



**MACEDONIAN INFORMATION AND LIAISON SERVICE (MILS) (Reg)**  
***Australian-Macedonians assist Macedonia in its hour of need !***

The **Australian Macedonian Society Inc.** was established in 1991, and incorporated in South Australia. Its co-founders, Chairpersons **Michael Radin** (Adelaide) and **Chris Angelkov** (Perth), established the association as a nation-wide vehicle to assist the cause of the sovereign and newly-independent Republic of Macedonia, with a view to promoting and enhancing its links with third-countries and international organizations, should Macedonia also become embroiled in the developing conflict promulgated by a rapidly-dissolving Yugoslav federation at that time. It worked in collaboration with a similar body in Canada, the Canadian Macedonian Society. Both bodies sought to lobby for the protection of Macedonian sovereignty and independence, enhance its international cooperation and trade, and promote the rights of Macedonians living in the other parts of Macedonia.

At the time, there was no generalist federal body of Macedonians active on Australian soil, outside of the religion-focused Australian Diocese of

the Macedonian Orthodox Church, with its administrative seat in Melbourne, and the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee, also based in that city.

Numerous eminent Macedonian activists across Australia were appointed to the board of the Australian Macedonian Society (AMS), while Chris and Michael took up responsibilities as Directors of its AMS fund-raising arm, the **Ilinden Foundation**. In this task, in the Adelaide office of the Foundation, the Directors were ably assisted by its executive officer, **Alex Glafchev**, who willingly gave up his regular employment to work full-time on this important project.

The Ilinden Foundation (IF) sought to raise funds for the “defence” of Macedonia, and in this regard, opened a professional campaign amongst Macedonian individuals, families, businesses and organizations across Australia and New Zealand. An extraordinary sum (for that time) of just under **AUD \$450,000.00** was raised in around six (6) months, a success-story never again matched, as the zeal and patriotism of ordinary Australian-Macedonians was fuelled by the frightening scenarios being contemplated in the Balkans, and elsewhere in Europe, as the walls built around C20th communism quickly started to crumble.

**Macedonian Liaison and Information Service**

Amidst the euphoria of the “*Campaign for an Independent Macedonia*”, led by the AMS and Ilinden Foundation, and involving cooperation with numerous other Macedonian organizations across Australia, well-known Australian journalist and lobbyist **Richard Farmer**, was recruited as a consultant to the AMS Inc. Farmer had previously played a critical role as Chief Media Adviser to Prime Minister Bob Hawke, and had already proven instrumental in providing advice to the Croatian government during the early stages of the conflict in the Balkans. Farmer’s advice to Radin, Angelkov and others involved was simple – establish a credible and independent media and lobby centre in the heart of Europe, in case the Yugoslav conflict results in the shutting down of the Republic of Macedonia to the outside world!

Farmer was subsequently despatched to Skopje to meet with **President Gligorov** and the Macedonian **government**, Macedonian **NGOs** (in all separated parts of Macedonia), as well as with the leaders of the **International Lobby/World Macedonian Congress** (which included Co-Chair Michael Radin) in Toronto, Canada, and as a consequence, a decision was taken to establish the **Macedonian Information and Liaison Service**, in the heart of ‘political’ Europe, Brussels, with a subsidiary office in Skopje, Macedonia.

At a meeting in Moscow in October 1991 of the CHD of the inter-governmental body the **OSCE** (Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe), Radin and Angelkov, amongst other Macedonian delegates from Australia, Canada, Republic of Macedonia, and the Aegean, Pirin and Mala Prespa/Golo Brdo regions of Macedonia, attending as representatives of the NGO-accredited international **Macedonian Human Rights Movement (AMHRC)** in Australia), met with former Macedonian lawyer **Ljupco Naumovski**, then adviser to the (Macedonian) Attorney-General of Yugoslavia, Vlado Kambovski, and some time later, they appointed Naumovski as **Director** of the newly-established **Macedonian Information and Liaison Service (MILS)**, based in Brussels, with a subsidiary office operating in Skopje.

Funds raised by the Ilinden Foundation, essentially from Australian-Macedonians, were used for this purpose. Naumovski relocated his family to Brussels, and managed the daily affairs of MILS from that office for almost 2 years, under the supervision of the AMS Inc. Cadet journalists and activists from Australia were sent to both offices to work voluntarily with the teams there. During this time, MILS established a healthy credibility and integrity as an independent source of important information about Macedonia, which was provided to major international institutions such as the UN, EU, Council of Europe, NATO, OSCE, and their important organs, the international media, as well as to countless nations internationally through their embassies and consulates in Brussels and elsewhere in Europe. Targeted and intense lobbying activities also took place in this regard.

### **MILS NEWS Daily Digest**

Although numerous publications were produced by MILS and distributed widely, in English and on a variety of relevant topics, perhaps the crowning achievement of MILS was its production, in English and Macedonian, of the **MILS NEWS Daily Digest**, from mid-1992 onwards. This was distributed exclusively via the still-nascent **Internet**, and became the first English-language daily bulletin about Macedonian affairs ever published and distributed on the Internet.

Although a lack of ongoing resources meant the inevitable closure of the Brussels office (running an NGO on a professional basis in super-expensive Brussels required a multi-million dollar annual budget), the Skopje office of MILS remained operational for another 16 years, producing the daily digest, and transforming itself in the heart of Skopje into a well-resourced media and information centre, which became a well-known landmark on the local scene there.

It was a heady and exciting time indeed, when the passionate urges of patriotic Australian-Macedonians to contribute meaningfully to the Macedonian cause in very challenging circumstances, saw MILS take an honourable place in the struggle to emancipate an independent Macedonia and confirm its special identity and culture throughout the world.

Brief examples of the **MILS NEWS Digest** appear on these [pages](#).