Inclusiveness

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1. To review and amend the criterion for access to state budget financing of PRACs set out in Article 6, paragraph 1 of the Law on PRACs, in order to eliminate the existing regulatory inconsistency and establish a more inclusive and equitable model. The existing limitation to the four political parties with the largest number of elected representatives creates normative tension with the principle of equality of political parties set out in Article 6, paragraph 1 of the Law on Political Parties, as well as with the fact that the possibility of forming a PRAC is available to all registered political parties. At the same time, this criterion is significantly more restrictive than the general model of public financing of political parties, which in Article 10 of the Law on Financing of Political Parties establishes a threshold of 1% of the total number of votes won. This arrangement creates a paradoxical situation in which a political party that meets the legal requirement for public financing of its regular operations and has formed a PRAC may at the same time be excluded from budgetary support for the development of its own analytical and research capacities. Therefore, consideration should be given to the possibility of granting access to state budget funding to political parties that have formed a PRAC and meet an appropriately defined representative criterion, such as a threshold of 1% of the total number of votes won or another proportional criterion based on electoral support and parliamentary representation. Changing the model in this direction would reduce the existing structural asymmetry, enable a more equitable development of the analytical capacities of a wider range of political parties, and bring the domestic solution closer to the recommendations of the Venice Commission and the OSCE/ODIHR for inclusive and non-discriminatory public financing. Comparative experiences from European democracies further indicate that formulas for the distribution of public funds should ensure a balance between political

pluralism, representativeness, fiscal sustainability, and effective control over the use of funds<sup>41</sup>.

2. To review the basic annual amount of 280,000 euros provided for in Article 10-a of the Law on Financing of Political Parties, taking into account the real personnel needs of PRACs, the possible expansion of the number of beneficiaries in accordance with recommendation 2.1, the scope of institutional and reporting obligations, and the real costs of their operational and project functioning. The appropriate basic amount should be determined on the basis of a previous fiscal assessment, with a clear distinction between the funds needed for personnel capacity and the funds intended for project activities. After determining the appropriate basic amount, a legal mechanism should be introduced for its regular annual adjustment through a combined indexation model based on objective and publicly available statistical indicators. One possible model is to adjust according to a formula in which 60% of the adjustment will be determined based on the annual increase in the cost-of-living index, and 40% based on the annual increase in the average monthly gross salary, according to the latest officially published data of the State Statistical Office. This ratio follows the structure of PRACs' costs, in which project activities have a larger share, while a significant part of the funds is used for salaries, contributions, and current material operations. This way, the financial basis would be adjusted to the real personnel, institutional, and project needs, and the amount would retain its real value and follow inflationary movements and the growth of professional work costs. At the same time, ad hoc and politically conditioned determination of funds would be avoided.

In addition to the regular annual adjustment of the amount, a periodic assessment of the adequacy of the criteria and parameters of the funding system should be carried out after each parliamentary election, in particular with regard to the number of beneficiaries, personnel needs, allocation of funds, and the real needs for the development of the analytical capacities of the PRACs. The assessment could be coordinated by the Ministry of Justice, based on a pre-established methodology and in consultation with the relevant institutions and beneficiaries of the system.

3. To consider the possibility of introducing a separate variable, competitive component for project funding of PRACs, which would be distributed on the basis of a public call and project proposals, according to pre-determined criteria, priorities, and objectives. The introduction of such a mechanism should not automatically imply an increase in the total

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<sup>41</sup> Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" Skopje, *Models of Public Financing of Political Parties in Developed European Countries*, Skopje, 2022. Available at: <https://idscs.org.mk/mk/2022/03/02/modeli-na-javno-finansiranje-na-politi/>.

amount of public funding for political parties. Depending on the results of the previous fiscal assessment, the competitive component could be provided as an additional budget component or by setting aside a limited part of the funds intended for project activities, without reducing the funds necessary for the basic operational functioning of PRACs.

PRACs of political parties that are beneficiaries of regular state budget funding, as well as PRACs of parties that do not meet the requirement for access to the basic model, could be eligible to participate, provided that they meet pre-determined minimum organizational, administrative, financial, and accountability criteria. Funding would be limited to clearly defined project objectives, such as the development of analytical capacities; the preparation of research, analysis, and proposals for public policies; the organization of public debates and trainings; inter-party cooperation; the inclusion of women and other vulnerable groups; networking with the academic and expert community; and other activities that contribute to better quality public debate and more informed political decision-making.

The management of such a mechanism should be clearly regulated in the Law, with a distinction between the expert evaluation, the final decision on the selection of projects, and the administrative and financial management of the funds. Project proposals would be assessed according to a publicly established scoring methodology by experts selected according to pre-established criteria. The final decision on the selection of projects could be made by the Committee on Political System and Inter-Ethnic Relations of the Parliament, while the administrative and technical implementation of the public call, contracting, payment, and financial monitoring would be carried out by a competent body determined in the Law. The public call, the criteria, the list of applied and approved projects, the scoring lists, the expert assessments, and the final decisions should be publicly available.

4. To introduce a clear obligation for annual operational, i.e. narrative, reporting on the work of the PRAC, with a pre-determined minimum content and deadline for preparation. The report should contain an overview of the implemented activities, the prepared analyses and research, the project activities, the trainings, the forms of cooperation, and other relevant results of the work of the PRAC in the reporting year. Standardizing the basic structure of the report would enable greater comparability of the work of the different PRACs and would create a basis for regular monitoring of their activities and results.
5. To introduce special standards for financial reporting on the funds allocated to PRACs within the financial, i.e. consolidated, reports of the political parties provided for by the Law on Financing of Political Parties. Information on the PRAC should be presented as a

clearly separated and recognizable segment, with an overview of the funds received and their use by basic categories of costs and activities. This way, greater transparency and comparability of the financial operations related to the PRACs would be ensured, without creating a special obligation for financial reporting of the PRACs as entities with separate legal status.

### 3. Transparency and Public Accountability

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1. To introduce a clear legal obligation to publicly publish the annual operational, i.e. narrative, report on the work of the PRAC on the official website of the political party, within a pre-determined deadline. The report should contain an overview of the analytical products, project and public activities, forms of cooperation, and other relevant results of the work of the PRAC in the reporting year, with clearly defined exceptions for information of an intra-party nature.

Financial data related to the PRAC should be publicly available through the political party's financial reports, in accordance with the specific standards proposed in recommendation 2.5. This would establish a clear distinction between operational reporting on the work and results of the PRAC and financial reporting on the funds used for its operation, while ensuring public availability of both types of information.

2. To establish a centralized publicly accessible register of PRACs, which will contain basic information on the established centers and their annual operational reports, in a standardized format that will allow for comparability between different PRACs and public insight by citizens, civil society organizations, and competent institutions. The register would be maintained by a competent state body determined by law, and its content and the manner of updating should be clearly regulated.
3. To consider the possibility of developing basic methodological guidelines, standards of good practice, and recommendations for the preparation of PRACs' analytical products, in cooperation with the academic community, the expert sector, and international organizations active in this field. Such guidelines should contribute to improvement of the quality, methodological soundness, and professionalism of analytical production, without limiting the programmatic, thematic, and analytical autonomy of the PRACs.

### 4. Inter-Party Cooperation and the Reduction of Polarization

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1. To operationalize and institutionalize the provision of Article 5, paragraph 1 of the Law on PRACs by establishing a formalized mechanism for regular inter-party meetings and PRAC

gatherings. The mechanism should provide periodic communication and the opportunity for joint consideration of issues that are of interest to multiple political entities, such as the analysis of public policies, the exchange of research experiences and findings, and the identification of areas for inter-party cooperation. The administrative coordination of the meetings could be provided by the Committee on Political System and Inter-Ethnic Relations, with support from the staff of the Assembly, while the chairmanship would rotate among the PRACs. The agenda would be determined jointly by the participants, thus preserving their programmatic autonomy. Such a mechanism would create an institutional space for dialogue, knowledge exchange, and building a minimum consensus on issues of broader public interest.

2. To encourage more active use of the opportunity for cooperation and membership in related international organizations and networks, provided for in Article 5, paragraph 2 of the Law on PRACs, with the aim of systematic transfer of knowledge, exchange of experiences, and good practices from comparable systems in the region and beyond. The costs related to membership, participation in international activities, professional development, and exchange of experiences should be able to be planned within the framework of the regular program and financial activities of the PRACs, in accordance with the legally established purpose of the funds.

## 5. Longer-Term Measures

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1. In the long term, the PRACs' system should be developed towards greater integration of their analytical documents into party programs and broader legislative processes. The quality and relevance of PRACs' analytical production are the key prerequisites for such positioning, as the influence on political decision-making cannot be fully standardized, but rather naturally arises from the credibility and expertise of the centers themselves.
2. In the long term, PRACs should be developed towards more active and systematic cooperation with the academic community, the expert sector, and civil society, outside of intra-party processes. Such positioning cannot be achieved only by legal obligation, but should be the result of institutional maturity, transparency, and proven analytical credibility of the PRACs themselves in the public space.

## 6. Regular Monitoring and Self-Evaluation of the Work of PRACs

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The previous experience shows that the formal fulfillment of legal obligations does not provide a complete picture of the activities, achievements, and institutional development of PRACs,

nor of the results related to the use of funds allocated to them from the state budget. Therefore, it is recommended to establish a mechanism for regular annual monitoring and self-evaluation of their work, based on pre-established, clear, and comparable criteria.

The self-evaluation should be an integral part of the annual operational, i.e. narrative, report on the work of the PRAC and should cover the production of analyses and research, transparency and public accountability, cooperation and institutional networking, as well as, based on documented examples, the contribution to public policies and the political debate. For each area, appropriate quantitative and qualitative indicators, data sources, and a brief explanation of the achieved results should be used.

In applying the framework, a distinction should be made between indicators that can be monitored regularly on an annual basis and development indicators whose results appear over a longer period of time. The latter should not be expected to be achieved in each reporting year, but documented examples should be cited where they exist and, if necessary, monitored cumulatively over a multi-year period.

The annual report should present the results of the self-evaluation and a brief explanation for each area, while the supporting documentation and evidence on which the data is based need not be published completely. They should be kept by the PRAC and made available upon request from the competent institutions, thus ensuring verifiability without creating a disproportionate administrative burden.

The complete framework for annual self-evaluation should primarily be applied to PRACs that are beneficiaries of regular state budget funding. For PRACs that use only limited project support, simplified reporting proportional to the type and volume of funds received could be envisaged, while for PRACs that do not use public funds the framework could have a recommendatory character.

Such a mechanism aims to enable systematic and comparable monitoring of the work and institutional development of PRACs, without assessing their political or ideological orientation and without mechanically ranking the centers. A detailed draft framework for the annual monitoring and self-evaluation is shown in the Annex to the Study.

**North Macedonia has taken the first step by establishing an innovative model for institutionalizing analytical capacities within political parties. The next step is its enhancement through targeted, consensus-based amendments that will enable it to reach its true potential, fostering more informed political decision-making, higher-quality public debate, and more substantive democracy.**

# Annex: Proposed Framework for Regular Monitoring and Self-Evaluation of PRACs' Effectiveness

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This framework is a proposed instrument for regular annual monitoring and self-evaluation of the work of party think tanks. Its aim is to enable the systematic collection of comparable data on the activities, results, and institutional development of PRACs, as well as their broader contribution, when this can be substantiated by appropriate data and documented examples.

The self-evaluation is prepared by the PRAC itself as an integral part of its annual operational, i.e. narrative, report. For each applicable indicator, the achieved value or result, the source of the data, and, where necessary, a brief explanation should be stated. The accompanying documentation and evidence are kept by the PRAC and are submitted upon request to the competent institutions, without the obligation to be a completely integral part of the publicly released report.

The indicators in the framework have different time frames. Core indicators are monitored annually and relate to activities and results that are directly measurable during the reporting year. Development indicators relate to results and impacts that can be manifested over a longer period of time. They do not require mandatory achievement in each year, but rather present documented examples where they exist and, if necessary, are monitored cumulatively.

The framework should not be used to assess the political or ideological content of the work of PRACs, nor to mechanically rank centers. Its purpose is to provide a structured and comparable insight into their activity, institutional development, and results achieved, with administrative requirements proportionate to the type and volume of public funding.

| Area                                | Data sources                                                                                                                                           | Measurement method                                                                                                                                    | Suggested indicators                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Production of analyses and research | Annual work program; annual operational report; publications, analyses, and other analytical products of the PRAC; website and other official channels | Quantitative and qualitative review of the scope, type, and availability of analytical production and the degree of realization of planned activities | Annual indicators: number and type of studies, analyses, research, and public policy documents produced; thematic diversity; public availability of |

|                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                               | publications; degree of implementation of relevant activities envisioned in the annual work program                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Contribution to public policies          | PRAC's publications and analytical products; party programs and other program documents; draft laws and amendments; other documented political and program initiatives             | Qualitative analysis of documented examples of the use of PRAC's analyses, findings, and recommendations in public policy-making processes    | Development indicators: documented examples of adoption or use of PRAC's analyses, findings, and recommendations in party programs, program documents, legislative proposals, amendments, and other public policy initiatives. This indicator is not expected to be achieved in every reporting year; where appropriate, results may also be tracked cumulatively. |
| Transparency and public accountability   | Annual operational report; website of the political party and/or the PRAC; publicly available publications and information on activities; financial reports of the political party | Analysis of the timeliness, availability, and completeness of information on the work, results, and use of public funds allocated to the PRAC | Annual indicators: publicly released annual operational report; availability of analytical publications and information on public activities; publicly available financial data for the PRAC as a separate segment in the political party's financial reporting; timely fulfillment of public disclosure obligations                                               |
| Cooperation and institutional networking | Annual operational report; information and documentation on implemented activities;                                                                                                | Quantitative and qualitative overview of the scope, diversity, and character of the                                                           | Annual indicators: number and type of realized collaborations with other PRACs, the                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

|                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                 | information on joint projects, publications, events, and other forms of cooperation                                                                                              | implemented cooperation                                                                                                                  | academic community, civil society organizations, the expert sector, and domestic and international organizations; number and type of joint activities, projects, publications, events, and other forms of institutional cooperation                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Contribution to the political and public debate | Annual operational report; information on public debates, conferences, and consultations; publications and official internet channels; other relevant publicly available sources | Quantitative and qualitative review of public activities and documented examples of presenting and discussing PRAC's analytical findings | Annual indicators: number and type of organized public debates, conferences, consultations, and other forms of public exchange; participation of external experts, organizations, and other relevant stakeholders; documented examples of public presentation and discussion of research findings. Development indicator: wider visibility and documented contribution of the PRAC's analytical products to the political and public debate |

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