

## CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES IN MACEDONIA - MORE THAN TWO DECADES

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**Abstract:** constitutional changes are something that is necessary in order to improve democratic governance or adapt to political, economic and social changes. The procedure for changing the constitution is special, more complex and more difficult than the procedure for changing laws. It is preferable that constitutional changes are adopted with formal amendments and respect for the democratic processes established in the constitution, and not informal changes. It is neither possible nor desirable to try to formulate in abstracto the best model for constitutional changes. The significance of the balance between rigidity and flexibility can vary from state to state, depending on the political and social context, constitutional culture, time, details and characteristics of the constitution, as well as a number of other factors. The 1991 Constitution of Macedonia is a milestone on the road to democratic transition, although it is alleged that it was created in the “lab” and not in the state institutions. The 1991 Constitution belongs to a group of flexible constitutions, despite the fact that a double majority is required for its change. Amendments to the Constitution of Macedonia were applied seven times (in 1992, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2009 and 2011) and they have become an integral part of the Constitution. More than twenty years of “constitutional development” since the passing of the Constitution through the numerous amendments that followed clearly describe the transformation of the modern Macedonian state, as well as the issues, the causes and problems which have appeared and the steps which have had to be taken. A number of constitutional changes in Macedonia from 1992 to 2011 show a strong tendency for democratization and integration of ethnic communities, they also have (probably unintended) supportive effect in cementing ethnic cleavages in the Macedonian political system. Finally, the external influence played a major role in the adoption of a number of changes in the 1991 Macedonian Constitution. In spite of the significance of formal rules for changing the Constitution, however, it has been established that the political and social context is far more significant for many changes. The Macedonian Constitution is an example when adapting to social and political changes was the basis for changing the constitution and the way for its revision several times with 31 changes since 1991. Also, while the formal right to initiative should be within national political actors, a particular initiative may sometimes come from abroad (for example, BiH, Sudan and Iraq). In Europe, in recent years it has become common place for states to change their constitutions in order to comply with the requirements that are necessary in order to achieve their goal of joining the European Union or the Council of Europe, which often require the states to undertake constitutional reforms aimed at harmonizing with the commitments they made when they became members of those organizations.

**Keywords:** constitution, constitutional changes, revision of the constitution, Republic of Macedonia.