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**Social Policy and the Global Crisis: Consequences and Responses**

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**Author 1:** Stiv Stojmenov

M.Sc. in Economics, Lazarski University of Commerce and Law (Warsaw, Poland)

**Author 2:** Bojana Jovanovska

Postgraduate Student of Social Policy, University St. Cyril and Methodius, Faculty of Philosophy, Institute of Social Work and Social Policy (Skopje, Macedonia)

**Title of the paper:** Social Policy Reforms in Macedonia: Implementing Conditional Social Assistance

The social policy in Macedonia was traditionally characterized by providing limited social protection tackling several social risks, defined with the Law on Social Protection. Basically, the social assistance is identified by low coverage and inadequate access, targeting the poorest people, favoring small families and mainly covers those with poor educational backgrounds, the unemployed, and persons with disabilities. The transition process in the country created a new variety of social risks that require essential changes in the social policy measures. In order to prevent and eradicate the negative effects of the transformation and also to answer the challenge for establishing sustainable system regarding the modern society requests, the social policy has launched the reform process, particularly through the social protection measures and activities.

This paper gives an overview of the recent reforms of the social protection system, set with the new Law on Social Protection in 2009. This Law includes additional social protection measures, as a part of the implementation of EU recommendation due to the European Integration process, that include subsidization of the consumption of electricity and other utilities, and conditional financial transfers provided for families- beneficiaries of social financial assistance, directed towards mobilization of children in secondary education.

The social assistance program of conditional financial compensation for secondary education aims to improve the access and the quality of education for scholars in secondary education living in households that are beneficiaries of the right of social financial assistance. This program will provide additional cash benefits for scholars, which as a precondition encloses the enrolment and attendance (at least 85% of the total number of classes provided by the school schedule and program) in secondary schools, and intends to increase the number of children enrolled in secondary education coming from low-income households and also for effective realization of the compulsory secondary education in Macedonia.

***Key words:** social policy reform, social assistance, conditional financial compensation*