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Societas Civilis -Skopje

**THE REPUBLIC OF  
MACEDONIA'S  
2016  
PARLIAMENTARY  
ELECTIONS  
HANDBOOK**

**SECOND UPDATED EDITION**

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MACEDONIA'S 2016  
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**POLITICS**

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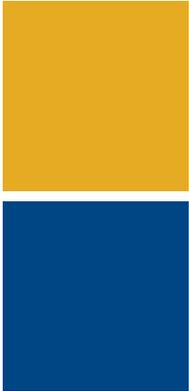
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**The stances exposed in this publication do not necessarily represent the positions of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" – Skopje, but are personal views of the author.**

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE 2016 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

### INTRODUCTION TO THE 2016 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Since the Republic of Macedonia gained its independence in 1991 from the former Yugoslavia, the country has held eight parliamentary elections. The next elections are scheduled for 11 December 2016 and will be the fourth consecutive snap elections held in the country. At its 125<sup>th</sup> sitting on 17 October 2016, the Assembly unanimously adopted a decision for its dissolution, paving the way for the early elections on 11 December. The following day, the president of the Assembly, Trajko Veljanoski, announced the elections within his constitutional and legal competences.<sup>1</sup> These snap parliamentary elections are to be held in six electoral units (EIU) within the Republic of Macedonia and one electoral unit (EIU 7) encompassing Macedonian citizens living abroad. Voting in EU 7 will occur in diplomatic and consular missions (DCM) of the Republic of Macedonia on 10 December 2016.

These elections have been preceded by a turbulent and dynamic period full of political upheaval and events. A political crisis that had been developing in Macedonia over the last several years culminated in 2015 with revelations regarding the "wiretapping scandal."<sup>2</sup> This was the basis for several events and massive protests that contributed to the destabilization of an already sensitive political situation. The signing of the Przino Agreement<sup>3</sup> on 2 June and the Protocol on 15 July 2015 were two significant steps towards resolving the political

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<sup>1</sup> Decision on announcement of snap elections for MPs in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. The Decision has been taken over from the site of the State Election Commission (SEC). Accessed 7 November 2016: <http://www.sec.mk/predvremeni-izbori-za-pratenici-2016/>

<sup>2</sup> In February 2015 the largest opposition party, SDSM, began to publish wiretapped conversations from the past few years (in the public known as "bombs") which allegedly indicated the involvement of senior government officials and public servants in election fraud, corruption, abuse of power, and pressure on the media. The president of SDSM, Zoran Zaev, alleged that more than 20,000 citizens had been illegally wiretapped. On 18 November 2016, the Special Public Prosecution announced they have material and evidence indicating that from 2008-2015, at least 5827 phone numbers had been directly tapped. For more information see: [www.jonsk.mk/2016/11/18/izjava-od-pres-konferencija](http://www.jonsk.mk/2016/11/18/izjava-od-pres-konferencija) (last visit: 22 November 2016).

<sup>3</sup> Przino Agreement. Accessed 7 November 2016: [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/news\\_corner/news/news-files/20150619\\_agreement.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/news_corner/news/news-files/20150619_agreement.pdf) and Protocol. Accessed 7 November 2016: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_STATEMENT-15-5372\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-15-5372_en.htm)

crisis.<sup>4</sup> The Agreement was signed by the four largest political parties – Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE), the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), and the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA) as a result of the mediation of representatives of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the USA. The Agreement provided for snap elections on 24 April 2016 and the events leading up to these elections. As per the Agreement, a transitional government was established on 11 November 2015 and the then current Prime Minister, Nikola Gruevski, resigned on 15 January 2016. The secretary general of VMRO-DPMNE, Emil Dimitriev, became the interim Prime Minister and he was to lead the Government for the hundred days leading up to the scheduled elections on 24 April. In January 2016, SDSM announced it would not participate in the snap parliamentary elections. SDSM stated that conditions of the Przino Agreement had not been fulfilled, specifically that the Voters' list had not been cleaned up and media reforms had not been fully implemented.<sup>5</sup> Under the Przino Agreement, the EU and US ambassadors designated 20 February as the deadline to assess to what extent the conditions had been met for holding credible elections on 24 April.<sup>6</sup> The conditions included cleaning up the voters' list, implementing media reforms and separating the state from party activities. After assessment on the deadline, the EU and US ambassadors in Macedonia went public with a position that although certain progress had been achieved, there were no conditions for holding credible elections.<sup>7</sup> As a result, the elections were postponed and the decision which had dissolved the Assembly on 18 January was reversed. On 23 February,

<sup>4</sup> The Przino Agreement and Protocol foresee a large package of measures to resolve the political crisis, among them the appointment of a new composition of the State Election, return of SDSM in the Assembly, establishment of a Special Public Prosecution to investigate the wiretapping recordings, establishment of a "transitional government" including ministers and deputy ministers appointed by SDSM and resignation of the Prime Minister. The Agreement provided SDSM with an Internal Affairs Minister and Minister of Labor and Social Policy and deputy ministers in the areas of agriculture and finance.

<sup>5</sup> "SDSM – Boycott on 24 April and new election date", Radio Free Europe, 20 January 2016. Accessed 14 October 2016: <http://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/27499957.html>

<sup>6</sup> "EU and USA gave a deadline: the conditions for elections would be assessed up to 20 February", The Telegraph, 29 January 2016. Accessed 21 November 2016: <http://www.telegraf.mk/aktuelno/makedonija/ns-newsarticle-340495-eu-i-sad-si-zadadoa-rok-do-20-februari-ke-ocenuvaat-dali-ima-uslovi-za-izbori.nspk>

<sup>7</sup> "EU and USA with an assessment, there are no conditions for elections on 24 April", 24 Vesti, 21 February 2016. Accessed 14 October 2016: <http://24vesti.mk/eu-i-sad-so-procenka-nema-uslovi-za-izbori-na-24-april>

the Assembly adopted the request of DUI to postpone the dissolution of the Assembly and the president of the Assembly, Trajko Veljanovski, officially rescheduled the elections on 5 June 2016.<sup>8</sup>

Although the new date was meant to give additional time to overcome the existing challenges, the events that followed further hampered the political atmosphere. On 9 April, before the official announcement of the elections, SDSM and 17 minor political parties signed the Platform for Democratic Macedonia highlighting necessary preconditions for regular, fair and democratic elections and also announced a boycott of the elections.<sup>9</sup> Several days later, President Gjorgje Ivanov pardoned<sup>10</sup> 56 individuals implicated in the wiretapping scandal, including high level politicians from the governing and opposition parties implicated in the wiretapping scandal. The decision sparked a series of protests and counter-protests over the following period. One group of protesters organized under the initiative „Protestiram“ demanded the resignation of the President and postponement of elections, while others united by GDOM (Citizen Movement for Defense of Macedonia) supported the position of the government and the 5 June elections. In the aftermath, the two major political parties and signatories to the Przino Agreement still differed in their attitude concerning the elections scheduled for 5 June 2016. VMRO-DPMNE retained the view that early elections were the key to ending the prolonged political crisis. On the other hand, SDSM believed it was necessary to fully implement the Przino Agreement as the only guarantee for fair and credible elections and retained its position to boycott the elections. The two signatories DUI and DPA, issued a position that only inclusive elections with the participation

<sup>8</sup> With 83 votes in favor and no abstentions, VMRO-DPMNE, DUI and DPA adopted the changes to the Election Code and set a new date for the elections on 5 June and the dissolution of the Assembly on 7 April. SDSM was not present at the sitting.

<sup>9</sup> "The opposition parties signed a Platform for Democratic Macedonia", The Telegraph, 9 April 2016. Accessed 10 November 2016: <http://www.telegraf.mk/aktuelno/makedonija/ns-newsarticle-opoziciskite-partii-potpisaa-platforma-za-demokratska-makedonija.nspk>

<sup>10</sup> On 12 April President Ivanov issued a decision for abolishment of 56 people, including notable politicians, leaders of VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM, former government officials, mayors, judges, officers, directors. After this decision followed numerous effects and pressure from the domestic public and from the international community, and on May 27 Ivanov decided to partially withdraw the abolition, or to withdraw the pardon of 22 politicians and the remaining 34 pardoned persons who were not politically exposed were given the opportunity to apply for withdrawal of the abolition. Ten days later, on June 6, Ivanov completely withdrew the abolition after none of the other pardoned persons demanded its withdrawal.

of all parties would be acceptable.<sup>11</sup> After an agreement between the parties failed to occur, VMRO-DPMNE was the only one of the four signatories of the Przino Agreement to submit lists of candidates for participation in the elections by the 11 May deadline. SDSM, DUI and DPA had not submitted lists. The very idea of holding elections with only one participating political party contradicts the concept of political pluralism. As a result, on 16 May, the European Commission released a statement that the conditions for holding credible and democratic elections on 5 June had not been met.<sup>12</sup> These events culminated with the initiative of DUI filed on 15 May to challenge the constitutionality of the decision to dissolve the Assembly. On 18 May, the Constitutional Court issued an interim order to suspend election activities until a final court decision on the constitutionality is reached. That same day, the President of the Assembly scheduled a sitting and convened the Assembly under the previous composition. This was followed by a subsequent change to the Election Code which cancelled the 5 June elections, but did not set a new date for elections.<sup>13</sup> Shortly after, the final decision of the Court regarding the initiative of DUI was issued and the dissolution of Parliament was declared unconstitutional on 25 May. The Government returned to Parliament in the composition as before the Przino Agreement, signifying a return to the starting position and a new wave of inter-party talks and exchanges.<sup>14</sup>

After these two unsuccessful attempts to hold early parliamentary elections in 2016, the summer months of 2016 saw further negotiations between the leaders of the four main political parties mediated by representatives of the EU and US in Macedonia. These negotiations aimed to put an end to the political crisis and find a solution to outstanding issues. The cleaning up of the Voters' list, the transitional government and media reforms remained on the agenda as key conditions for free and fair elections. On 20 July, these efforts

<sup>11</sup> Final report, OSCE/ODIHR Monitoring Mission, Snap parliamentary elections scheduled on 5 June 2016, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 8 July 2016, p.6. Accessed 10 November 2016: <http://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/fyrom/253996?download=true>

<sup>12</sup> "Brussels: There are no minimum conditions for elections on 5 June", Deutsche Welle, 16 May 2016. Accessed 10 November 2016: [www.dw.com/mk/брисел-нема-ни-минимум-услови-за-избори-на-5-јуни/a-19260597](http://www.dw.com/mk/брисел-нема-ни-минимум-услови-за-избори-на-5-јуни/a-19260597)

<sup>13</sup> All present MPs supported this decision with the exception of DPA, who did not participate in the voting.

<sup>14</sup> "The Assembly Decided – no elections on 5 June", 24 News, 18 May 2016. Accessed 10 November 2016: <http://24vesti.mk/sobranieto-odluchi-nema-izbori-na-5-juni>

produced a successful agreement known as Przino 2<sup>15</sup>. This agreement resolved disputed names from the Voters' list, restored ministers and deputy ministers from the opposition to the „transitional government“, established an ad hoc body to monitor media reporting in the campaign period and addressed issues related to the powers of the Minister of Interior. After the amendments to the laws deriving from the second Przino Agreement were passed in Parliament, a leadership meeting was held on 31 August in which it was concluded that the conditions had been fulfilled and the snap elections were set for 11 December 2016.<sup>16</sup>

However, the period following the announcement of the date for elections did not go without any further disturbance. The issue of the disproportionate number of voters in the electoral units and the initiative to alter the electoral units were two of the most prominent questions raised. It was perceived that failure to address this issue could jeopardize the legitimacy and legality of the elections and could be used as an alibi by any of the parties dissatisfied with the results to declare the elections illegitimate.<sup>17</sup> Postponing the date for the dissolution of the parliament, originally scheduled 60 days before the snap parliamentary elections on 12 October, also prompted further debate. The reason for this delay was the failure to adopt a draft budget for 2017. On 12 October, SDSM filed an urgent request for the dissolution of the Assembly which was conditioned by VMRO-DPMNE with the adoption of the budget for 2017. The budget was adopted on 17 October through a shortened procedure, thus paving the way for the decision to dissolve the Assembly, which was formally adopted on 18 October. However, the situation did not calm down after the decisions. The party Uniteti submitted an initiative to the Constitutional Court challenging the decision to call snap parliamentary elections. The reason for this initiative was the imbalance of the electoral units, that is, the number of voters in the sixth electoral unit being above the

<sup>15</sup> Agreement among the four political parties on 20 July 2016. Accessed 10 November 2016: [http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/the\\_former\\_yugoslav\\_republic\\_of\\_macedonia/press\\_corner/all\\_news/news/2016/2016-07-20\\_agreement\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia/press_corner/all_news/news/2016/2016-07-20_agreement_en.htm)

<sup>16</sup> On 31 August, a meeting of the leaders of the four largest political parties was held to decide if there were conditions to hold elections in December. At this meeting the leaders agreed on 11 December as the date for snap parliamentary elections and on additional steps derived from the Przino Agreement.

<sup>17</sup> "All parties left a possible alibi for defeat at the elections", Radio Free Europe, 18 October 2016. Accessed 10 November 2016: <http://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/28060549.html>

allowed ceiling.<sup>18</sup> As this paper was published, the Constitutional Court had yet to declare a position regarding this issue.

## PREPARATIONS FOR SNAP PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

On 18 October, the State Election Commission (SEC) adopted a timetable for election activities for the snap parliamentary elections.<sup>19</sup> In accordance with the timetable, three days after the announcement of the elections, i.e. on 21 October, the SEC submitted a request to the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA) for data on employees in state and municipal administrations, the administration of the City of Skopje and other positions of public administration which MISA provided to the SEC within five days of receiving this request. Taking into consideration this information, no later than 31 October the SEC completed the composition of the Municipal Election Commissions (MEC) to replace those members whose office had ceased. By 3 November, three days after the establishment of the MEC, SEC forwarded data to MEC on employees in state and municipal administrations, the administration of the City of Skopje and other positions in public administration residing within the jurisdiction of the MEC to form or complement the electoral board (EB) members to replace those whose mandate had terminated. The SEC submitted a request by 2 November to the political parties in opposition and in government, that won the majority of votes on the last parliamentary elections, for proposals for EB members and their deputies to form or complement the EB. Parties were required to submit their proposals to the MEC and form the EB within five days of receiving information from SEC. Regarding the implementation of voting abroad, the deadline for the formation of EB was 8 November.

According to the Election Code, 10 days after the announcement of the elections, SEC put the Voters' list on its web page <http://>

<sup>18</sup> "Uniteti challenged the elections before the Constitutional Court", Deutsche Welle, 25 October 2016. Accessed 11 November 2016: [www.dw.com/mk/uniteti-gi-ospori-izborite-pred-ustaven-sud/a-36148913open\\_in\\_new](http://www.dw.com/mk/uniteti-gi-ospori-izborite-pred-ustaven-sud/a-36148913open_in_new)

<sup>19</sup> Timetable for the execution of election activities for the early elections for members of the Assembly of Republic of Macedonia, 18 October – 11 December Revised text. Accessed 11 November 2016: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8ZpCwro9h-zMHFRVIZOQWdHbTg/view>

[izbirackispisok.gov.mk](http://izbirackispisok.gov.mk), in its district and local offices, as well as in the DCM for public access. For the upcoming elections, insight into the list ran from 28 October to 11 November. By 16 November, the SEC submitted the Voters' list to the political parties and by 21 November the political parties submitted requests for entering, adding or deleting data to the Voters' list. The SEC decided on the requests by 24 November. Ten days before the elections, 1 December, the SEC will have the concluded Voters' list.

According to the legal deadlines and the timetable of the SEC for the implementation of the 2016 parliamentary elections, the election campaign will run from 21 November to 9 December 2016, with 10 December as the day of election silence.

According to the timetable, the financial statements of the organizers of the campaign are submitted to the SEC, the State Audit Office (SAO) and the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) in the following terms:

- On 1 December, regarding revenues and expenditures in the first 10 days of the campaign;
- On 10 December, regarding revenues and expenditures in the second half of the campaign;
- Final financial reports shall be submitted immediately but no later than 30 days from the closing of the transaction account and shall be published on the websites of the SEC, SAO and SCPC;
- Broadcasters and print media in the country are obliged to report on the advertising space used by each of the participants in the election campaign within 15 days of the end of the electoral campaign

In terms of election observation, submission of monitoring requests with the SEC begins on 18 October and lasts until 6 December, 5 days before the election. Within 2 days of receiving the request, SEC shall issue authorization to the observers.

## RECENT CHANGES TO THE ELECTORAL LEGISLATION

The Przino Agreement resulted in changes to the electoral legislation. At its 75<sup>th</sup> sitting, the Assembly adopted a package of laws including the Law on Amendments to the Election Code<sup>20</sup> which aimed to create conditions for fair and legitimate snap parliamentary elections. These amendments included the following main aspects:

- The system of six electoral units in the Republic of Macedonia remained unchanged, however the three electoral units for Macedonian diaspora were replaced with a single electoral units (EU 7), which covers all Macedonian citizens living in Europe, Asia, Africa, North and South America and Australia. The representatives for EIU 7 are to be elected according to the proportional model, meaning that the required number of votes to elect one member from EIU 7 should correspond to at least as many votes as received by the MP who was elected with the lowest number of votes in any of the electoral districts in the previous parliamentary elections.
- The prohibition of using office space, equipment and official vehicles of public authorities for the purposes of the election campaign, except by special regulation.
- The provision for the establishment of a Code for fair and democratic elections<sup>21</sup>, which is to be signed by the political parties participating in the elections. As part of the Code, participants undertake not to pressure employees of public and state administration and other institutions financed from the budget of the Republic of Macedonia. Furthermore, the Code aims to ensure that by supporting or not supporting any political party or candidate citizens will not be under threat in terms of job or social security.

<sup>20</sup> Law on changes and amendments to the Election Code, Official Gazette of R of Macedonia, No. 196 of 10 November 2015. Accessed 11 November 2016: <http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/63cc34eb402342698f7e82e59629175a.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Codex for fair and democratic elections, November 2016. Accessed 21 November 2016: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8ZpCwro9h-zTGdoMmZIZjV4UkE/view>

- The composition of the SEC was changed from 7 to 9 members and the election processes of selecting members was altered. This composition comprises of President, Vice President and 7 members. With the new changes, 3 members are proposed by the political parties in power, 2 by the governing party with the largest number of MPs and 1 by the second largest governing party. The opposition parties also propose 3 members, 2 by the opposition party with the largest number of MPs and 1 by the second largest opposition party. The three remaining members are elected by consensus to represent the expert community. The changes also introduced the position of Secretary General of the SEC, created to strengthen the administrative aspect of the organization. The Secretary General is not a member of the SEC and does not have the right to vote.
- Additional changes to the Election Code include provisions relating to the Voters' list. The SEC is appointed as the only institution responsible for maintaining and updating the Voters' list and provides electronic access to the Voters' list in accordance with the regulations, giving each citizen the right to submit a request to the SEC not to make public his/her address for security reasons. The SEC updates the Voters' list once a month and publishes a call to citizens to inspect their data every 6 months. In order to determine the authenticity of the Voters' List, each member of the SEC may request an inspection of the records of the Ministry of Interior related to the issuing of biometric documents, and databases and records of citizens of other state bodies and institutions. The SEC adopts Rules of Procedure on the methodology for updating the Voters' list based on checks and statistical analyses, cross-checking of different databases and records, spot checks and other recognized methods of verification. Additionally, the SEC updates and maintains a Rule Book on the methodology for full access, change and deletion of data in the Voters' list and procedures for conducting spot checks to update it.
- Amendments to the Election Code provide for a greater percentage of representation for the underrepresented gender

in the submitted lists of candidates. For every three places at least one will be reserved for the less represented gender and additionally at least one place for every ten places, increasing this number to 40% of the total rather than the previous 33%.

- Regarding media presentation, the amendments to the Election Code include provision on electronic media and internet portals. Like broadcasting stations and printed media, internet sources are obliged to work in accordance with the Election Code while covering the election process. Members of the media and persons associated with them are prohibited from funding or donating to political parties and advertisements are prohibited from being funded from the budget of the Republic of Macedonia, the budgets of municipalities or the City of Skopje. The amendments to the Election Code aimed at providing equal and balanced access to political parties of the advertising space.

After the postponement of the snap parliamentary elections on 5 June, the four largest political parties reached a new agreement on 20 July as a part of a new round of inter-party talks. The annex to the Przino Agreement (Przino 2) provided for changes to the Election Code. The Law on Amendments to the Election Code was adopted on 28 July.<sup>22</sup> The amendments to this law mainly covered reforms in the media:

- Established an ad hoc body within the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services comprising a five-member Interim Committee tasked with monitoring media coverage during the campaign period until the completion of the electoral process; and
- Appointed of a new editor for the Public Broadcasting Service of the country. The editor will be elected at the proposal of the opposition party with the highest number of MPs, and after consultation with both political parties in power with the largest number of Members of Parliament and the opposition political party with the second largest number of MPs.

<sup>22</sup> Law on changes and amendments to the Election Code, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 142 of 1 August 2016. Accessed 11 November 2016: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/Zakon\\_za\\_izmenuvanje\\_i\\_dopolnuvanje\\_na\\_izborniot\\_zakonik\\_28\\_juli\\_2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/Zakon_za_izmenuvanje_i_dopolnuvanje_na_izborniot_zakonik_28_juli_2016.pdf)

## 1990 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS<sup>23</sup>

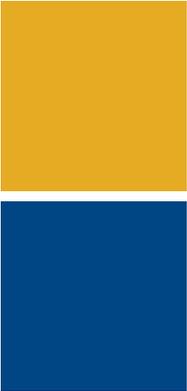
After the introduction of political pluralism in 1989, which enabled establishing of political parties, in 1990 Macedonian voters in the then Socialist Republic of Macedonia (SRM) were able to vote in the first ever multiparty elections.<sup>24</sup> At the same time, these were the first free multiparty elections held in 1990 in all of the six republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). The elections were organized in an atmosphere which exposed the beginnings of the breakup of the Federation which during the elections in most of the republics reflected in the victory of the newly established national parties, branching out from the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. The first multiparty elections in Macedonia were held in accordance with the majority election system featuring two rounds of voting with 120 Electoral Units (EIUs). 18 political parties and 43 independent candidates took part in the first elections. While some parties in some EIUs campaigned separately, pre-election coalitions promoting joint candidates were established in other EIUs. The first round took place on 11 November and had a voter turnout of 84.8%. The ruling party at the time, the Communist Union of Macedonia - Party for Democratic Transformation (SKM-PDP), obtained the majority of votes. However, in the second round of voting on 25 November, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO- DPMNE), established the same year, won the majority of votes with a turnout of 76.8%.<sup>25</sup>

After the second round, in the EIU in which the parties participated independently, they won: VMRO-DMPNE 38 mandates, SKM-PDP 31, Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) 17, Union of Reform Forces of Macedonia (SRSM) 11, Socialist Party of Macedonia (SPM) 4,

<sup>23</sup> More information on the elections and the political scene at the time can be found in the "Handbook for Parliamentary Elections in the Republic of Macedonia 2014 (second updated edition)." Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" – Skopje, Skopje, 2014, pp. 21-23. Accessed 26 October 2016: [http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas\\_37897-1522-2-30.pdf?140529135320](http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_37897-1522-2-30.pdf?140529135320)

<sup>24</sup> State Election Commission. "Parliamentary elections on 11 and 25 November 1990." Bulletin No. 20. Final results from the election of MPs for the Assembly of SR of Macedonia. Accessed 24 March 2014: [http://www.sec.mk/arhiva/1990\\_parlamentarni/konecni\\_rezultati\\_1990.pdf](http://www.sec.mk/arhiva/1990_parlamentarni/konecni_rezultati_1990.pdf)

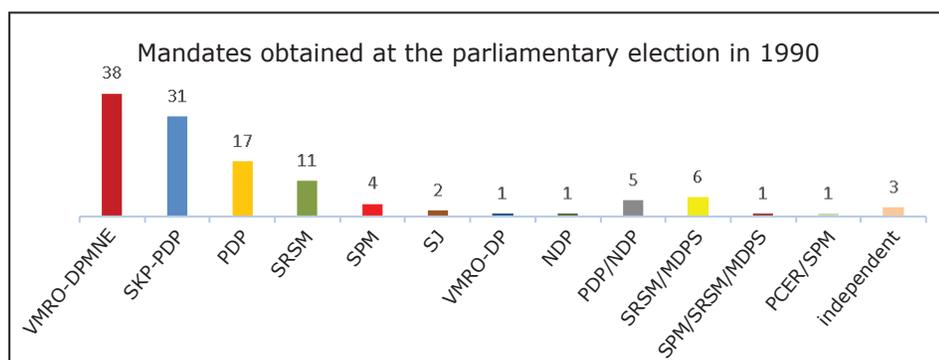
<sup>25</sup> Blagoja Nineski. Elections, media and parties in Macedonia 1990-2000. Studentski zbor. Skopje, 2001, p.20.



## HISTORY OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN MACEDONIA (1990 - 2014)

Yugoslavian Party (SJ) 2, VMRO – Democratic Party (VMRO-DP) 1, and People’s Democratic Party (NDP) 1. In the EIUs in which parties participated as coalitions, the PDP/NDP coalition received 5 mandates, the coalition SRSM/Young Democratic Progressive Party (MDPS) 6, the coalition of SPM/SRSM/MDPS 1, and the coalition of the Party for Complete Emancipation of the Roma PCER/SPM 1. Three independent MPs were also elected.

The Assembly in such composition voted for the first Government of the Republic of Macedonia on 20 March 1991. This was an expert government led by Nikola Kljusev. The Assembly elected Kiro Gligorov as the first President and Ljubcho Georgievski, the leader of VMRO-DPMNE, as Vice-President. This first government, however, did not last long. On 17 August 1992 the Assembly gave a vote of no-confidence and the mandate for a new Government was given to the vice-president and leader of VMRO-DPMNE, Ljubcho Georgievski, as the party with the most mandates in the Assembly. When Georgievski failed to form a government, the mandate was offered to Petar Goshev, president of the SKM-PDP. Goshev refused the mandate which it was then passed on to another member of SKM-PDP, Branko Crvenkovski. Crvenkovski accepted the mandate and formed the first political government of independent Macedonia.



## 1994 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

The first parliamentary elections after Macedonia’s independence took place in 1994, coinciding with the first direct presidential elections. The candidates for these elections were recommended by 38 political parties and there were also 283 independent candidates. The coalition “Union for Macedonia”, led by the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), won the elections. SDSM was the heir of the former SKM-PDP party, having changed its name and ideology at the April 1991 Congress, transforming the party from communists to social democrats.

On the elections<sup>26</sup>, which followed the majority electoral model, 77.8% of the 1,360,792 registered voters participated in the first round of elections on 16 October. The second round took place on 30 October with a voter turnout of 57.5%. This significant decrease in turnout in the second round resulted from the boycott of the opposition parties VMRO-DPMNE and the Democratic Party (DP).<sup>27</sup> These parties claimed that the first round of voting demonstrated serious irregularities in the election process, and electoral fraud and omissions in organizing the elections had occurred particularly in relation to the Voters’ list.

According to the results of the first round, the coalition “Union for Macedonia”, composed of SDSM and SPM, won 32.6% of the votes and thus had a significant advantage over the main opposition parties, VMRO-DPMNE and DP. VMRO-DPMNE won 14.3% and DP 11% of the votes.

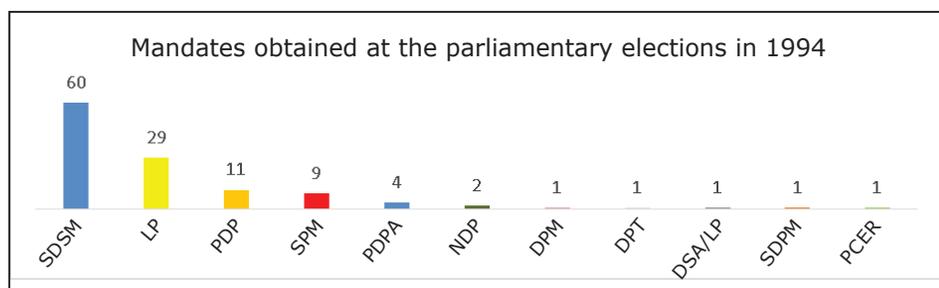
Because the opposition boycotted the second round of elections, the coalition “Union for Macedonia” managed to win a significant number of mandates. SDSM won 60 mandates in the parliament, LP 29, PDP 11, SPM 9, the Party for Democratic Prosperity of the Albanians (PDPA) 4, and NDP 2. The Democratic Party of Macedonia (DPM), the Democratic

<sup>26</sup> State Election Commission. Parliamentary Elections on 16 and 30 October 1994. Report on the conducted elections for MPs in the Republic of Macedonia’s Assembly in 1994. Skopje, 8 November 1994. Accessed 22 March 1994: [http://www.sec.mk/arhiva/1994\\_parlamentarni/izvestaj\\_parlamentarni\\_1994.pdf](http://www.sec.mk/arhiva/1994_parlamentarni/izvestaj_parlamentarni_1994.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> Cane Mojanovski. Chronicle of the Macedonian Democracy. Skopje, 2000, p.43. Accessed 24 March 2014: <http://www.fb.uklo.edu.mk/knigi/Cane%20T.%20Mojanovski%20Letopis%20na%20makedonskata%20demokratija.pdf>

Party of the Turks (DPT), the Democratic Union of the Albanians – Liberal Party, Social-Democratic Party of Macedonia (SDPM) and PCER won one mandates each.

The second round of elections was monitored by observers from the International Republican Institute (IRI)<sup>28</sup> who did not register any serious problems in the election process jeopardizing the legitimacy of the elections. Although they concluded the elections were organized well, they underlined that the Voters' list had not been updated in many polling stations and that some voters had been required by the election officials to show different IDs, thus creating confusion. The observers also registered voters who complained that they were prevented from voting due to delays by the state organs in issuing the necessary documents. After these elections, the government was established again by Branko Crvenkovski and comprised of ministers from SDSM, but also from SPM, PDP and LP. From 1994 to 1998, the Assembly functioned without the largest opposition parties who continued their boycott throughout the entire four-year mandate.



<sup>28</sup> International Republican Institute (IRI), Monitoring Mission for the elections in Macedonia. Parliamentary Elections on 18 and 30 October 1994. Final monitoring report of the second round of the elections. Accessed 24 March 2014: <http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/Macedonia's%201994%20Parliamentary%20Elections.pdf>

## 1998 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

The 1998 parliamentary elections occurred with a mixed electoral model,<sup>29</sup> featuring a combination of proportional and majority models and two rounds of voting. Under the new electoral code amendments, 85 of the 120 mandates were distributed in one-mandate EIUs, for which the voting occurred on 18 October. The remaining 35 mandates were distributed according to the proportional D'Hondt method, which made the whole state a single constituency. The voting for these mandates occurred on 1 November. An electoral threshold of 5% was introduced for the proportional lists. 72.9% of 1,572,976 registered voters for these elections turned out for the voting for the majority lists. The turnout<sup>30</sup> for the proportional lists in the second round was 69.4%. For the majority lists, 22 political parties, 4 coalitions offered their own candidates and there were 7 independent candidates as well. For the proportional lists, 12 parties competed along with 4 coalitions and a group of voters.

A change in government resulted from these elections as VMRO-DPMNE<sup>31</sup> led with 49 mandates and SDSM came in second with 27. PDP received 14 mandates, Democratic Alternative (DA) 13, Democratic Party of the Albanians (DPA) 11, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) 4, and SPM as well as the Roma Union of Macedonia (SRM) one mandate each. After the elections, the leader of VMRO-DPMNE, Ljubco Georgievski, established a coalition government together with DA and DPA.

These elections were the first in Macedonia to be monitored by the OSCE/ODIHR mission by invitation of the Macedonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The general assessment in the monitoring report<sup>32</sup> was

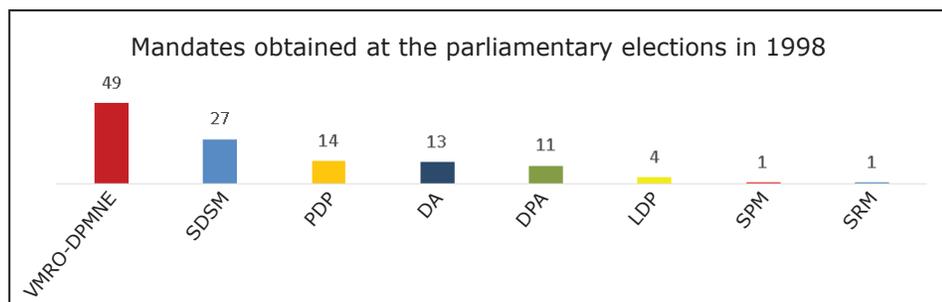
<sup>29</sup> Law on election of MPs in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 24 of 28 May 1998. Accessed 22 October 2016: <http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/EF6EE403BB714C52B969183A4FO4CA8A.PDF>

<sup>30</sup> Cane Mojanovski, Chronicle of the Macedonian Democracy, p. 67. Skopje, 2000. Data on citizens' turnout in both rounds of the 1998 Parliamentary Elections. Accessed 26 March 2014: <http://www.fb.uklo.edu.mk/knigi/Cane%20T.%20Mojanoski%20Letopis%20na%20makedonskata%20demokratija.pdf>. The website of the State Election Commission does not have data on the 1998 turnout available in its archives.

<sup>31</sup> The Republic of Macedonia's Assembly. Results from the election of members of the Republic of Macedonia's Parliament from the 1998 Parliamentary Elections. Accessed 12 October 2016: <http://www.sobranie.mk/?ItemID=9402373424ED504883EE17FED5E72EB4>

<sup>32</sup> OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Republic of Macedonia, Parliamentary Elections on 18 October and 1 November 1998, Final Report. Accessed 12 October 2016: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/fyrom/15887?download=true>

that there had been significant improvements compared to previous elections due to changes in the electoral legislation and a civil election campaign with a small number of isolated cases of violence. The main remarks pertained to several registered cases of group and family voting and the slow functioning of the electoral organs in processing the data from voting.



## 2002 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

The parliamentary elections on 15 September 2002 took place in a very tight post-conflict atmosphere following the 2001 armed conflict between the security forces and the representatives of the National Liberation Army (NLA). The conflict ended with the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement<sup>33</sup>. This cycle was marked by the emergence of a new entity on the political stage in the Albanian political block, the party Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), established by the NLA leadership. The election model was changed for these elections. The elections took place in accordance with the proportional electoral model,<sup>34</sup> across six Electoral Units, with representatives of 33 parties on the candidate lists. 73.4% of the 1,664,296 registered voters turned out for the elections. These elections resulted in another change of government. The coalition "For Macedonia Together", under the leadership of SDSM, won the majority of votes. The coalition won a total of 60 mandates, out of which 43 went to SDSM, 12 to LDP, 2 to DPT, and one mandate each to the United Party of the Roma in

<sup>33</sup> Ohrid Framework Agreement, Secretariat for Implementation of the Ohrid Agreement. Accessed 13 October 2016: [http://siofa.gov.mk/data/file/Ramkoven\\_dogovor\\_mk.pdf](http://siofa.gov.mk/data/file/Ramkoven_dogovor_mk.pdf)

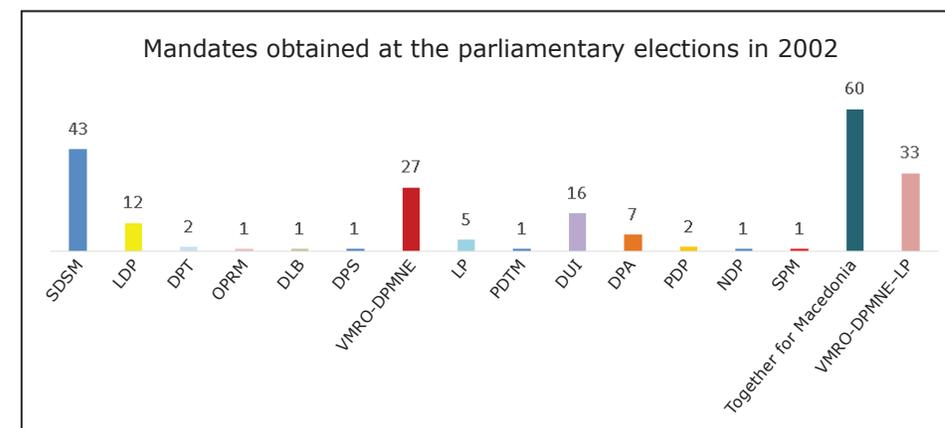
<sup>34</sup> Law on Election of Members of Parliament in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Article 96, Determining the results from the voting in the Electoral Units for the 2002 parliamentary elections. Accessed 26 March 2014: [http://www.sec.mk/arhiva/2002\\_parlamentarni/zakonski%20regulativi/zakonski%20regulativi.html](http://www.sec.mk/arhiva/2002_parlamentarni/zakonski%20regulativi/zakonski%20regulativi.html)

Macedonia (OPRM), the Democratic League of the Bosniaks (DLB) and the Democratic Party of the Serbs (DPS).

The coalition VMRO-DPMNE and LP won 33 mandates in total, out of which 27 mandates went to VMRO-DPMNE, 5 to Liberal Party (LP), and one for the Party of the Turks Movement in Macedonia (PDTM). Among the Albanian political parties in Macedonia, the newly established DUI won most of the mandates in the Parliament or 16. DPA received 7, PDP 2, and NDP one mandate. Additionally, the Socialist Party of Macedonia (SPM) also received one mandate.

The OSCE/ODIHR<sup>35</sup> monitoring mission expressed concern regarding the campaign leading up to these elections due to several cases of violence, threats and selective application of the legal procedures with regard to certain candidates. The electoral process itself was assessed positively.

President of the new government, after a 4-year break, was again the leader of SDSM, Branko Crvenkovski, and the government included LDP and DUI. This was the first time DUI participated in a Macedonian Government.



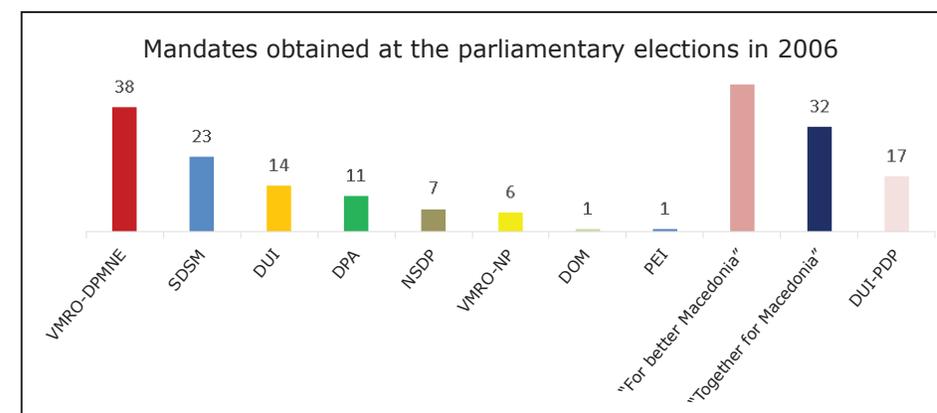
<sup>35</sup> OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Republic of Macedonia, Parliamentary Elections on 15 September 2002, Final Report. Warsaw, 20 November 2002. Accessed 24 March 2014: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/fyrom/15887?download=true>

## 2006 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

The elections which took place on 5 July 2006 experienced the lowest voter turnout ever.<sup>36</sup> Only 56% of 1,741,449 registered voters turned out for the elections. The parties changed their roles once again. As a result of these elections, the governing SDSM became an oppositional party and VMRO-DPMNE became the ruling party after winning the majority of seats in parliament. These elections, like the previous, took place in accordance with the proportional electoral model, in six EIU. 33 candidate lists, of which 31 came from political parties and coalitions and 2 from groups of voters, applied for participation. The coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, "For Better Macedonia", won 45 mandates. Out of these, 38 went to VMRO-DPMNE. The coalition lead by SDSM, "For Macedonia Together", came in second and received 32 mandates, with 23 of these going to SDSM. Third was the coalition DUI-PDP which received 17 mandates, with 14 going to DUI and 3 to PDP. DPA won 11 mandates, New Social Democratic Party (NSDP) 7, VMRO – People's Party (VMRO- NP) 6, Democratic Restoration of Macedonia (DOM) 1, and the Party for European Future (PEI) 1.

The OSCE/ODIHR<sup>37</sup> monitoring mission concluded the elections were in accordance with the endeavors for democratic elections. However, on the day of election there were certain irregularities registered and the first half of the election campaign experienced cases of violence and intimidation. After these elections, Nikola Gruevski received his first mandate to form a government. It was comprised of representatives from the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, DPA and NSDP. The government had also been supported by DOM and PEI, though they did not receive ministry positions. VMRO-NP also voted for the government, but did not enter the government coalition. The event marking these elections was that VMRO-DPMNE partnered with Menduh Taci's DPA to establish the government, although DUI had won the majority of seats in the parliament. This resulted in a political crisis and several half-an-hour

obstructions<sup>38</sup> of the highways in northwest Macedonia by members and supporters of DUI. DUI believed it was the only legitimate representative of the majority of Albanians in Macedonia and should be part of the government, anything contrary would be disrespectful to the political will of the Albanians. In March 2008, DPA<sup>39</sup> filed a resolution to leave the government. Their reason for leaving was the silence of Prime Minister Gruevski regarding six demands they submitted to him.<sup>40</sup> The demands related to the recognition of Kosovo, the failed processing of the "Hague cases", changes to the Law on Languages related to the official use of the Albanian language, the use of the Albanian flag, the status of the ONA fighters and a proposed increase of Albanian representatives in public administration.



<sup>36</sup> Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Election results of parliamentary elections 2006. Final voting results. The report was prepared by the State Election Commission, 25 June 2006. Accessed 25 March 2014: <http://sobranie.mk/WBStorage/Files/Rezultati-2006-5.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Republic of Macedonia, Parliamentary Elections 5 July 2006, Final report. Warsaw, 18 September 2006. Accessed 23 March 2014: <http://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/fyrom/20630?download=true>

<sup>38</sup> "DUI Protests", Deutsche Welle, Macedonian Language Service, 7 August 2006. Accessed 17 October 2016: <http://www.dw.de/%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B8-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%B4%D1%83%D0%B8/a-2535607>

<sup>39</sup> "DPA out of government", Macedonian Information Agency, 13 March 2008. Accessed 17 October 2016: <http://www.idividi.com.mk/vesti/makedonija/427732/index.htm>

<sup>40</sup> "DPA says it will leave the government", BBC Macedonia, 12 March 2008. Accessed 17 October 2016: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/macedonian/news/story/2008/03/080312\\_vladaostavka.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/macedonian/news/story/2008/03/080312_vladaostavka.shtml)

## 2008 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Two years after entering government, the ruling party VMRO-DPMNE accepted the parliamentary initiative of DUI to dismiss the parliament and organize snap elections.<sup>41</sup> On 12 April 2008 the Assembly was dissolved and the parliamentary elections took place on 1 June 2008. DUI, led by Ali Ahmeti, considered it necessary to organize snap elections to correct the previous state in which DPA had represented Albanians in the government in spite of having received less mandates. At the same time, the country was facing new challenges in the process of Euro-Atlantic integration after it failed to receive an invitation for membership in the NATO Alliance<sup>42</sup> at the 2008 Bucharest Summit due to the ongoing dispute with Greece regarding the country's constitutional name. These were the first snap parliamentary elections in independent Macedonia significant for the fact that there was no change of government, but rather further strengthening of VMRO-DPMNE's position as the leading party. The elections took place in accordance with the proportional model and had a 57.06% turnout of 1,779,116 registered voters. On the lists, 41 parties and two groups of voters participated with their own candidates in the June 1st elections.

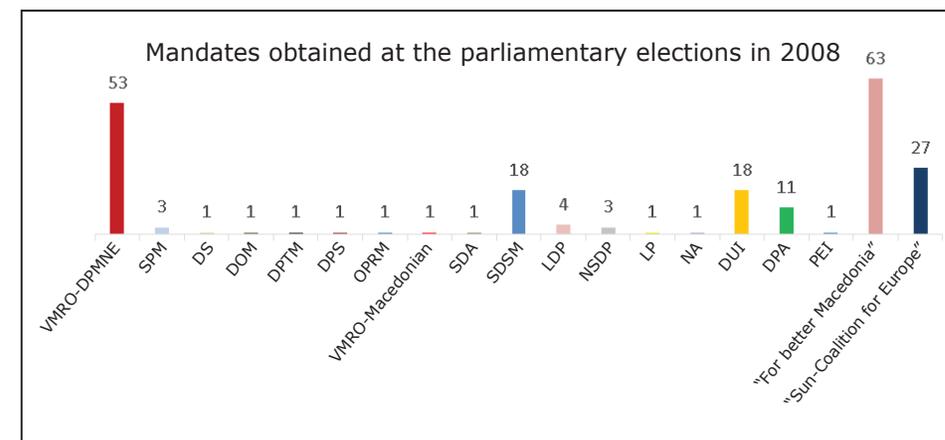
The coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, "For Better Macedonia", won a record number of 63 out of 120 available mandates.<sup>43</sup> Within the coalition, VMRO-DPMNE received 53 seats, SPM 3, and the Democratic Union (DS), the Democratic Party of the Turks of Macedonia (DPTM), DPS, OPRM, VMRO-Macedonian and Party of Democratic Action of Macedonia (SDA) one mandate each.

Second was the oppositional coalition led by SDSM, "Sun – Coalition for Europe", which won 27 mandates in total. Out of these mandates, 18 belonged to SDSM, which was the lowest number of mandates the

party had held up to this point. The remaining mandates went to other members of the coalition, with LDP receiving 4, NSDP 3, and LP and New Alternative (NA) one each.

DUI won 18 mandates and joined the government of the winning coalition. DPA won 11 mandates and PEI one.

The State Election Commission cancelled the voting in 197 polling stations and organized a repeated voting. The monitoring mission of OSCE/ ODIHR<sup>44</sup> reported that anticipated progress had not been achieved as authorities had failed to prevent acts of violence primarily in environments with a majority of Albanians. The initial irregularities were removed in the repeated voting through the enhanced presence of police which enabled citizens to fulfill their right to vote in a peaceful atmosphere. The government was again established by Nikola Gruevski and included ministers from the coalition "For Better Macedonia" and also from DUI.



<sup>41</sup> Citizens Association Most. Final Report from the National Monitoring of the Snap Elections on 1 June 2008. Skopje, September 2008. Political Context, p.3. Accessed 26 March 2014: <http://www.most.org.mk/images/transparency/Parliamentary%20Elections%202008/parlamentarniIzbori2008.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> "Dejection in Bucharest: Jilted Macedonia Walks out of NATO Summit", Spiegel. Accessed 17 October 2016: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/dejection-in-bucharest-jilted-macedoniawalks-out-of-nato-summit-a-545214.html>

<sup>43</sup> State Election Commission. Snap Parliamentary Elections on 1 June 2008. Final Results Report by D'Hondt method. Accessed 20 March 2014: [http://www.sec.mk/arhiva/2008\\_predvremeniparlamentarni/index/2008-07-17-10-15-07.htm](http://www.sec.mk/arhiva/2008_predvremeniparlamentarni/index/2008-07-17-10-15-07.htm)

<sup>44</sup> OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. The Republic of Macedonia, snap parliamentary elections 1 June 2008, final report. Warsaw, 20 August 2008. Accessed 23 March 2014: <http://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/fyrom/33153?download=true>

## 2011 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS<sup>45</sup>

The snap parliamentary elections on 5 June 2011 were the second consecutive snap elections since Macedonia's independence. It was preceded by a complex political situation and one of the most serious political crises in the country to occur since its independence.<sup>46</sup> At the beginning of 2011, the opposition led by Branko Crvenkovski, with the exception of LDP, left the Parliament and demanded snap parliamentary elections. Their reason was the freezing of the bank accounts of the largest private television "A1" and the three daily newspapers "Vreme", "Koha" and "Shpic" all owned by the businessman Velija Ramkovski and his subsequent arrest in December 2010, as well as their claim that there was a severe lack of political dialogue in the country.<sup>47</sup> In March the Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski<sup>48</sup> accepted their request for snap elections. The opposition then set several conditions and threatened that if they were not met, they would boycott the elections. The conditions set by the opposition included unblocking the bank accounts of the four media, introducing a law for equal distribution of budget resources for all media, session for amendments to the Election Law with consensus and establishing a joint parliamentary commission tasked with confirming the Voters' list. On 21 March, the largest opposition party<sup>49</sup> concluded the conditions had been met and decided to return to the Assembly.

<sup>45</sup> More information on the elections and the political scene at the time can be found in the "Handbook for Parliamentary Elections in the Republic of Macedonia 2014 (second updated edition)." Skopje: Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" - Skopje, 2014, pp. 32-34. Accessed 25 November 2016: [http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas\\_37897-1522-2-30.pdf?140529135320](http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_37897-1522-2-30.pdf?140529135320)

<sup>46</sup> Citizens Association Most. Final Report from the National Monitoring of 5 June 2011 Snap Elections. Skopje, 2011. Accessed 17 October 2016: [http://www.most.org.mk/images/transparency/elections2011/Final\\_report\\_IZBORI\\_2011\\_MKD.pdf](http://www.most.org.mk/images/transparency/elections2011/Final_report_IZBORI_2011_MKD.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> Ramkovski was arrested in December 2010 and held in detention on charges of money laundering, criminal association, tax evasion and abuse of official position and authorizations. As the first defendant in the trial "Cobweb", in March 2012 he was sentenced to 13 years in prison. As part of the trial "Cobweb" 23 people, managers and founders of the companies situated on "Pero Nakov" bb were charged including Ramkovski's son Hedi Ramkovski, his daughter Emel Ramkovska, Ramkovski's brother Amdi Ramkovski as well as the former directors of TV "A1", Darko Perushevski and Aneta Kochishki.

<sup>48</sup> S.S.Z. "Parties Take Up Urgent Consultations". Nova Makedonija, 22 February 2011. Accessed 26 March 2014: <http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=22211818202&id=9&setIzdanie=22213>

<sup>49</sup> SDSM. "Crvenkovski: SDSM returns to Parliament after 4 conditions fulfilled". Skopje, 21 March 2011. Statement of the SDSM leader, Branko Crvenkovski, on the ending of the political crisis which led to the 2011 elections. Accessed 26 March 2014: <http://sdsd.org.mk/default.aspx?mId=55&agId=5&articleId=5008>

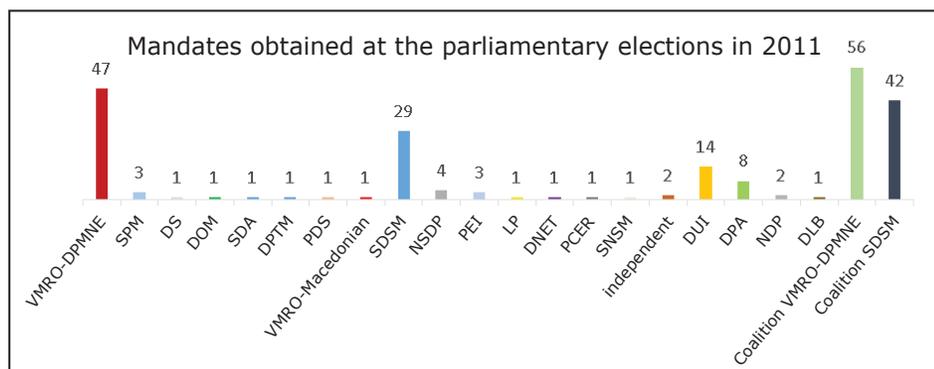
The event that marked these elections was the increase in the number of constituencies from 6 to 9. The three new Electoral Units were established to represent citizens from abroad, one for Europe and Africa, one for North and South America, and one for Australia and Asia. This increased the seats in the Parliament from 120 to 123, providing one seat to each of the new Electoral Units. Macedonian citizens living abroad were able to vote in Diplomatic-Consular Missions (DCMs) around the world.

The turnout on the elections reached 63.39% of the 1,821,122 registered voters. Due to the voting enabled for the Diaspora, there was a slight modification of the electoral model. While the six EIUs within Macedonia elected candidates in accordance with the proportional model, the three new EIUs abroad used the majority model. In these elections, 53 political parties recommended candidates on the lists.

The coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE won the elections for third consecutive time. The coalition won 56 mandates, out of which 47 belonged to VMRO-DPMNE. From the coalition partners, SPM received 5 mandates, while DS, DOM, SDA, DPTM, DPS, and VMRO-Macedonian one mandate each. Second in a row was the coalition led by SDSM with 42 mandates in total, out of which 29 went to SDSM, 4 to NSDP, 3 to PEI and one mandate each for LP, Movement for National Unity of the Turks in Macedonia (DNET), PCER, Serbian Advanced Party in Macedonia (SNSM) and two other independent MPs. Third according to number of seats in the Parliament was DUI which received 14 mandates, followed by DPA with 8, NDP 2, and the Democratic League of the Bosniaks (DLB) with 1 MP.

The general assessment was that the elections took place in a peaceful and fair atmosphere.<sup>50</sup> After the elections, the leader of VMRO-DPMNE, Nikola Gruevski, formed the government for the third time and formed a coalition with DUI as a representation for the Albanians.

<sup>50</sup> OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Republic of Macedonia, 5 June 2011 snap elections, Final report. Warsaw, 6 October 2011. Accessed 26 March 2014: <http://www.osce.org/mk/node/84061?download=true>



## 2014 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

The 2014 parliamentary elections were the eighth parliamentary elections since the independence of the Republic of Macedonia and third consecutive snap parliamentary elections. The elections were held jointly with the second round of Presidential elections and were called on 6 March 2014. Just a day earlier, on 5 March, the MPs had unanimously voted for dismissal of the Assembly.<sup>51</sup> Previously, in December, DUI's leader Ali Ahmeti came forward to say he did not support President Gjorgje Ivanov,<sup>52</sup> believing that he did not sufficiently represent the interests of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia. DUI then announced that it would not promote its own presidential candidate, but would strive for a "consensual President", one that would be acceptable for all ethnic communities in Macedonia. After the two coalition partners, VMRO-DPMNE and DUI failed to agree on a common solution regarding the proposition of a "consensual President" and it became evident that VMRO-DPMNE would support Ivanov for a second presidential mandate, on 1 March the parliamentary group of DUI officially submitted an initiative for the dismissal of the Assembly and called for snap parliamentary elections.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. Decision to call snap parliamentary elections. 6 March 2014. Accessed 19 October 2016 : <http://goo.gl/ph6fff>

<sup>52</sup> "Ahmeti – There will be no bombarding in the coalition", Radio Free Europe, Macedonian language Program, 22 December 2013. Accessed 31 March 2014: <http://www.makdenes.org/content/article/25208426.html>

<sup>53</sup> "Manual for Parliamentary Elections in the Republic of Macedonia 2014 (second updated edition)". Skopje: Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis - Skopje, 2014, pp. 21-23. Accessed 26 October 2016: [http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas\\_37897-1522-2-30.pdf?140529135320](http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_37897-1522-2-30.pdf?140529135320)

The elections were held on 27 April with 62.96% of 1,780,128 registered voters participating. Candidates for Parliament, as in the previous election cycle, were elected from six electoral units within Macedonia according to the proportional model and three MPs from abroad were elected according to the majority model. A total of 14 political entities submitted lists of candidates.

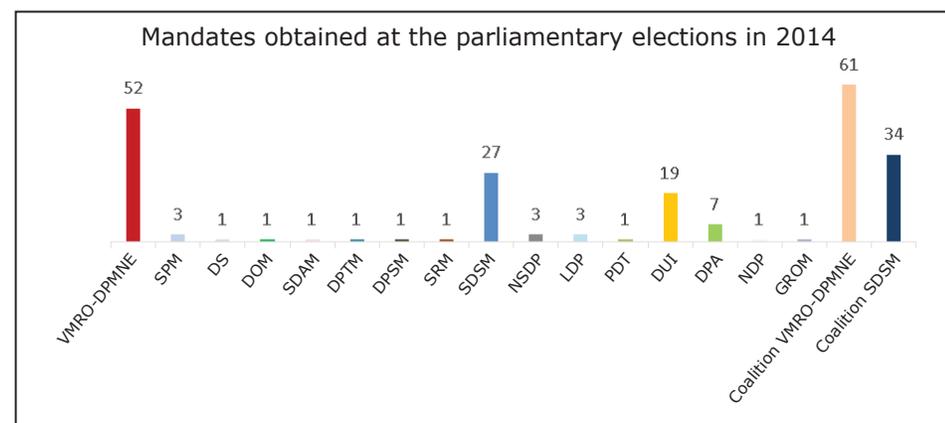
The coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE<sup>54</sup> and Nikola Gruevski won the elections once again, this time with a compelling number of votes. This coalition won 61 mandates, 52 of those going to VMRO-DPMNE. From the coalition parties, SPM received 3 mandates, and DS, DOM, SDAM (Party for Democratic Action of Macedonia), DPTM, DPSM (Democratic Party of Serbs in Macedonia) and SRM (Alliance of Romas in Macedonia) received one mandate each. The coalition led by SDSM was in second place by number of mandates, with a total of 34 mandates. Of these mandates, SDSM received 27, NSDP 3, LDP 3 and PDT (Party for Movement of Turks) 1. DUI received 19 mandates and was in third place by number of mandates, followed by DPA with 7, and NDP (National Democratic Revival) and GROM (Civic Option for Macedonia) with one mandate each.

After the elections, the leader of VMRO-DPMNE, Nikola Gruevski, formed the government for the fourth time and formed a coalition once again with DUI as the representation of Albanians. Immediately after polling stations closed and before the counting of the votes had started, the leader of SDSM, Zoran Zaev, announced that the united opposition would not recognize the election results and demanded for a technical government to be established in order to conduct new presidential and parliamentary elections. Zaev accused VMRO-DPMNE of usurping the right to vote, exerting total systemic control of voters in the election process, abuse of the state system for party purposes, and pressure on public administration, and claimed that the SDSM party had witnessed

<sup>54</sup> VMRO-DPMNE, Socialist Party of Macedonia, Democratic Party of Serbs in Macedonia, Alliance of Romas in Macedonia, Party of Justice, Party of Democratic Action of Macedonia, party of Vlachs from Macedonia, Party for Roma Integration, Workers-Agricultural Party of Republic of Macedonia, Permanent Macedonian Radical Reunion, New Liberal party, Party of United Democrats in Macedonia, Macedonian Patriotic Organization for Radical Renewal – Vardar – Aegean – Pirin, Macedonian Alliance, Democratic Party of Turks in Macedonia, VMRO-DP (VMRO-Democratic Party), Democratic Alliance, Democratic Renewal of Macedonia, Democratic Forces of Roma, Democratic Bosniac party, United Party for Roma Equality, Democratic Party of Roma, Social Democratic Union, Romas United from Macedonia.

voters being bribed and numerous irregularities throughout the election process.<sup>55</sup>

The monitors assessed that the elections on 27 April had been efficiently conducted with only minor technical irregularities noted throughout the day. The results published on the SEC (State Election Commission) web page were positively assessed. Nevertheless, the monitors noted several weaknesses in the election process. These included: the use of public resources in the campaign by the ruling party, inequality of the vote due to an uneven distribution of voters in the three EUs from abroad and the difference between the number of voters in the EUsin and outside the country, pressure on voters (especially among employees of public administration) and the purchase of votes among economically endangered groups. Concern was also expressed regarding the accuracy of the Voters' list, especially regarding a large number of voters sharing the same address. The legal provisions enabling political parties to contest the data in the Voters' list are assessed as unclear as they do not specify clearly which institution is responsible for conducting the investigations.<sup>56 57</sup>



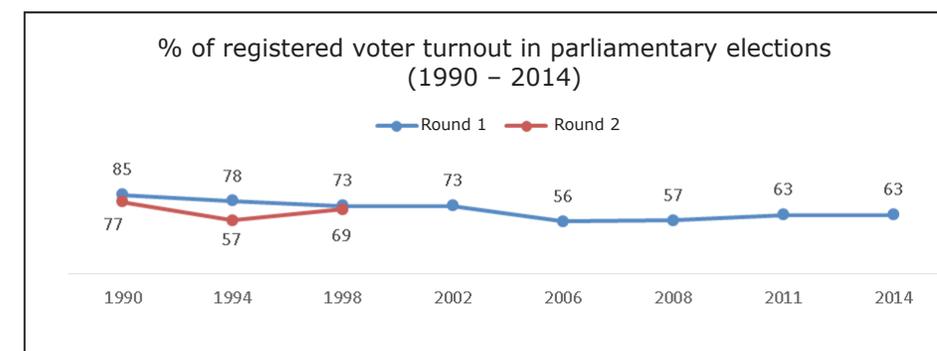
<sup>55</sup> "Zaev: SDSM does not recognize the elections and demands new ones with a technical government", Voice of America, 27 April 2014. Accessed 20 November 2016: <http://mk.voanews.com/a/macedonia-elections/1902316.html>

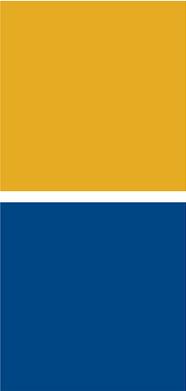
<sup>56</sup> Civic Association MOST. Final Report – Domestic Monitoring of Presidential and Snap parliamentary Elections 2014. Accessed 18 October 2016: [www.most.org.mk/images/MOST/Final\\_Report\\_Presidential\\_and\\_Parliamentary\\_Elections\\_2014\\_MKD.pdf](http://www.most.org.mk/images/MOST/Final_Report_Presidential_and_Parliamentary_Elections_2014_MKD.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Republic of Macedonia. Presidential and Snap Parliamentary Elections 27 April 2014, Final Report. Warsaw, 15 July 2014. Accessed 8 November 2016: <http://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/fyrom/121926?download=true>

## TURNOUT AT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS (1990 – 2014)

Participation in parliamentary elections from 1990 to 2014 has experienced a mild decline. The highest turnout was experienced at the first parliamentary elections in 1990 and the lowest turnout at the parliamentary elections in 2006. From 2011 to the most recent parliamentary elections in 2014, the percentage of voter turnout has remained steady, however, still far below the 1990 levels.





## THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM FOR PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN MACEDONIA

### THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM FOR PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN MACEDONIA

Members of Parliament in the Republic of Macedonia are elected in general, direct and free elections via secret ballot and receive a four-year mandate. In parliamentary elections, 120-123 members of Parliament are elected, whereas the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia allows for the Parliament to consist of 120 to 140 MPs. MPs are elected according to the proportional election model of closed candidate lists and each of the six electoral units within Macedonia receive 20 MPs. In accordance with the amendments to the Election Code<sup>58</sup> of November 2015, voting outside Macedonia is organized in one EIU, EIU 7, which includes Macedonian citizens in Europe, Africa, North and South America, Australia and Asia. This EIU 7 is represented by a maximum number of three elected MPs. In the previous parliamentary elections of 2011 and 2014, voting abroad was done in three separate electoral units in which the majority system was used to elect one MP in each electoral unit, resulting in a total number of three MPs.

The maximum deviation allowed for the number of voters in an electoral unit is plus or minus 5% of the average number of voters across the six electoral units. The mandates are distributed by the D'Hondt formula, wherein the results are determined for each electoral unit separately according to the total number of votes cast for the candidate lists separately. The mandates for each political party are allocated according to the number of votes its candidate list receives in comparison to the number of votes cast for the other candidate lists. In cases in which two lists have identical results, the last mandate will be assigned by lot. When distributing the mandates, the number of MPs corresponds with the number of mandates won by the list. Mandates are allocated to candidates according to their rank on the respective candidate lists. The number of elected candidates from abroad depends on voter turnout and the extent to which the number of voters for the candidate lists correspond with the lowest number of voters in the electoral units on the territory of the Macedonia in the last parliamentary elections. The first MP in EIU 7 shall be elected

<sup>58</sup> Law on changes and amendments to the Election Code, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 196 of 10 November 2015. Accessed 8 April 2016.

if the candidate list in EIU 7 obtains at least the same number of votes as an MP who is elected with the lowest number of votes in an electoral unit within the territory of the state in the last parliamentary elections. According to the results of the 2014 parliamentary election, this threshold amounts to 6,478 votes. The number of votes needed to win the second and third MP seat abroad should be in the same proportion, that is, two and three times larger respectively than the lowest number of votes obtained in an electoral unit within the territory of the state in the last parliamentary elections. In the event that none of the candidate lists abroad obtain the required number of votes, no MP will be elected in electoral unit 7.

Parliamentary elections are held every four years within the final 90 days of the previous parliament's mandate or within 60 days after a dismissal of the Assembly. In the instance of early elections, the timetable for electoral activities is shortened by five days, except for the time allowed for the election campaign.

The mandate of an MP can be terminated before expiration in cases of resignation, conviction of a criminal act for which at least five years of imprisonment is envisaged, in the case of incompatibility with the function of the MP, death, or if the MP is removed from an official aptitude via an enforced decision. If the MP resigns, the Assembly acknowledges the termination of the mandate on the day of its subsequent session.

In the case of termination on any of these grounds, the subsequent candidate on the list of the MP's party is appointed for the remainder of the mandate. In the case of the termination of a female MP's mandate, she is replaced by the subsequent female candidate from the party list.

The constitutive session of the Assembly of Republic of Macedonia is held within 20 days of elections and is called by the outgoing President. If the President fails to call the Assembly within the first 20 days, the most senior elected MP will call to constitute the Assembly on the 21st day after the election at 10.00 hours. In the case that he

or she refuses to call the session, the right is transferred to the next MP in line of seniority until an MP calls the first constitutive session of the Assembly.<sup>59</sup>

Within ten days of the Constitutive Assembly, the President of Republic of Macedonia is obliged to entrust the mandate for a new Government to a candidate (mandate holder) of the party or parties that received the majority of the mandates.<sup>60</sup> Within 20 days of being entrusted with the mandate, the mandate holder submits a proposal for the composition and program of Government to the Assembly. The Government is then elected by a majority vote from the total number of MPs.

## ELECTORAL BODIES

The State Election Commission (SEC), together with the Municipal Election Commissions (MEC), the Election Boards (EB) for voting within the country and at the Diplomatic-Consular Missions (DCM) of the Republic of Macedonia are the electoral organs responsible for implementing parliamentary elections. The SEC comprises nine members<sup>61</sup> elected by the Assembly with two-thirds of votes from the total number of MPs. They perform their function with a five year mandate and can be reelected. Members of the SEC are elected 30 days before the current mandate of the SEC ends. The SEC has a party-expert composition, with six members representing the political parties of the Assembly and three members elected through a joint proposition of the leading and oppositional parties from a list of applicants. The party in power with the largest number of MPs proposes two members and the second

<sup>59</sup> Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of Republic of Macedonia (consolidated text), Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 54 of 15 April 2013. Accessed 18 October 2016: <http://www.sobranie.mk/delovnik-nasobranieto-na-republika-makedonija-precisten-tekst.nsp>

<sup>60</sup> The Constitution of Republic of Macedonia, Assembly of Republic of Macedonia, 17 November 1991. Accessed 18 October 2016: <http://sobranie.mk/ustav-na-rm.nsp>

<sup>61</sup> According to the changes in the Election Code foreseen by the Przino Agreement, the new SEC is comprised of nine members, three of them proposed by the parties in power, three by the opposition and three independent members elected by the Assembly with two-thirds majority of votes, of those the president or vice president are elected from the members of the largest non-majority community. Previously SEC was comprised of seven members with a four year mandate through a different election procedure. Namely, the parties of the opposition proposed the president and two members of SEC, whereas the parties in power proposed the vice president and three members of SEC.

largest party in power proposes one. The opposition party with the largest number of MPs proposes two members and the second largest opposition party proposes one. The president and vice president of the SEC are elected by the Assembly from members proposed jointly by the parties in power and in opposition, whereby the president and vice president should come from the members of the largest non-majority community. The SEC nominates a secretary general responsible for the experts' office with administrative, organizational and technical work.

The Municipal Election Commissions (MEC) that are established in each municipality are responsible for implementing the elections and monitoring the work of the election boards within the territory under their auspices. Each MEC comprises five members, namely, one president, and four other members, each having a deputy. The members and deputies of the MEC are highly qualified and elected employees from state, public, and municipal administrations, each receiving a mandate of five years. Their selection is conducted by the SEC by random choice using the data records of state and municipal administrations, the administration of the City of Skopje and the public administration.

The Election Board (EB) is a body established at each polling station, comprising of five members including a president and four members, each with a deputy. The president of the Election Board and his deputy, two members and their deputies are selected by random choice from employees in the state, public and municipal administration for a mandate of four years. One member and their deputy are nominated by the political parties in opposition with the highest number of votes won in the previous parliamentary elections, and the final member and deputy is nominated by the governing political parties with the majority of votes won in the previous parliamentary elections. The random selection of members for the Election Boards is conducted by the MEC within their areas of responsibility upon the SEC's request. Voting abroad is organized by DCM in which there is a minimum of 10 voters registered, and the number of polling stations from abroad shall be determined upon registration for voting at these polling stations.

## ACTIVE AND PASSIVE ELECTORAL RIGHT, PROCEDURE FOR SUBMITTAL OF CANDIDACIES<sup>62</sup>

All citizens of the Republic of Macedonia who are at least 18 years of age with active legal capacity have the right to vote. Voting is secret and voters should not be held responsible for the cast vote, nor should they be asked to show who they voted for or why they did not vote at all. It is the responsibility of the SEC to inform and educate the citizens about the voting procedure and to provide the polling stations with voting instructions in Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Vlach, Serbian, Roma, and Bosniac languages. The lists of candidates are also displayed at the polling stations.

An MP candidate can be any Macedonian citizen who is at least 18 years of age with active legal capacity. Additionally, the candidate must not have been sentenced up to 6 months imprisonment with a final court decision, whose sentence has not started yet, or who has previously served time for committed crimes. Also, if cooperation with state security bodies<sup>63</sup> has been determined with a final ruling, the right to hold public office is limited for a time period of five years from the day the ruling comes into force.<sup>64</sup>

The right to nominate MP candidates is exercised by submitting a candidate list to the SEC. An individual candidate can only be nominated on one list and a submitter can only submit one list of MP candidates. The MP candidate lists have to include at least 40% of the underrepresented gender as candidates. For every three candidates, at

<sup>62</sup> The Election Code (consolidated text), unofficial version prepared by the Expert Service of the State Electoral Commission (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No 40/60, 136/08, 148/08, 155/08, 163/08, 44/11, 51/11, 54/11, 142/12, 31/13, 34/13, 14/14,30/14, 196/15, 35/16, 97/16 and 99/16). Accessed 19 October 2016: <http://www.sec.mk/>. Election Code, Law on changes and amendments of the Election Code, No. 142, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 142 from 1 August 2016. Accessed 19 October 2016: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/Law\\_on\\_changes\\_and\\_amendments\\_of\\_electoral\\_code\\_28\\_july\\_2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/Law_on_changes_and_amendments_of_electoral_code_28_july_2016.pdf)

<sup>63</sup> This decision stems from the Law on determining a criterion for limiting the exercise of public office, access to documents and publishing the cooperation with the bodies of the state security, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 86 of 9 July, 2012 or known to the public as Lustration Law.

<sup>64</sup> Law on termination of the Law on determining a criterion for limiting the exercise of public office, access to documents and publishing the cooperation with the bodies of the state security, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 143 of 24 August, 2015. Accessed 28 October 2016: <http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/aab4eac48b942f38b927f84b6a49dfa.pdf>

least one place will be reserved for the underrepresented gender and an additional place for every 10 candidates. This measure was introduced in November 2015, whereas previously only one place was guaranteed for the underrepresented gender for every three candidates.

The lists are submitted in Macedonian in Cyrillic alphabet, but in EIU in which at least 20% of the citizens speak an official language other than Macedonian, submitters may use the language and the alphabet that the citizens of that local government unit use.

The right to submit candidate list belongs to registered political parties independently or as part of a coalition as well as to a group of voters. The group of voters needs to collect at least 1,000 signatures from registered voters on the Voters' list for the electoral unit in order to submit a candidate list. Signatures are collected before the regional units of the SEC or the officials of the DCM on a form prescribed by the SEC. One voter can put his/her signature on the candidate lists of several MPs. In regular elections, the collection of signatures starts on the fifteenth day after elections are called and goes on for 15 days. In early elections, it starts on the tenth day after the call for election and goes on for 10 days. For the current elections, the collection of signatures occurred from 28 October to 6 November and the lists of MP candidates were submitted to the SEC by midnight of 11 November.

When a political party submits a list of candidates, it must also submit a registration certificate issued by an authorized court. When a coalition submits a list, it must be accompanied by a party coalition agreement. In the case of a group of voters submitting a list, the collected signatures from the registered voters must also be submitted. Each candidate included on a list must then file an irrevocable written statement for candidacy. The candidate lists are submitted to the authorized election commission within 30 days prior to the elections. The SEC or MECs must then determine if the lists were duly and properly submitted. If any irregularities are registered, the SEC will summon the official representative of the list to eradicate any such irregularities within a period of 48 hours. When the list is corrected to meet all provisions in the given timeframe, it will be sustained by the SEC. If it is determined that the lists are not submitted on time or the irregularities have not been eradicated in the given timeframe, the SEC will issue a decision to

reject the list. In the case of rejection, the list representative can file a complaint against the SEC's decision at the Administrative Court within 24 hours, whereas the Court is obliged to decide on the case within the following 24 hour period. An objection or complaint for the lists in electoral unit 7 may be submitted electronically, in person or through an authorized representative.

The SEC shall publish the confirmed lists of MP candidates in the electoral units in the daily press 23 days before the elections at the latest, using also the language spoken by at least 20% of the community. The candidate lists should be delivered to the DCM through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs within 48 hours for the purpose of being published.

### **LIMITATIONS FOR THE CURRENT STATE OFFICIALS<sup>65</sup>**

The position of an MP is performed professionally and cannot be held simultaneously with the position of the President of the Republic, Prime Minister of Republic of Macedonia, cabinet minister, judge, Public Prosecutor, Public Attorney, Ombudsman or any other position elected or appointed by the Assembly and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. In addition to these elected roles, the position of MP is also incompatible with the position of a mayor or member of the Local Government Council, role as an expert or employee in state administration bodies, the performance of economic or other profit activity, membership on the board of public enterprises, public institutions, funds, agencies, institutes or other legal entities. Finally, an MP is unable to simultaneously serve in the elected role of representative of state or social capital in trade associations.

If a member of the government, a deputy minister, or any other official is a candidate for MP, from the day a decision was made to call for elections to the end of the elections they are forbidden to:

<sup>65</sup> The Election Code (consolidated text), unofficial version prepared by the Expert Service of the oral Commission No 40/60, 136/08, 148/08, 155/08, 163/08, 44/11, 51/11, 54/11, 142/12, 31/13, 34/13, 14/14,30/14, 196/15, 35/16, 97/16 and 99/16, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia. Accessed 27 November 2016: <http://www.sec.mk/>. Law on changes and amendments of the Election Code, No. 142, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia. Accessed 19 October 2016: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/Law\\_on\\_changes\\_and\\_amendments\\_of\\_electoral\\_code\\_28\\_july\\_2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/Law_on_changes_and_amendments_of_electoral_code_28_july_2016.pdf)

- Administer the budget of the Republic of Macedonia, the budgets of municipalities and of the City of Skopje, public funds, public properties, public institutions, or legal persons who own state capital, unless it is otherwise determined by law regulating the financing of election campaigns of political parties;
- Initiate construction work with budget resources, public funds, public properties and other legal persons who own state capital, of new objects for infrastructure such as roads, water conduits, transmission lines, sewage systems, sports playgrounds, and other facilities, or facilities for social activities such as schools, kindergartens, and other facilities, unless budget resources have already been allocated to that goal;
- Perform extraordinary payment of salaries, retirement incomes, social welfare or any other payments from the budget or the public funds;
- Sell state capital;
- Sign collective agreements; and other limitations according to the Election Code.

If a minister or deputy minister violates these regulations, he/she will be fined between 500 to 1,000 EUR. Continued action contrary to these regulations is punishable according to the provisions of the Criminal Code.

If a candidate for MP is a member of the armed forces of the Republic of Macedonia, the uniformed section of the police, the authorized personnel at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Defense, or the Intelligence Agency, their professional engagement will be suspended from the day their candidacy is confirmed, prohibiting that person from participating in the election campaign in any official uniform.

Additionally, beginning 20 days before the start of the election campaign to the end of elections, it is not allowed to pay subsidies which are not part of regular monthly wages nor it is allowed to organize public events to initiate or put into operation construction work of facilities

for public use or infrastructure financed by the budget, public funds, or resources from the public companies or other legal persons with state capital. From the day of the decision to call for the elections to the conclusion of the elections, the Ministry of Finance is obliged to publish all data on budgetary payments, excluding regular incomes, pensions and communal expenditures, publicly in a special online database for budgetary expenditures in the election period. The Ministry of Finance files a pre-electoral financial report two weeks after the call for elections providing a comprehensive overview of all planned and realized revenues and expenditures of the budget from the start of the fiscal year to the day the report is filed, which is published on the Ministry of Finance's website.

## ELECTION CAMPAIGN<sup>66</sup>

An election campaign is the public presentation of candidates and their programs by the competent electoral bodies in the pre-election period. The election campaign for snap parliamentary elections begins 20 days before the day of elections. For the current election period in Macedonia, this began on 21 November and will end on 9 December at 24:00. The day before the elections, 10 December, is set aside as a day of pre-election silence. On this day, candidates are not allowed to campaign and the public media may provide no electoral presentation of participants in the elections.

Within 48 hours of the confirmation of the candidate list, organizers of an election campaign must open a separate bank account only for the purpose of the election campaign and the campaign can be financed only with resources from this account. The election campaign can be financed by the political party's membership fees and donations in amounts up to 3,000 EUR for natural persons and 30,000 EUR for legal persons. The donation can be in the form of money, goods, and services, but their

<sup>66</sup> The Election Code (consolidated text), unofficial version prepared by the Expert Service of the oral Commission No 40/60, 136/08, 148/08, 155/08, 163/08, 44/11, 51/11, 54/11, 142/12, 31/13, 34/13, 14/14,30/14, 196/15, 35/16, 97/16 and 99/16, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia. Accessed 27 November 2016: <http://www.sec.mk/>. Law on changes and amendments of the Election Code, No. 142, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia. Accessed 19 October 2016: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/Law\\_on\\_changes\\_and\\_amendments\\_of\\_electoral\\_code\\_28\\_july\\_2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/Law_on_changes_and_amendments_of_electoral_code_28_july_2016.pdf)

value should not surpass the determined amounts. If the amount of the donation exceeds the limit, the participant in the election campaign is obliged to transfer the difference between the limit and the donation into the budget of Republic of Macedonia within five days. The participants in the election campaign may spend up to 110 denars per registered voter in an electoral unit in which they have submitted a candidate list, 70 denars less than the amount allowed in the elections in 2014.

The election campaign cannot be financed from the budget of Republic of Macedonia, the municipal budgets or the budget of the City of Skopje, except from the compensations for election expenditures which are in possession of the election campaign organizers. The election campaign cannot be financed with funding from public properties and public institutions, associations of citizens, religious communities, religious groups and foundations, foreign governments, international institutions, properties with mixed capital in which foreign capital is dominant, as well as from unidentified sources. With the new legislative changes, radio broadcasting companies, printed and electronic media (internet portals), and persons related to them must not finance or donate to political parties, including campaigns. Related persons are considered to be the members of the family, family of the spouse or extramarital partner, persons who have a share in the equity, participate in management, and persons who have been generating more than 30% of their income from advertising, TV shopping and sponsorship through marketing or some other contract.<sup>67</sup>

If a candidate drops out of the race, the organizers of the election campaign are obliged to return the saved donations to the donors within a period of 60 days. The participant in the election campaign is obliged immediately and no later than 30 days from the end of the election campaign to file a financial report on the incomes and expenditures of the campaign. Elected candidates for MP are entitled to compensation from the state budget of 15 MKD per vote if they win at least 1.5% of the vote in an Electoral Unit. These resources are transferred within three months of filing the financial report for the election campaign.

<sup>67</sup> The term "related persons" is more precisely defined in the Law on audio and audiovisual media services, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 184 of 26 December 2013. Accessed 19 October 2016: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/Zakon\\_za\\_izmenuvanje\\_i\\_dopolnuvanje\\_na\\_izborniot\\_zakonik\\_28\\_juli\\_2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/Zakon_za_izmenuvanje_i_dopolnuvanje_na_izborniot_zakonik_28_juli_2016.pdf)

As part of the legislative changes introduced by the Przino Agreement, from the day elections are called to the end, the radio broadcasting companies, printed and electronic media (internet-portals) may not publish advertisements financed from the budget of the Republic of Macedonia, from the budget of the municipalities and the City of Skopje or from other persons that have been given by law public authorizations.

If the rights of a candidate are violated during public appearances and announcements, they have the right to press charges. In such a case, the competent general court presides in urgency and the decision is announced in the public media.

## THE ROLE OF PUBLIC MEDIA<sup>68</sup>

During the election campaign, the public radio broadcasting service and the commercial radio broadcasters, including the electronic media (internet-portals), are obliged to present the election programs and candidates in a just, balanced, and unbiased manner. The Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (AAMS),<sup>69</sup> under the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services is the entity responsible for monitoring the media presentation of the political parties and the candidates in the radio broadcasting and electronic media (internet-portals)<sup>70</sup> from the day elections are called until the end of the voting on Election Day. If the Agency determines any irregularities, it may press charges against the broadcaster violating the regulations.

<sup>68</sup> The Election Code (consolidated text), unofficial version prepared by the Expert Service of the oral Commission No 40/60, 136/08, 148/08, 155/08, 163/08, 44/11, 51/11, 54/11, 142/12, 31/13, 34/13, 14/14,30/14, 196/15, 35/16, 97/16 and 99/16, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia. Accessed 27 November 2016: <http://www.sec.mk/>. Law on changes and amendments of the Election Code, No. 142, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia. Accessed 19 October 2016: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/Law\\_on\\_changes\\_and\\_amendments\\_of\\_electoral\\_code\\_28\\_july\\_2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/Law_on_changes_and_amendments_of_electoral_code_28_july_2016.pdf)

<sup>69</sup> Former Radio Broadcasting Council, Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 184 of 26 December 2013. Accessed 27 November 2016: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/Zakon\\_za\\_audio\\_i\\_audiovizuelni\\_mediumski\\_uslugi\\_mkd\\_1.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/Zakon_za_audio_i_audiovizuelni_mediumski_uslugi_mkd_1.pdf)

<sup>70</sup> Even though the Election Code foresees this obligation of the Agency, in January 2016 the Agency made its position public due to the lack of preconditions it shall not monitor the electoral media presentation on the internet-portals. AAMS, 2016, Position of AAMS regarding the monitoring of internet-portals reporting. Accessed 4 November 2016: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/Stav\\_na\\_Agencijata.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/Stav_na_Agencijata.pdf). AAMS, 2016, Methodology for monitoring electoral media presentation on radio and television program services during election processes. Accessed 4 November 2016: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/metodologija\\_za\\_monitoring\\_05.01.2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/metodologija_za_monitoring_05.01.2016.pdf)

Editors, journalists, program hosts and presenters who prepare the programs of the radio broadcasters are not allowed to participate in the pre-election activities of political parties, coalitions, groups of voters and their representatives. If these persons decide to participate in any such campaign activities, their engagement in the programs of the radio broadcasters should be put to rest until the closing of the elections.

The public broadcasting service, Macedonian Radio Television (MRTV), is obliged to inform the citizens on voting technicalities and electoral matters without any financial compensation whatsoever. MRTV is required to provide equal access to the informative program. With the changes to the Election Code as a result of the Przino Agreement, 30% of the program should relate to events in the country and around the world, 30% to activities of the parties represented in power, 30% to activities of the opposition parties and 10% to the activities of non-parliamentary political parties.

During the election campaign MRTV is obligated to broadcast the political presentation of participants in the elections in a balanced manner, free of charge. This balance is proportional according to the number of confirmed lists of MP candidates. The Assembly Channel should provide free of charge political presentation up to three hours for the opposition and ruling parties in accordance with the results of the last parliamentary elections and one hour for the submitters of lists who are not represented in the Assembly. The free of charge political presentation has to be adequately and visibly marked as "free of charge political presentation" during the entire duration of the broadcast. Unlike MRTV, radio broadcasting companies are not allowed to broadcast free of charge political presentation from the day the elections are called until their end.

In the period between the call for the elections and the start of the election campaign, radio broadcasters and the printed media are not allowed to broadcast or publish any paid political advertising. During this time, advertisements financed by the state or municipal budget are also not allowed. Radio broadcasters are compelled to record their programs from the day elections are called to their conclusion and

should keep that material for 30 days after the elections to provide to the AAMS in the instance this data is requested.

Media entities are obliged to determine their pricelists<sup>71</sup> for paid political advertising within five days after elections are called and publicly announce them. These prices may not be altered for the duration of the campaign. Radio broadcasters covering the elections can broadcast 18 minutes of additional advertising per actual hour of broadcasting exclusively devoted to paid political advertising. This allows them to dedicate up to eight minutes each to the political parties in power and opposition and one minute for political parties without a parliamentary group and for non-parliamentary parties. When there is interest to merge the additional advertising of one political party in two subsequent hours, the media must alternate the representation of political parties in power and opposition of two hours. Radio broadcasters and printed media are obligated to submit a report on the advertising space used by each participant in the election campaign and the funds paid or claimed for that purpose.

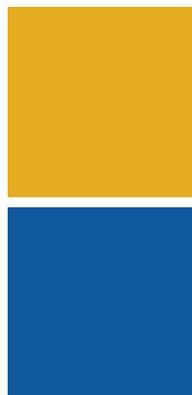
Results from public opinion polls related to the candidates should not be published through public services in the last 5 days before the elections. When public opinion poll results related to candidates in the election process are published, members of the media are obligated to identify the entity that has commissioned and funded the poll, the institution that has conducted the poll, the applied methodology, size and structure of the sample and the period in which the research was conducted. Results of public opinion polls conducted on the day of elections must not be published before the polling stations close at 19:00 hours.

## MONITORING THE ELECTIONS

The right to monitor elections belongs to accredited domestic, foreign and international organizations and representatives of foreign countries with accreditations granted by the SEC. Accreditation for monitoring

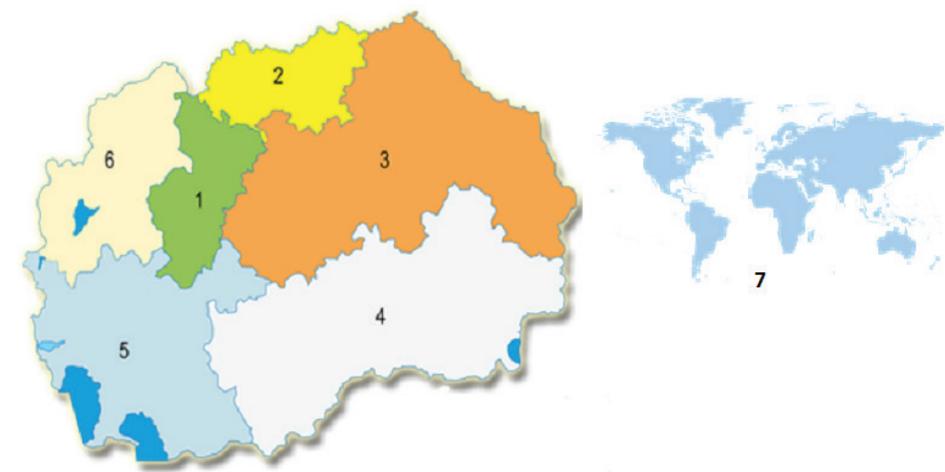
<sup>71</sup> The price lists of the media for paid political advertising of participants in the election process for the parliamentary elections on December 11, 2016 are accessible on the web site of the SEC at the following link: [goo.gl/TbAlf3](http://goo.gl/TbAlf3).

can be granted to national civic organizations registered at least one year prior to the elections, provided that the principle of human rights protection is integrated in their statute. Submitters of the lists also have the right to an authorized representative designated to monitor the work of the election bodies.



## ELECTORAL UNITS

## ELECTORAL UNITS<sup>72</sup>



Electoral Units<sup>73</sup>

The snap parliamentary elections scheduled for 11 December 2016 will be organized in 7 separate electoral units (EIU). There are 6 EIU's within the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, whereas the 7<sup>th</sup> EIU encompasses polling stations outside the territory of the state and represents Macedonian citizens living abroad who have the right to vote.

Shortly before the parliamentary elections in 2002, a Law on Electoral Units<sup>74</sup> was passed which divided the territory of the state into 6 EIU's with approximately an equal number of registered voters in each EIU.

<sup>72</sup> The final results of the State Election Commission of the Republic of Macedonia have been used to determine the number of mandates and registered voters by EIU in the snap parliamentary elections on 27 April 2014. Accessed 15 October 2016: [rezultati.sec.mk/Parliamentary/Results](http://rezultati.sec.mk/Parliamentary/Results)

<sup>73</sup> The graphic presentation of the electoral units in Macedonia is taken from the website of the State Election Commission of the Republic of Macedonia (SEC). Accessed 2 November 2016: <http://217.16.84.11/Default.aspx> and [goo.gl/6Cb9e5](http://goo.gl/6Cb9e5)

<sup>74</sup> Law on Electoral Units for MPs in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia, No. 43 of 26 June 2002. Accessed 5 October 2016: <http://www.sivesnik.com.mk/Issues/D8BCA0533D35554CA3F003112BB47F1B.pdf>.

In accordance with the Election Code enacted in 2016,<sup>75</sup> the number of registered voters in a single EIU may vary plus or minus 5 percent compared to an average number of 292,000 voters per electoral unit. Each of the 6 EIUs receive 20 mandates according to the proportional election model or 120 seats in the Assembly out of the total 123.

Before the snap parliamentary elections in 2011, changes were made to the Election Code<sup>76</sup> enabling Macedonian citizens living abroad to vote for the first time. Voting abroad took place in three electoral units according to the majority election model. EIU 7 comprised Macedonian citizens living in Europe and Africa, EIU 8 included North and South America and EIU 9 included Asia and Australia. The legislative changes introduced as a result of the 2015 Przino Agreement combined the three external EIUs of EUrope, Africa, North America, South America, Australia and Asia into one electoral unit (EIU7). Within EIU 7, three MP's will be elected according to the proportional election model.<sup>77</sup> Macedonian citizens abroad vote in diplomatic and consular missions (DCM) and in the consulate offices of the Republic of Macedonia.

The number of polling stations in the country for the upcoming snap parliamentary elections is 3,524. For the snap parliamentary elections in 2014, there were 3,480 polling stations, 504 more than at the previous elections in 2011. No more than 1,000 voters can vote in one polling station.

<sup>75</sup> Election Code (revised text), unofficial version prepared by the Expert Service of the State Electoral Commission, Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia, No. 40/06, 136/08, 148/08, 155/08, 163/08, 44/11, 51/11, 54/11, 142/12, 31/13, 34/13, 14/14, 30/14, 196/15, 35/16, 97/16 и 99/16). Accessed 7 October 2016: <http://www.sec.mk/izboren-zakonik/>; Law on changes and amendments to the Election Code, Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia, No. 142 of 1 August 2016. Accessed : 7 October 2016: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/Zakon\\_za\\_izmenuvanje\\_i\\_dopolnuvanje\\_na\\_izborniot\\_zakonik\\_28\\_juli\\_2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/Zakon_za_izmenuvanje_i_dopolnuvanje_na_izborniot_zakonik_28_juli_2016.pdf)

<sup>76</sup> Election Code (revised text), Official Gazette of RM, No. 54 of 14 April 2011. Accessed 3 November 2016: [http://old.sec.mk/star/Predvremeni2011/IZBOREN\\_ZAKONIK\\_\(Precisten\\_tekst\).pdf](http://old.sec.mk/star/Predvremeni2011/IZBOREN_ZAKONIK_(Precisten_tekst).pdf)

<sup>77</sup> Election Code (revised text), unofficial version prepared by the Expert Service of the State Election Commission, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 40/06, 136/08, 148/08, 155/08, 163/08, 44/11, 51/11, 54/11, 142/12, 31/13, 34/13, 14/14, 30/14, 196/15, 35/16, 97/16 & 99/16). Accessed 7 October 2016: <http://www.sec.mk/izboren-zakonik/>; Law on changes and amendments to the Election Code, Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia, No. 142. 1 August 2016. Accessed 7 October 2016: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/Zakon\\_za\\_izmenuvanje\\_i\\_dopolnuvanje\\_na\\_izborniot\\_zakonik\\_28\\_juli\\_2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/Zakon_za_izmenuvanje_i_dopolnuvanje_na_izborniot_zakonik_28_juli_2016.pdf).

Aside from the changes to the Election Code as a result of the Przino Agreement as well as the abolition of the three EIU abroad and their merger into EIU 7, in the past period there was discussion on altering the borders of the electoral units. According to the last Voters' list delivered by the SEC, EIU 6, which includes the regions of Tetovo and Gostivar, had surpassed the 5% threshold of difference in the number of voters as set forth by the Election Code, thus endangering the equality of votes. As a result, DUI initiated a debate to alter the EIU's borders. For that purpose a Working group for amendments to the Election Code in the part of altering the EIU's borders was established. DUI proposed two measures to overcome the existing inequality of the EIUs. One proposition included the reshaping of EIU 6 and the transfer of several thousand voters to EIU 5. They proposed that the entire city of Debar should be transferred to EIU 5 to accomplish this purpose. The second proposition called for the reshaping of all EIUs in the country. However, the Working group was unable to reach an agreement before the dissolution of the Assembly, meaning that the upcoming parliamentary elections will be held with the currently unbalanced EIUs.<sup>78</sup>

EIU 1 encompasses parts of the capital, Skopje, and part of central Macedonia. This includes the municipalities Aerodrom, Karposh, Kisela Voda, Centar, Saraj, Sopiste, Makedonski Brod, Studenichani and part of the Chair municipality. The majority of the voters in EIU 1 are ethnic Macedonians. In the 2014 parliamentary elections, in EIU 1 297,686 voters were registered to vote at 522 polling stations. The voter turnout was 65.22%. The coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE won 8 mandates in this EIU, the coalition led by SDSM 7, DUI 3, DPA 1 and GROM 1.

EIU 2 encompasses the remaining part of Skopje in addition to part of northern Macedonia. This EIU represents a balanced population, including ethnic Macedonians, Albanians, Serbs and Roma. The municipalities Butel, Gazi Baba, Gjorche Petrov, part of Chair municipality, Shuto Orizari, Arachinovo, part of Kumanovo, Lipkovo, part of Staro Nagorichane and Chucher Sandevo all fall within this EIU. In the 2014 parliamentary elections, 306,067 voters were registered in

<sup>78</sup> "The sixth ace down the sleeve to challenge the elections", Deutsche Welle, 19 October 2016. Accessed 3 November 2016: [www.dw.com/mk/шестката-кец-од-ракав-за-оспорување-на-изборите/a-36085391](http://www.dw.com/mk/шестката-кец-од-ракав-за-оспорување-на-изборите/a-36085391)

EIU 2 to vote at 504 polling stations. With a voter turnout of 60.18%, the coalition of VMRO-DPMNE received 10 mandates, SDSM 5, DUI 4, and DPA 1.

EIU 3 encompasses parts of central, east and northeast Macedonia. This EIU covers the municipalities of Berovo, Veles, Vinica, Gradsko, Delchevo, Zelenikovo, Zrnovci, Ilinden, Karbinci, Kochani, Kratovo, Kriva Palanka, part of Kumanovo, Lozovo, Makedonska Kamenica, Petrovec, Pehchevo, Probishtip, Rankovce, Sveti Nikole, part of Staro Nagorichane, Chashka, Cheshinovo – Obleshevo and Shtip. The majority of the population is ethnically Macedonian. In the 2014 parliamentary elections, 280,890 voters were registered in EIU 3 to vote at 682 polling stations. With a voter turnout of 70.89%, the coalition of VMRO-DPMNE received 13 mandates and SDSM 7.

EIU 4 encompasses the municipalities of southeast Macedonia, including part of the city of Bitola, Bogdanci, Bosilevo, Valandovo, Vasilevo, Gevgelija, Demir Kapija, Dojran, Kavadarci, Konche, part of Krivogashtani, Mogila, Negotino, Novaci, Novo Selo, Prilep, Radovish, Rosoman and Strumica. The majority of the population is ethnically Macedonian. In the 2014 parliamentary elections, 280,810 voters were registered in EIU 4 to vote at 599 polling stations. With a voter turnout of 73.14%, the coalition of VMRO-DPMNE received 12 mandates and SDSM 8.

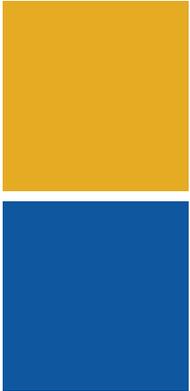
EIU 5 encompasses the municipalities of southwestern Macedonia, including part of the city of Bitola, Vevchani, part of Debar, Debarca, Demir Hisar, Dolneni, part of Kichevo, part of Krivokashtani, Krushevo, Orhid, Plasnica, Resen, Struga and Centar Zupa. The majority of the population is of Macedonian ethnicity, however there is also a significant Albanian ethnic community. In the 2014 parliamentary elections, 286,435 voters were registered in EIU 5 to vote at 655 polling stations. With a turnout of 61.24%, the coalition of VMRO-DPMNE won 11 mandates, SDSM 6 and DUI 3.

EIU 6 encompasses the municipalities of northwestern Macedonia, including Bogovinje, Brvenica, Vrapchishte, Gostivar, part of Debar,

Zelino, Jegunovce, part of Kichevo, Mavrovo and Rostusha, Tearce and Tetovo. The population of this EIU 6 is predominantly of Albanian ethnicity. In the 2014 parliamentary elections, 304,458 voters were registered in this EIU to vote at 516 polling stations. With a turnout of 49.69%, in the parliamentary elections in 2014 in this EIU the most mandates were won by DUI – 9 mandates, DPA 5, the coalition of VMRO-DPMNE 4, NPD 1 and the coalition of SDSM 1.

EIU 7 includes Macedonian citizens living or staying temporarily abroad. This includes states in Europe, Africa, North America, South America, Australia and Asia. The 3 MPs representing citizens abroad are elected according to the proportional model. The mandates are allocated according to the D'Hondt method. To vote abroad, citizens of the Republic of Macedonia temporarily employed or residing abroad with a registered last residence in the Republic of Macedonia before the elections should register at the appropriate DCM / consular office. These voters are placed in a special excerpt of the Voters' list. The registration may be done by submitting an application that is either personally signed or sent by electronic mail. The number of polling stations abroad is subject to change and a polling station will not be established at a DCM/consular office where less than 10 voters have registered.

For the parliamentary elections in 2011 and 2014, voting abroad was carried out in three separate EIUs. In the 2014 parliamentary elections, 18,911 voters were registered in EIU 7 (Europe and Africa) and they could vote at 27 polling stations in DCM or consular offices of the Republic of Macedonia. With a voter turnout of 45.55%, the coalition of VMRO-DPMNE won the mandate. In EIU 8 (North and South America), 3,337 voters were registered and they could vote at 6 polling stations. VMRO-DPMNE won the mandate with a voter turnout of 55.29%. In EIU 9 (Australia and Asia), 1,534 voters were registered and they could vote at three polling stations. With a voter turnout of 64.02%, the coalition of VMRO-DPMNE won the mandate.



## OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE SNAP PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS OF 2016

### OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE SNAP PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS OF 2016

In accordance with the timetable adopted by the SEC regarding the execution of activities for the snap parliamentary elections on 11 December, a total of 13 political parties and coalitions submitted lists of candidates by the 11 November deadline. After reviewing the applications, the SEC accepted 11 of the lists for participation in the elections.<sup>79</sup> The applications of two political parties, the Social Democratic Party of Macedonia and the People's Movement for Macedonia, were rejected due to irregularities.<sup>80</sup> In the upcoming elections, 1,784,524 citizens are eligible to vote. They will be able to vote for 11 political entities, including six political parties and five coalitions on 58 lists of candidates. In the seventh electoral unit for Macedonian diaspora, a total of 20,573 citizens will be able to exercise their right to vote.

This manual will present all political parties and coalitions, in addition to holders of the candidate lists participating in the snap parliamentary elections. The four largest parliamentary parties, VMRO-DPMNE, SDSM, DUI and DPA, will be presented in more detail. The order in which the parties and the coalitions are presented corresponds to the order they will appear on the ballots in the upcoming elections.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Conclusion of confirmed lists of candidates to participate in the snap elections of Members of Parliament - December 11, 2016, State Election Commission, 17 November 2016. Accessed 20 November 2016: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8ZpCwro9h-zcVZ4Z1NEb2Y2bFU/view>

<sup>80</sup> The applications were rejected because they contained some irregularities. After the SEC announced the decision to reject the applications, the two parties filed charges against the SEC through the Administrative Court. The court rejected the appeals and upheld the decisions to reject the candidate lists adopted by the SEC.

<sup>81</sup> "The campaign for snap elections launched on 11 December", Telma, November 2016. Accessed 22 November 2016: <http://telma.com.mk/vesti/pochna-kampanjata-za-predvremnite-izbori-na-11-dekemvri>

## POLITICAL PARTIES, COALITIONS AND HOLDERS OF CANDIDATE LISTS <sup>82</sup>

### VMRO-DPMNE



The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization - Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) is a party that declares itself as a center right party with a christian democratic ideology. Since the independence of Macedonia, VMRO-DPMNE has remained as one of the two largest parties in the country. It has participated in almost all parliamentary and local elections, with the exception of the second round of parliamentary elections in 1994, which they boycotted due to what they perceived to be irregularities in the voting system. In the parliamentary elections of 1998, VMRO-DPMNE won 49 mandates in a coalition with the Democratic Alternative, which won 13 mandates and PDPA-NDP (later known as DPA) with 11 and several smaller parties. VMRO-DPMNE formed a government for the first time and would remain in power until 2002, except for the period of time between May and November 2001 during the armed conflict in which a broad coalition government was formed including ministers from SDSM and LDP. In 2002, VMRO-DPMNE and its coalition partners only won 33 seats in the Assembly and became the opposition party until 2006. In the election of 2006, VMRO-DPMNE won again with the coalition "For Better Macedonia", receiving 45 mandates and forming a government. In these elections, the party had presented the first program with specific deadlines for reforms, which was a novelty in the electoral competition. VMRO-DPMNE has since won three additional cycles of snap parliamentary elections in 2008, 2011 and 2014. In the snap parliamentary elections in 2008 it won, together with the coalition "For Better Macedonia", a record 63 mandates. In the snap parliamentary elections in 2011 the party, together with the

<sup>82</sup> The party logos and photos of leaders of the candidate lists are taken from the websites of the respective parties, certain public institutions and official Facebook profiles of the candidates. All logos and photographs were found on the internet.

coalition, won 56 mandates. In the last composition of the Parliament, VMRO-DPMNE had 52 MPs, and together with the coalition partners held 61 out of the 123 seats in Parliament.

Since its establishment and up until 2003, president of VMRO-DPMNE was Ljubco Georgievski. At a party congress in May 2003, Georgievski resigned and Nikola Gruevski was elected in his place and currently leads the party. Gruevski served as Prime minister of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia from 2006 until January 2016.

The coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE also holds power at local level of government. In the last local elections in 2013<sup>83</sup>, its candidates won in 57 of the 80 municipalities across the country, including the city of Skopje.



The VMRO-DPMNE led coalition "For Better Macedonia" is composed of 24 parties: Socialist Party of Macedonia (SPM), Democratic

Party of Serbs in Macedonia (DPSM), the Union of Roma of Macedonia (SRM), Party for Justice, Citizens Option Macedonia - GROM, Party for democratic action of Macedonia (SDAM), Party of the Vlachs from Macedonia, Party for integration of Roma (PIR), Workers' Agricultural Party of Macedonia, Lasting Macedonian Radical Unification, Macedonian Action (MAAK), New Liberal Party, Party of United Democrats of Macedonia, Macedonian Alliance, Democratic Party of Turks in Macedonia, VMRO-DP (VMRO-Democratic Party), Democratic Bosniak party, the Democratic Party of Roma, Social Democratic Union, Roma United in Macedonia, Union of Tito's Left Forces, United Party for Equality of Roma, Movement for National Unity of Turks, and the Democratic Forces of Roma.

For the 11 December 2016 elections, the coalition "For Better Macedonia" is led by VMRO-DPMNE and has submitted candidate lists in all seven electoral units.

<sup>83</sup> Final results from the 2013 local elections. State Election Commission. Accessed 1 May 2013: <http://217.16.84.17/Results.aspx?RaceID=1&UnitID=1&IsPS=0&Turnout=0&LangID=1> (last visited 3rd April 2014).

## VMRO-DPMNE

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www.vmro-dpmne.org.mk

### HOLDERS OF CANDIDATE LISTS OF VMRO-DPMNE AND THE COALITION "FOR BETTER MACEDONIA"



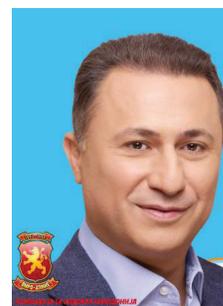
**EIU 1 – Nikola Poposki** is the current Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. In the past, he has held a string of positions in European institutions and organizations and from 2010 to 2011, was appointed as Ambassador, Chief of the Mission of Macedonia to the European Union. Poposki completed his BA in Economics at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje in 2002. He obtained a MSc in Foreign Languages and International Trade in the EU from the University of Rennes, France in 2002 and the University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" in Skopje and completed MA in European Economic Studies at the College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium in 2005. Poposki was born in 1977 in Skopje. In the 2014 snap early parliamentary elections, Poposki was the holder of the candidate list in EIU 6.



**EIU 2 - Nikola Todorov** is Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Health and a member of the Executive Committee of VMRO-DPMNE. Since 2006, he has performed a string of functions in public enterprises and from 2009 to 2011 he was Minister of Education. In 2011, he was appointed Minister of Health. Todorov completed his degree in the Law Faculty of Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. Todorov was born in 1979 in Skopje. In the 2014 snap parliamentary elections, Todorov was the holder of the candidate list in EIU 3.



**EIU 3 - Ilija Dimovski** is the coordinator of the VMRO-DPMNE parliamentary group. This will be his fourth term in Parliament since 2006. Born in 1980 in Veles, he graduated from the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus" at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje.



**EIU 4 - Nikola Gruevski** was Prime Minister of the Republic of Macedonia from 2006 to January 2016, when he resigned as part of the Przino Agreement. He is the current president of VMRO-DPMNE. He became Prime minister for the first time after having won the parliamentary elections in 2006. Gruevski has been present in the political life from 1998 to 1999, when he performed the functions Minister without Portfolio and Trade Minister. From 1999 to 2002, he was the governor of Macedonia in the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, followed by the position of Minister of Finance. He was first elected as an MP in 2002 and from 2003 he has been the leader of VMRO-DPMNE. He was born in 1970 in Skopje and obtained his MA from the Faculty of Economics at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in 2006 and graduated from the Faculty of Economics - Prilep at the University Ss. Kliment Ohridski - Bitola.



**EIU 5 - Antonio Milososki** is a member and Vice-President of Parliament. From 1999 to 2000, he was chief of staff to the Vice President of the Government, Dosta Dimovska, and from 2000 to 2001 spokesman of the government. In the 2006 elections, he was elected Member of Parliament. He was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, a post he held until the 2011 elections, after which he resigned to return to Parliament. Milososki obtained his MSc in 2002 in European integration at the University of Friedrich Wilhelm in Bonn, Germany. He graduated from the Law Faculty of Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje.

Milosoki was born in Tetovo in 1976. He was also the holder of the electoral list in EIU 5 in the parliamentary elections of 2006, 2008, 2011 and 2014.



**EIU 6 - Vladimir Gjorchev** has been a Member of Parliament since 2006, and this is his fourth term. Born in 1978 in Skopje, he is a graduate of Political Studies at the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus" at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. In the parliamentary elections of 2006, 2008 and 2011 he was the holder of the lists in EIU 3.



**EID 7 - Ramadan Miftaroski**<sup>84</sup> is from Debar Mogorje and currently lives in Venice, Italy.

<sup>84</sup> More biographical information cannot be found for this MP candidate.

## DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF ALBANIANS



### PARTIA DEMOKRATIKE SHQIPTARE

The Democratic Party of Albanians was founded in June 1997 as a result of the unification of the Party for Democratic Prosperity of Albanians (PDPA) and the National Democratic Party (NDP). PDPA was founded in 1994 after the radical wing led by Arben Xhaferi and Menduh Thaci left its mother party, Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP). DPA declares itself a center-right party and strives to fight for the greater rights of Albanians in Macedonia and to redefine the constitutional framework set by the Ohrid Framework Agreement. Menduh Thaci was elected as the President of DPA on 30 June 2007. Thaci stepped into this position after the resignation of former president Arben Xhaferi.

In the 1998 elections, DPA won 11 mandates and became part of the Government led by VMRO-DPMNE. During the 2001 conflict, DPA remained part of the broad coalition government which later signed the Ohrid Framework Agreement. Signatory of the Framework Agreement on behalf of DPA is the president Arben Xhaferi. After the dissolution of the government, DPA remained in the government coalition. In the next parliamentary elections in 2002, DPA won 7 mandates with 5.2% of the votes and became part of the opposition in Parliament. DPA returned to power after the elections in 2006 and successfully completed coalition negotiations with VMRO-DPMNE, which had received the mandate to form the government. In these elections, DPA won 11 mandates with 7.5% of the votes, which was less than the mandates received by DUI. In the snap elections in 2008, DPA won 11 mandates. After these elections, the largest parliamentary party VMRO-DPMNE terminated the traditional partnership with DPA and formed a coalition with the largest Albanian party in parliament, DUI. In the 2011 snap parliamentary elections, DPA won 8 mandates. In the last composition of the Parliament DPA had 7 MPs.

The party received one mayor position across the 80 municipalities of the country in the last local elections of 2013.

In these 2016 elections the party submitted candidate lists in five electoral districts: EIU 1, EIU 2, EIU 3, EIU 5 and EIU 6.

### Democratic Party of Albanians

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www.pdsh.info

### HOLDERS OF CANDIDATE LISTS OF DPA



**EIU 1 - Idriz Orana**<sup>85</sup> is a doctor by and serves as a Member of the City Council of Skopje.



**EIU 2 - Orhan Ibraimi** was an MP in the last Parliament and the Deputy Coordinator of the DPA Parliamentary Group. He was born in 1964 in the village Opae, Lipkovo and graduated from Ss. Kliment Ohridski University in Bitola.



**EIU 3 - Sami Rushidi**.<sup>86</sup>



**EIU 5 - Adrian Useini**<sup>87</sup> is a lawyer by occupation. He was born in Dolgozdi, a village in the Struga region.



**EIU 6 - Menduh Thaci** has been an MP since 2002. From 1997 to 2006, he was vice president of the party, and after the resignation of its leader Arben Xhaferi, became the president of DPA. He graduated with a degree in dentistry from the Medical Faculty of the University of Pristina in Kosovo. Thaci has held the candidate list of the DPA in EIU 6 for several parliamentary election cycles.

<sup>85</sup> More biographical information cannot be found for this MP candidate.

<sup>86</sup> Basic biographical information cannot be found for this MP candidate.

<sup>87</sup> More biographical information cannot be found for this MP candidate.

## DEMOCRATIC UNION FOR INTEGRATION



The Democratic Union for Integration was established by former members of the National Liberation Army (NLA), the Albanian group which started the armed conflict in 2001. DUI declares itself as left-centrist party that advocates for greater rights of Albanians in Macedonia and implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. The party was formed in 2002

and participated for the first time in parliamentary elections that same year, winning the most votes among the ethnic Albanian electorate. After winning a total of 16 mandates, DUI became part of the SDSM-led government. Since the founding of the party, Ali Ahmeti has served as chairman of the party. DUI was part of the government from 2002 to 2006, represented by the largest number of ministers from an Albanian party to participate in a government of Macedonia. In the 2006 parliamentary elections, DUI won the most votes among the Albanian electorate with 12.2% of the total vote and 17 mandates, but was unsuccessful in negotiating a place in the VMRO-DPMNE led government coalition. As a result, DUI announced a boycott of the Parliament in 2006 until 2008, when snap parliamentary elections were called. In the 2008 parliamentary elections, DUI won 12.8% of the total vote and 18 mandates. As the largest political party representing ethnic Albanians in Macedonia, DUI entered into the government led by Nikola Gruevski. In the 2011 parliamentary elections, DUI won 14 mandates and in 2014, 19 and formed the government with VMRO-DPMNE.

After the last local elections in 2013, DUI has 14 mayors out of the total of 80 municipalities across Macedonia.

For these elections, the party submitted candidate lists in all seven electoral units.

## Democratic Union for Integration

St. Mala Recica

1200 Tetovo

Tel: 044 334 398press@bdi.mk

www.bdi.mk

## HOLDERS OF CANDIDATE LISTS OF DUI



**EIU 1 - Artan Grupi** was an MP in the last composition of Parliament. He was born in 1977 in Skopje and has an MSc in media and communications and a Doctorate in Political Science.



**EIU 2 - Ejup Alimi** is the State Secretary of the Secretariat for Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. From 2005 to 2009, he held the office of advisor to the Council of the municipality of Chair. He has performed the functions of coordinator of the Councilors of DUI and chairman of the International Relations Committee. He was born in 1980 in the village Tanushevci, Skopje and graduated from the Law Faculty of the State University in Tetovo.



**EIU 3 - Nafi Durmishi**<sup>88</sup> studies at the Medical Faculty in Tetovo. He is originally from the Veles region.

<sup>88</sup> More biographical information cannot be found for the MP candidates in the electoral units 3, 4, 5 and 7.



**EIU 4 - Artin Spahiu** is the current director of the House of Culture in Debar. Born in Debar, he studied at the State University in Tetovo.



**EIU 5 - Agim Shaqiri** comes from Labunishta, Struga.



**EIU 6 - Ali Ahmeti** has led DUI since it was founded in 2002 and has served as an MP since 2002. During the conflict in 2001, Ahmeti was the supreme commander and political leader of the National Liberation Army (NLA). In 1983, he graduated in philosophy at the University of Pristina, Kosovo. He was born in 1959 in the village Zajas, Kicevo. This is the sixth time that Ahmeti has held the candidate list in EIU 6.



**EIU 7 - Xhevdet Spahiu** is a businessman who lives and works in Zurich, Switzerland.

## SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC UNION OF MACEDONIA



The Social Democratic Union of Macedonia declares itself to be a center-left party with a social democratic ideology and it is currently the second largest party in Macedonia. SDSM was founded by a party Congress held on 21 April 1991 as the legal successor of the League of Communists of Macedonia - Party for Democratic Transformation (SKM-PDP). At this congress, the party changed its name to SDSM and shifted the party ideology from communist to social democratic. It has participated in all parliamentary and local elections from the independence to date. In 1992, after the dissolution of the first expert government, SDSM was given the mandate to form the first political Government of the Republic of Macedonia even though it did not have a majority in Parliament. From 1994 to 1998, the party held a majority in Parliament together with the coalition partners with 85 mandates, however only won 27 seats in the following parliamentary elections in 1998. SDSM was the main opposition party until 2002, when it again won the elections with 60 mandates with its coalition partners and remained in power until the next parliamentary elections in 2006. In the parliamentary elections in 2006, SDSM won only 32 mandates. From 2006 until today, SDSM has been in opposition after losing three consecutive election cycles in 2008, 2011 and 2014. In the 2008 snap parliamentary elections it won together with the coalition 27 mandates and in the 2011 snap parliamentary elections 42. In the snap parliamentary elections of 2014, SDSM won 27 mandates and the coalition a total of 34 mandates.

Branko Crvenkovski was the president of the party since the independence of Macedonia up till 2004. He withdrew from this position after winning the snap presidential elections in 2004 and became President of the Republic of Macedonia. At the extraordinary Congress of SDSM in November 2004, Vlado Buckovski was elected president of the party and led the party during the defeat of the 2006 elections.

After the elections, Buckovski was given a vote of no-confidence and in the extraordinary party Congress in November 2006, Radmila Sekerinska was elected president. Radmila Sekerinska held the position of president of SDSM until June 2008, when she submitted an irrevocable resignation because of the loss of the snap parliamentary elections. In September 2008, at the 8th Congress of the Party, Zoran Zaev was elected acting president. After the presidential term expired in 2009, Branko Crvenkovski returned again at the head of SDSM at the Congress. He was the party leader until 2013, when he withdrew from the position and Zoran Zaev was re-elected in his place.

At the local level, the party is also in opposition. In the 2013 local elections, SDSM won power in 4 of the 80 municipalities across Macedonia.



The coalition of the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) led by the SDSM is composed of 13 parties: the New Social

Democratic Party (NSDP), the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the Party for Movement of Turks in Macedonia (PDT), New Alternative (NA), Democratic Union of Vlachs from Macedonia (DSVM), Serbian Party in Macedonia (SSM), the Party for Economic Change ("PEP 21"), Party of United Pensioners and Citizens of Macedonia (POPGM), Party for European Future (PEI), Alliance for Positive Macedonia (APM), Democratic Renewal of Macedonia (DOM), Serbian Progressive Party in Macedonia (SNSM) and the Party for Full Emancipation of Roma (PCER).

In the upcoming elections, SDSM submitted candidate lists in all seven electoral units.

#### **Social Democratic Union of Macedonia**

St. "Bihacka" no.8 1000 Skopje, Republic of Macedonia

web@sds.org.mk

www.sds.org.mk

## **HOLDERS OF THE CANDIDATE LISTS OF THE COALITION SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC UNION OF MACEDONIA**



**EIU 1 - Stevo Pendarovski** is an associate professor at the Faculty of Political Sciences at the University American College Skopje. In the 1990s, he worked as a deputy interior minister and as head of the Analysis and Research Department in the Ministry of Interior. From 2004 to 2005, he was president of the State Election Commission. From 2001 to 2004 and again from 2005 to 2009, Pendarovski was an adviser for national security and foreign policy to two Presidents of Macedonia. In 2014, he was SDSM candidate for President of the Republic. He was born in 1963 in Skopje and graduated from the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus" at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, where he also completed a MA and PhD.



**EIU 2 - Oliver Spasovski** is Secretary General of the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia. According to the Przino Agreement, Spasovski was appointed Interior Minister in the government responsible for the organization of the snap parliamentary elections in 2016. Spasovski was elected Member of Parliament for two terms, 2006 to 2008 and 2011 to 2014. He was born in 1976 in Kumanovo and obtained a MA from the Law Faculty "Iustinianus Primus" at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje.



**EIU 3 - Ljupco Nikolovski** is chief of staff of SDSM's president and an executive board member of SDSM. According to the Przino Agreement, Nikolovski was appointed as additional deputy minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management in the government responsible for the organization of early parliamentary elections in 2016. Born in 1983 in Kriva Palanka, he graduated from the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus" at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. Nikolovski is currently completing his postgraduate studies at the same faculty in administrative law and public administration.



**EIU 4 - Zoran Zaev** has been the president of the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia since 2013. From 2003 to 2005, Zaev was a Member of Parliament and after winning the local elections in 2013, he began his 3rd term as mayor of the city of Strumica. Zaev was born in 1974 in Strumica and graduated from the Faculty of Economics at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. He is currently enrolled at the same university for postgraduate studies in Monetary Economics and Finance.



**EIU 5 - Radmila Sekerinska** is vice president of the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia. Over her political career, Sekerinska has been elected to parliament for four terms (1998-2002, 2006-2008, 2008-2011 and 2011-2014). From 2002 to 2006, she was vice president of Government in charge of European Integration and Foreign Assistance Coordinator. From 2006 to 2008, she was the president of SDSM. Born in 1972 in Skopje, Sekerinska graduated from the Faculty of Electrical Engineering at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. She obtained a MA in international relations at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in the USA.



**EIU 6 - Petre Shilegov** is an MP and the current spokesman for the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia. In the 2014 parliamentary elections, he was the holder of the list in EIU 2 and was elected as MP. Born in 1969 in Skopje, Shilegov graduated from the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus" at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. Before being elected to office, Shilegov worked as a lawyer.



**EIU 7 - Blazo Stojanov**<sup>89</sup> is the chairman of the party organization in Locarno, Switzerland.

<sup>89</sup> More than the stated biographical information cannot be found for this MP candidate in the ED 7.

## COALITION FOR CHANGES AND JUSTICE - THIRD BLOCK (DEMOCRATIC UNION, FRODEM, DEMOS AND MORO-RP)



The Coalition for CHANGES and JUSTICE - Third block is composed of four political parties: the Democratic Alliance (DS), Front for Democratic Macedonia (FRODEM), DEMOS and MORO - Workers Party and is led by the Democratic Alliance under the leadership of Pavle Trajanov. It was established in 2016 immediately before the snap parliamentary elections. The coalition is committed to fight crime, stabilize the economy, reduce poverty, and prevent the emigration of young people out of Macedonia.

For the upcoming elections, the Coalition for CHANGES and JUSTICE submitted lists of candidates for MPs in six electoral units.

### **Democratic Alliance**

St. Stale Popov 9 ext. 4  
1000 Skopje  
demokratskisojuz@ymail.com  
www.demokratskisojuz.org.mk

## HOLDERS OF THE CANDIDATE LISTS OF THE COALITION FOR CHANGES AND JUSTICE

EIU 1 - Pavle Trajanov  
EIU 2 - Jove Kekenovski  
EIU 3 - Vesna Stoimenovska  
EIU 4 - Slobodan Bogoevski  
EIU 5 - Aleksandar Delov  
EIU 6 - Branko Majstorovski

## PARTY FOR DEMOCRATIC PROSPERITY



The Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) is the oldest party of Albanians in Macedonia. It was founded in 1990 and functioned independently until the parliamentary elections in 2011 when it joined DPA. The party was reactivated in January 2014 under the leadership of Abdyladi Vejseli, a member of three former compositions of Parliament. In

the 1990s it was the largest parliamentary party representing Albanians in Macedonia and was a coalition partner in the government of SDSM several times. After the so called radical wing of the party seceded in 1994 to form DPA, PDP is considered a moderate political party. PDP stands for the equality of Albanians in the political, economic, social and cultural areas of Macedonia, for a national language, and harmonious interethnic relations based on the democratic principles of equality and justice. The slogan of PDP in the upcoming elections is "Pride and Dignity."

For these elections, the party submitted a list in only one electoral unit, EIU 6.

### **Party for Democratic Prosperity**

St. Karaorman no. 62  
1200 Tetovo  
[https://www.facebook.com/PPDzyrtare/?ref=br\\_rs](https://www.facebook.com/PPDzyrtare/?ref=br_rs)

## HOLDER OF THE CANDIDATES LIST OF PDP

EIU 6 - Abdyladi Vejseli

## COALITION "ALLIANCE FOR THE ALBANIANS" (DR-DPA, UNITETI, NDP)



The Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians" is made up of the political parties: Movement for Reform of DPA, Uniteti and NDP. The Convention to promote the coalition was held in Gostivar. The coalition is led by Zijadin Sela, the leader of the

Movement for Reform of DPA, Vesel Memedi, president of the National Democratic Revival, and Gzim Ostreni, the president of Uniteti. The main commitment of the coalition is for the full equality of Albanians in Macedonia, Albanian as an official language in the country, the proper allocation of the budget and a constitutionally regulated existence of SPO.

The Coalition submitted candidate lists in 4 electoral units: EIU 1, EIU 2, EIU 5 and EIU 6.

### Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians" (DR-DPA, Uniteti, NDP)

[www.uniteti.org](http://www.uniteti.org)

[www.rdk.org.mk](http://www.rdk.org.mk)

<https://www.facebook.com/aleancaper?fref=ts>

## HOLDERS OF CANDIDATE LISTS OF THE COALITION "ALLIANCE FOR ALBANIANS"

EIU 1 - Zylfi Adili

EIU 2 - Nexhmedin Sadiku

EIU 5 - Syria Rashidi

EIU 6 - Zijadin Sela

## LIBERAL PARTY



The Liberal Party was founded in 1990 and is one of the oldest political parties in Macedonia. It has a centrist character and a strong liberal orientation. In the first few years after Macedonian independence, LP formed a coalition with SDSM, SPM and PDP. In 1997 LP merged with the Democratic Party (DP)

to form the Liberal Democratic Party, which existed until 1999. From 1999 to 2008, LP was in coalition with VMRO-DPMNE. President of the party is Ivon Velickovski, who was elected at the Tenth Party Congress in 2011. The LP as party strives for reformist liberalism in accordance with a social liberal platform. The party focus is on democracy and pluralism, market economy and the rule of law guaranteeing the exercise of civil rights and freedoms.

In these elections, LP has submitted lists of candidates for MPs in the five electoral units in Macedonia: EIU 1, EIU 2, EIU 3, EIU 4, and EIU 5.

### Liberal Party

St. "Yuri Gagarin" 67b

1000 Skopje

[info@lp.org.mk](mailto:info@lp.org.mk)

[www.lp.org.mk](http://www.lp.org.mk)

## HOLDERS OF THE CANDIDATE LISTS OF THE LIBERAL PARTY

EIU 1 - Ivon Velickovski

EIU 2 - Kire Buzliev

EIU 3 - Danco Markovski

EIU 4 - Danica Jovanova

EIU 5 - Kice Mickovski

## COALITION VMRO FOR MACEDONIA



VMRO for Macedonia is a coalition of the political parties VMRO-People's Party, United for Macedonia and Dignity. The coalition is led by the leaders of

the three political parties, Ljubco Georgievski as the leader of VMRO-People's Party, Ljube Boskovski as the leader of United for Macedonia and Stojanche Angelov as the leader of Dignity. The ideological placement is center-right and the main goals of the coalition are the democratization of Macedonia, rule of law, independent judiciary and prosecutors, economic prosperity, and membership in EU and NATO.

For these elections, the Coalition submitted candidate lists in all seven electoral units.

### Coalition VMRO for Macedonia

[www.facebook.com/vmrozamakedonija2016/](http://www.facebook.com/vmrozamakedonija2016/)

[www.vmro-np.org.mk](http://www.vmro-np.org.mk)

[www.facebook.com/obedinetiza.makedonija/](http://www.facebook.com/obedinetiza.makedonija/)

[www.facebook.com/dostoinstvo1/](http://www.facebook.com/dostoinstvo1/)

## HOLDERS OF CANDIDATE LISTS OF THE COALITION VMRO FOR MACEDONIA

EIU 1 - Danail Donchev

EIU 2 - Ljupco Balkovski

EIU 3 - Stojance Angelov

EIU 4 - Ljubco Georgievski

EIU 5 - Ljube Boskoski

EIU 6 - Zoran Velkovski

EIU 7 - Stojadin Naumovski

## MOVEMENT BESA



The political party "Movement BESA" was founded on 23 March 2015 in Skopje. The Movement Besa aims to promote the interests of all citizens of Macedonia, especially the Albanians. The main objectives are based on equality,

justice, freedom and prosperity. The movement starts from the asymmetric position of the state towards its people. Instead of asymmetry the state should be based upon: the principles of freedom, equality, justice, welfare, fight against corruption. To achieve these goals Besa is striving to change the functioning of the system in the country, develop universal values of humanism, enhance democracy in the country, eliminate any kind of discrimination, build a rule of law state, along with other objectives. This party will participate for the first time in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

For these elections, Besa submitted lists of candidates in four electoral units: EIU 1, EIU 2, EIU 5 and EIU 6.

### Movement Besa

Bull. Misirkov no. 7 ext. 68 A

1000 Skopje

[kontakt@levizjabesa.mk](mailto:kontakt@levizjabesa.mk)

[www.levizjabesa.mk](http://www.levizjabesa.mk)

## HOLDERS OF CANDIDATE LISTS OF THE MOVEMENT BESA

EIU 1 - Zeqirija Ibrahim

EIU 2 - Afrim Gashi

EIU 5 - Arben Labenishti

EIU 6 - Bilal Kasami

## LEVICA



Levica is a new political party founded in late 2015. The party has expressed leftist ideology and calls for the values including anti-capitalism, anti-nationalism, anti-militarism, anti-clericalism and anti-conservatism. The focus of the party are the rights of workers and basic human rights. The party stands for the poor, underprivileged, marginalized and disadvantaged. This party will take part for the first time in an election on the territory of the Republic Macedonia in the upcoming elections.

Levica submitted its candidate lists in five electoral units: EIU 1, EIU 2, EIU 3, EIU 4 and EIU 5.

### **Levica**

St. Djuro Djakovic no. 20, entrance 1, floor 3, No.12 ext.  
1000 Skopje  
contact@levica.mk  
www.levica.mk

## HOLDERS OF THE CANDIDATE LISTS OF LEVICA

EIU 1 - Dimitar Apasiev  
EIU 2 - Trajce Stojanov  
EIU 3 - Marija Jones  
EIU 4 - Mitko Nikolov  
EIU 5 - Zdravko Saveski



## **EARLY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA 2016 - RESULTS, CAMPAIGN, FINDINGS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The eighth parliamentary elections held since the independence of the Republic of Macedonia took place on 11 December 2016, which were also the fourth snap parliamentary elections. In these elections, 1,784,416 individuals had the right to vote, 20,573 of which were voters from the diaspora. Ill and disabled persons, including those under house arrest and prisoners in the detention facilities voted a day before on 10 December. Voting in the diplomatic and consular representative offices was held on 7 December. Voter turnout in the elections was 66.79% (1,191,852 voters), up from 63% in the 2014 parliamentary elections. The voter turnout in the diaspora was 40% (8,232 voters).

Eleven political entities took part in these elections, including five coalitions and six political parties with 58 candidate lists. The participating political entities included: the Coalition "For Better Macedonia", led by the VMRO-DPMNE, the Coalition led by the SDSM, the Coalition for Changes and Justice – Third Block, the Coalition "VMRO for Macedonia", the Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians", the Democratic Party of the Albanians, the Democratic Union for Integration, the Party for Democratic Prosperity, the Liberal Party, the BESA Movement and Levica.

According to the State Election Commission (SEC), the parliamentary elections were monitored by 7,605 national and 642 international accredited observers, 354 interpreters and 98 accredited international journalists. The general evaluation of the observers was that the elections were carried out peacefully, although there were certain irregularities registered during the election process. The main remarks of the observers related to the pressure put on voters, the lack of respect for the voting secrecy, group voting, etc.<sup>90</sup>

The elections resulted in dramatic changes in the distribution of mandates among participants. The Coalition "For Better Macedonia", led by the VMRO-DPMNE, will have 51 Members of Parliament in the

<sup>90</sup> International election observation mission of the OSCE/ODIHR, Republic of Macedonia, Early Parliamentary Elections, 11 December 2016, Statement on preliminary findings and conclusions. Accessed 30 December 2016: <http://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/fyrom/288296?download=true>.

next composition of the national Assembly, a decrease from the 61 seats they held in the previous composition. The Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) will have 10 MPs, down from 19 in the previous composition. With the weakening of the position of the ruling parties, the opposition parties and coalitions will have more representation in the Assembly in relation to the previous composition as a result of these elections. The Coalition of SDSM will have 49 mandates, 15 more than in the previous parliamentary composition when it had only 34 mandates. The DPA will now have 2 MPs, 5 less than the previous composition. The novelty of these elections were the newly established Albanian parties and coalitions – the Movement BESA and the Coalition “Alliance for the Albanians”, which will enter the national Assembly for the first time. The Movement BESA won 5 mandates and the Coalition “Alliance for the Albanians” 3 mandates. The other parties and coalitions participating in these elections, such as the Coalition for Changes and Justice – Third Block, the Party for Democratic Prosperity, the Liberal Party, the Coalition “VMRO for Macedonia” and Levica did not win enough votes to secure representatives in the national Assembly. In these elections, the Coalition led by the VMRO-DPMNE won the majority of diaspora votes with 5,044 in total. However, due to an insufficient number of votes, no representatives from the diaspora secured mandates in the national Assembly.

This handbook contains a more detailed review of the election campaign, incomes and expenditures of the parties and coalitions during the election campaign, media coverage, election results, respect for and the protection of voters’ rights, evaluation of the elections by observers and political parties, as well as the final conclusions as a summary of the overall election cycle.

## ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The official campaign for the snap parliamentary elections was from 21 November to 9 December 2016. To provide for a period of election silence, the parties had to terminate their campaigns by 10 December. The parties utilized the usual promotion methods, such as public

gatherings, meetings with the citizens, door-to-door campaigning, TV advertisements and a more evident promotion on social media. While the majority of candidates ran a positive campaign, confrontational and negative discourse was also present in the campaign. The ongoing political crisis in Macedonia was the main focus of the campaign, as well as the federalization and bilingual status of the country, in addition to the expatriation of young people, the creation of new jobs, the economy, etc.

According to the monitoring mission of the OSCE/ODIHR<sup>91</sup>, the parties were enabled to run their campaigns freely, with the respect to the freedom of association, public gathering and expression. However, there were certain remarks in relation to registered incidents of intimidating voters, putting pressure on civil servants, individuals and their families, abusing administrative resources and purchasing votes in the Roma community. In the Albanian block, the campaigns were more intense with confrontational discourse. Moreover, the OSCE observers registered several cases of violent behavior, such as vandalizing party offices, destroying billboards and damaging vehicles belonging to party members.

An interesting highlight of this campaign was that the two largest parties in the Macedonian block replaced their traditional party colours. In these elections, the ruling VMRO-DPMNE used the light blue colour with white, orange and red motifs, while the SDSM used the red colour with white motifs. With this rebranding, the parties took the colours traditionally associated with the ideological orientations of their European sister parties. Across Europe, the blue colour is traditionally considered the colour of the conservative right-centre parties, while the red colour is traditionally the colour of the social democrats.<sup>92</sup>

As part of the campaigns, in addition to regular media promotions and discussions, there were several debates organised among the list

<sup>91</sup> International election observation mission of the OSCE/ODIHR, Republic of Macedonia, Early Parliamentary Elections, 11 December 2016, Statement on preliminary findings and conclusions.” OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Accessed 19 December 2016: <http://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/fyrom/288296?download=true>

<sup>92</sup> VMRO-DPMNE rebranded itself with light blue colour, this is why?, Zurnal 23 November 2016. Accessed 22 December 2016: <http://zurnal.net/?p=11650>

carriers. These debates were organised between the list carriers in the first constituency on TV21 and TV Alsat-M, between the list carriers in the Electoral Districts 2 and 3, and the list carriers from the Albanian parties.

In these elections, the Coalition "For Better Macedonia", led by VMRO-DPMNE, campaigned under the slogan, "You know what is better! For you! For Macedonia!" During the election campaign, the party promoted its electoral programme for the period 2017-2020 titled, "Realistically! Work, security, progress!"<sup>93</sup>. The programme comprised 500 pages of material, represented in 17 chapters, covering projects and measures in various areas. These plans projected 70,000 new working positions to be opened in the following four years, as well as the continuation of housing subsidies, increase in salaries, pensions, and social welfare, and 600 million euros of new subsidies for the farmers, etc. Moreover, the electoral programme also focused on investments in education, infrastructure, sports, Macedonia EU and NATO integration processes, improvements in the quality of medical service, better conditions for business, protection of the environment and support for tourism. Several months before the elections, VMRO-DPMNE presented its report<sup>94</sup> for the achievements of the party and the Coalition "For Better Macedonia" in the previous 10 years. The main focus of the report was on the period between 2014 and 2016, which contained over 3,500 realized projects, measures, and reforms.

The online campaign of VMRO-DPMNE was run through the official website of the party ([www.vmro-dpmne.org.mk](http://www.vmro-dpmne.org.mk)), official party profiles on the social networks Facebook and Twitter as well as the personal profiles of the carriers and candidates of the electoral lists. Videos from public events and meetings with citizens, as well as the electoral music videos, were published on the party's YouTube channel and other social media channels.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Realistically! Programme of VMRO-DPMNE 2017-2020. Work! Security! Progress!, VMRO-DPMNE. Accessed 16 December 2016: [http://vmro-dpmne.org.mk/files/vmro\\_programa\\_2017-2020\\_web.pdf](http://vmro-dpmne.org.mk/files/vmro_programa_2017-2020_web.pdf)

<sup>94</sup> Account on the achieved programme goals of VMRO-DPMNE and the Coalition "For Better Macedonia" 2016, VMRO-DPMNE. Accessed 15 December 2016: [http://vmro-dpmne.org.mk/files/vmro-dpmne\\_otcet\\_2016.pdf](http://vmro-dpmne.org.mk/files/vmro-dpmne_otcet_2016.pdf).

<sup>95</sup> VMRO-DPMNE's official YouTube channel. Accessed 15 December 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/user/vmrodpmnemacedonia>

The Coalition led by the largest opposition party SDSM ran its campaign under the slogan, "For life in Macedonia". The electoral programme, titled "Plan for life in Macedonia"<sup>96</sup> introduced the key goals of the coalition in 262 pages, including the urgent reform priorities of the new Government in the first 6 to 24 months. Moreover, the election programme promoted five pillars aimed at reducing inequality in Macedonia. The first pillar related to an accountable government and control over the government through transparency in the state budget resources expenditures. The second pillar related to the existence of a just taxation and social welfare system, aimed at reducing inequality in the distribution of the available revenues in Macedonia. The third pillar related to the development of domestic companies and the opening of new work positions. The fourth pillar focused on the European future of the country and the quality life, reaffirming the Euro-Atlantic agenda of Macedonia, as well as the development of key spheres in the society, such as education, health systems, environment, culture, etc. The final, fifth pillar, related to the construction of a unified society by overcoming interethnic and other tensions and focusing on social differences.

The online campaign of SDSM was run through the official websites of the party and coalition ([www.sdsm.org.mk](http://www.sdsm.org.mk) and [www.zazivot.mk](http://www.zazivot.mk)), official party profiles on the social networks Facebook and Twitter, as well as the personal profiles of the carriers and candidates of the electoral lists of the coalition. Videos from public events and meetings with citizens were published on the party's YouTube channel<sup>97</sup> and other social media channels.

DUI ran its campaign under the slogan "Together we decide". The electoral programme<sup>98</sup> which was prepared by over 100 intellectuals and contained more than 200 pages, had the same title as the party's slogan. It promoted measures to be taken in the forthcoming period from 2016 to 2020. The main priority was the bilingual issue in

<sup>96</sup> Plan for life in Macedonia, SDSM and the coalition, 2016 Parliamentary Elections, SDSM. Accessed 15 December 2016: [http://zazivot.mk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Plan\\_za\\_zivot\\_vo\\_Makedonija.pdf](http://zazivot.mk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Plan_za_zivot_vo_Makedonija.pdf)

<sup>97</sup> SDSM's official YouTube channel. Accessed 16 December 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/user/SDSMtube>

<sup>98</sup> Bashkë vendosim (Together we decide), DUI. Accessed 16 December 2016: [http://bashkevendosim.com.mk/BDI\\_Programa\\_WEB.pdf](http://bashkevendosim.com.mk/BDI_Programa_WEB.pdf)

Macedonia, specifically the introduction of the Albanian language in official use across the entire country. In order to attain this goal, the party promised to establish an institution to serve as a mechanism for the protection of the Albanian language. In the sphere of economy, the party promoted measures to reduce unemployment by opening new work positions in order to provide employment for each Albanian family. Moreover, some of the measures were also directed towards achieving full equality and wellbeing of Albanians in all social spheres, as well as improving the quality of education, promoting regional development, operating with a transparent budget and highlighting the EU and NATO integration processes of the country. A novelty in this election campaign was that the party enabled citizens to give suggestions on their official website regarding what they believe the party had failed to attain in the previous period.

DUI ran its online election campaign mostly through its party website ([www.bdi.mk](http://www.bdi.mk)), as well as through the official party profiles on the social network Facebook, as well as the personal profiles of the carriers of the election lists and the MP candidates. For these elections, DUI did not have a profile on the social network Twitter.

In these elections, the DPA party promoted the slogan "We are going straight". Similar to the previous parliamentary elections, DPA did not offer any electoral programme to its voters in these elections. Instead, it offered a platform for the forthcoming mandate in the Government, titled "DPA's platform for the period between 2016-2020"<sup>99</sup>, which was revealed in 68 pages. Within this platform, the party's main focus was on two spheres, the economy and politics. In the economic sphere, the party strove for a just and proportional distribution of the budget, including measures against discriminatory budgets, more investments in all regions equally and freeing the Albanians from paying debts from penalties towards the state. In the political sphere, the main focus of the platform was the bilingual issue, particularly the official use of the Albanian language across the entire country, as well as freedom for all convicted Albanians in staged court processes.

<sup>99</sup> DPA's platform for the period between 2016-2020, DPA. Accessed 16 December 2016: <http://www.pdsh.info/platforma-finale.pdf>

The party also ran an online campaign through social networks. The online campaign was run mainly through the official party website ([www.pdsh.info](http://www.pdsh.info)) and the social network Facebook, through official party profiles and personal profiles of the carriers and candidates on the electoral lists. The video recordings from the events were distributed on the social media and the party's YouTube channel<sup>100</sup>.

The Coalition for changes and justice – the Third Block of the Democratic Union, FRODEM, MORO and DEMOS ran its campaign under the slogan "Do not fear, the regime will fall". The electoral programme of the coalition, titled "Changes, justice, progress"<sup>101</sup> covered various areas from the social life. Some of the priorities that were listed related to establishing a system of responsible governance and creating a just state "governed" by the rule of law. Additionally, as main goals were highlighted the reforms in the judiciary, economic growth, reforms in education, initiation of projects and opportunities for the young people, membership in the EU and NATO, rise in minimum wages, etc. The coalition ran its online campaign through the social network Facebook, through the official party profiles and the profiles of the carriers and candidates on the electoral lists. The electoral promotion of the coalition was also available on the YouTube channel<sup>102</sup> of the party Democratic Union.

In these elections, the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) promoted itself only in one constituency, the 6<sup>th</sup> Electoral District. Their election campaign was limited to small-scale meetings with the citizens and public gatherings. The party also ran a modest electoral campaign mainly on the social network Facebook.

The Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians" participated for the first time in parliamentary elections. The main goal promoted in the platform of the coalition was full equality of Albanians in Macedonia, promotion of the Albanian language as official across the entire country, as well as

<sup>100</sup> DPA's YouTube channel. Accessed 16 December 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/user/PDSHoficiale>

<sup>101</sup> Changes, justice, progress – Electoral Programme 2016-2020, Coalition for changes and justice. Accessed 20 December 2016: [http://www.demokratskisojuz.org.mk/content/KPP%20-%20IP%202016-2020%20A5\\_\\_NOVO%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.demokratskisojuz.org.mk/content/KPP%20-%20IP%202016-2020%20A5__NOVO%20(2).pdf)

<sup>102</sup> YouTube channel of the Democratic Union. Accessed 20 December 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/user/demokratskisojuz100>

a just distribution of the budget and constitutional justification for the existence of the Special Public Prosecution. The coalition ran its online campaign through the websites of the parties in the coalition, through the official party profiles and the profiles of the carriers and candidates of the electoral lists on the social network Facebook and the coalition's official YouTube channel<sup>103</sup>.

The Liberal Party ran its campaign under the slogan "For an organised state". The party promoted its electoral programme, "Liberal doctrine for a consolidated Macedonia"<sup>104</sup> in these elections. Within this programme, three key themes were identified: the economy, an organised state, and education and youth. Some of the party's goals included the creation of a dominant middle layer, a consolidated state, functional institutions, free media, just budgeting and responsible governance. The party ran its campaign with small-scale meetings with the citizens, via tribunes and small public gatherings. The online campaign was run through the party's official website ([www.lp.org.mk](http://www.lp.org.mk)), through the official party profiles and through the profiles of the carriers and candidates on the electoral lists on the social network Facebook, and the party's YouTube channel<sup>105</sup>.

The Coalition "VMRO for Macedonia" was promoted under its slogan "Together for a strong Macedonia!". The coalition did not promote a typical printed programme, but instead only used advertising material. What was evident in their public promotions was that the coalition's goals are freedom, democracy, economic prosperity and human rights. The coalition ran its online campaign mainly through the official party profiles and the profiles of the carriers and candidates on the electoral lists on the social network Facebook and the coalition's YouTube channel<sup>106</sup>.

The Movement BESA ran its campaign under the slogan "Revival with BESA! Today or never." The electoral programme<sup>107</sup> focused on several aspects including Macedonia's integration into the EU and NATO, the economy, depoliticizing the judiciary system, improving the health system, education and infrastructure. Moreover, one of the main goals of the party was full equality between Albanians and Macedonians, equal treatment of the languages and the redefinition of the state. The online campaign was run through its official website ([www.levizjabesa.mk](http://www.levizjabesa.mk)), through the official party profiles and the profiles of the carriers and candidates of the electoral lists on the social network Facebook and BESA's official YouTube channel<sup>108</sup>.

Levica, which participated for the first time in these parliamentary elections, used the slogan "Spark in the darkness". In their electoral programme<sup>109</sup> the party promoted greater workers' rights and social justice, the redistribution of the wealth on behalf of the impoverished, democracy in all the spheres of the social life, easier access to justice, advancements in education, free health care for everyone, modernization and organisation of the agricultural sector, focus on the environment, good neighbourly relations, etc. The party ran its electoral campaign mainly through small-scale meetings with the citizens, smaller advertising campaigns, through the official website of the party ([www.levica.mk](http://www.levica.mk)), through the profiles of the carriers and candidates on the electoral lists on the social network Facebook and the party's YouTube channel<sup>110</sup>.

## ELECTION CAMPAIGN FINANCING<sup>111</sup>

In accordance with the timeline for election activities, the participants in these parliamentary elections were obliged to provide three financial reports on their expenses during the election campaign. The first

<sup>103</sup> YouTube channel of the coalition Alliance for the Albanians. Accessed 16 December 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4Eb-YmODPqviGLFszaUZDg>

<sup>104</sup> Liberal doctrine for a consolidated Macedonia, LP, Accessed 16 December 2016: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/amsqxdrix7k1462/Doktrina.pdf?dl=0>

<sup>105</sup> YouTube channel of the LP. Accessed 19 December 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCr7ZB0uk0bzZbVxoooypiUg>

<sup>106</sup> YouTube channel of the Coalition VMRO for Macedonia. Accessed 16 December 2016: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5DX2\\_\\_0qvTbYkVJPoaNnlw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5DX2__0qvTbYkVJPoaNnlw)

<sup>107</sup> Programi Zgjedhor per Zgjedhjet parlamentare 2016 – Rilindje me BESË (Electoral programme for the 2016 parliamentary elections), BESA, Accessed 16 December 2016: <http://www.levizjabesa.mk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Programi%20Zgjedhor%20per%20Zgjedhjet%20parlamentare%202016%20-%20Rilindje%20me%20BES%20C3%8B.pdf>

<sup>108</sup> YouTube channel of the Movement BESA. Accessed 16 December 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFg0vjAkXJ59CMK9C4c5v-A>

<sup>109</sup> Electoral programme of the Left – 2016, Levica. Accessed 16 December 2016: [https://levica.mk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Programa-FINAL-23.XI\\_2016.pdf](https://levica.mk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Programa-FINAL-23.XI_2016.pdf)

<sup>110</sup> YouTube channel of the Left. Accessed 16 December 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4IvFVInvs76o0WZQdMBAzA>

<sup>111</sup> All data are taken from the SAC's official website.

financial report covers the first 10 days of the election campaign and the parties and coalitions were expected to submit it on 1 December 2016, the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the campaign. The second report covers the second half of the election campaign and was due 10 December, one day after the end of the campaign. The third financial report covers the overall incomes and expenditures throughout the entire campaign, which the parties and coalitions are required to submit within 30 days of the closing their accounts, which could be up until fourth months after the elections. The financial reports are forwarded to the State Election Commission (SEC), the State Audit Office (SAO) and the State Commission for Prevention against Corruption (SCPC). The third financial report is also forwarded to the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. The SAO is obliged to audit the overall financial reports with 60 days of receiving the reports.

All of the participants at the parliamentary elections submitted the first two periodical reports. According to the submitted financial reports, the largest amount of expenditures was made by the coalition led by the VMRO-DPMNE, 117,212,742 MKD (1,905,898 EUR<sup>112</sup>). In the first part of the campaign, the coalition spent 43,961,384 MKD (714,819 EUR) and in the second part 73,251,358 MKD (1,191,079 EUR). Up until 10 December, the coalition managed to collect 18,131,715 MKD (294,825 EUR) in total, with a difference between incomes and expenditures of 99,081,027 MKD (1,611,074 EUR). This implies that the expenditures were almost six and a half times larger than the incomes.

Second in a row according to the amount of money spent was the coalition led by SDSM which spent 33,923,911 MKD (551,608 EUR) in total during the election campaign. In the first part of the campaign, SDSM spent 19,683,894 MKD (320,063 EUR) and 14,240,017 MKD (231,545 EUR) in the second part. The coalition led by the SDSM is one of the five participants in these elections that collected more money than they spent during the election, collecting 50,736,772 MKD (824,988 EUR). According to the Electoral Code, the surplus of resources should be given to charity by the coalition.

<sup>112</sup> The calculations in euros have been done according to the average currency exchange rate of 61.5 MKD per 1 EUR.

The third party according to its expenditures in the campaign is DUI. The party collected 12,686,050 MKD (206,277 EUR) in total, 7,880,750 MKD (128,142 EUR) in the first and 4,805,300 MKD (78,135 EUR) in the second part of the campaign. Up until 10 December, the party spent 22,684,550 MKD (368,854 EUR) in total, which is 9,998,500 MKD (162,557 EUR) more than it collected.

The Coalition "VMRO for Macedonia" is the fourth party according to its expenditures. The party spent 8,364,675 MKD (136,011 EUR) in total, 2,848,970 MKD (46,325 EUR) in the first and 5,515,705 MKD (89,686 EUR) in the second part of the campaign. The coalition is one of several participants in these elections that collected more money than they spent during these elections, collecting 10,150,504 MKD (165,049 EUR) in total. According to the Electoral Code, the surplus of resources should be given to charity by the coalition.

During the campaign the Movement BESA spent 8,725,348 MKD (141,876 EUR) in total, 4,725,217 MKD (76,833 EUR) in the first and 4,000,131 MKD (65,043 EUR) in the second part of the campaign. Until submitting its second report, the party had collected 6,079,750 MKD (98,858 EUR) in total, or 2,645,598 MKD (43,018 EUR) less than its expenditures.

The Coalition for Changes and Justice – the Third Block spent 2,469,485 MKD (40,154 EUR) in total, 1,559,635 MKD (25,360 EUR) in the first and 909,850 MKD (14,794 EUR) in the second part of the campaign. Up until 10 December, the coalition managed to collect 1,837,871 MKD (29,884 EUR) in total, or 631,614 MKD (10,270 EUR) less than its expenditures.

The Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians" collected a total of 1,326,145 MKD (21,563 EUR) in these elections. The coalition spent 1,052,030 MKD (17,106 EUR) in total, or 893,519 MKD (14,529 EUR) in the first and 158,511 MKD (2,577 EUR) in the second part of the campaign. The coalition is one of the several parties and coalitions where income exceeded expenditures. According to the Electoral Code, the surplus of resources should be given to charity by the coalition.

In these elections, DPA had lower incomes and expenditures. The party spent 2,044,210 MKD (33,239 EUR) in total, 433,840 MKD (7,054 EUR) in the first and 1,610,370 MKD (26,185 EUR) in the second part of the campaign. Up until 10 December, the party collected 935,001 MKD (15,203 EUR) in total, which is 1,109,209 MKD (18,036 EUR) less than its expenditures.

The smaller parties, such as the Liberal Party, Levica and the Party for Democratic Prosperity, had smaller incomes and expenditures in comparison to the other parties in these elections. The three parties together spent 863,787 MKD (14,045 EUR) and managed to collect 605,300 MKD (9,842 EUR) in total.

If we summarize the results, what is evident from the nine reports is that the expenditures outweigh the incomes. In order to compensate for such discrepancies, the parties can collect funds until the day of they submit their final financial reports. Moreover, one of the remarks of "Transparency Macedonia" was that most of the parties had not shown the expenditures for transportation services, communal services and heating, as well as rental of facilities and equipment in their reports.<sup>113</sup>

		First financial report	Second financial report	TOTAL
<b>VMRO-DPMNE</b>	Incomes	7,431,579	10,700,136	18,131,715
	Expenditures	43,961,384	73,251,358	117,212,742
<b>DPA</b>	Incomes	602,001	333,000	935,001
	Expenditures	433,840	1,610,370	2,044,210
<b>DUI</b>	Incomes	7,880,750	4,805,300	12,686,050
	Expenditures	5,336,095	17,348,455	22,684,550
<b>SDSM</b>	Incomes	32,922,717	17,814,055	50,736,772
	Expenditures	19,683,894	14,240,017	33,923,911
<b>Coalition for Changes and Justice</b>	Incomes	1,448,300	389,571	1,837,871
	Expenditures	1,559,635	909,850	2,469,485
<b>PDP</b>	Incomes	0	0	0
	Expenditures	262,761	0	262,761

<sup>113</sup> Monitoring of the budget expenditures of the political parties in the pre-election and election process, Transparency Macedonia, 5 December 2016. Accessed 21 December 2016: [http://www.transparency.mk/images/stories/press/2016/prezentacija\\_izborni\\_troshoci\\_21.11-30.12.2016.pdf](http://www.transparency.mk/images/stories/press/2016/prezentacija_izborni_troshoci_21.11-30.12.2016.pdf)

<b>Alliance for the Albanians</b>	Incomes	1,145,745	180,400	1,326,145
	Expenditures	893,519	158,511	1,052,030
<b>LP</b>	Incomes	436,000	46,000	482,000
	Expenditures	477,811	645	478,456
<b>VMRO for Macedonia</b>	Incomes	4,633,502	5,517,002	10,150,504
	Expenditures	2,848,970	5,515,705	8,364,675
<b>BESA</b>	Incomes	4,153,750	1,926,000	6,079,750
	Expenditures	4,725,217	4,000,131	8,725,348
<b>Levica</b>	Incomes	104,800	18,500	123,300
	Expenditures	81,354	41,216	122,570

## MEDIA

The OSCE/ODIHR<sup>114</sup> Monitoring Mission for Elections monitored the media from 7 November to 10 December 2016, encompassing programmes broadcasted in peak hours by the Public Broadcasting Service, MRT1 and MRT2, and private TV channels including: Sitel, Kanal 5, Alfa, Telma, and Alsat-M, 24 Vesti. The OSCE/ODIHR also monitored daily newspapers including: Dnevnik, Koha, Lajm, Sloboden Pečat, and Vest. The mission observed political and ethnic divisions within the Macedonian media, which was highlighted in its reports on media monitoring during the campaign for parliamentary elections. Moreover, the mission registered a strong influence of pro-governmental private radio broadcasters in the advertising market, as well as political pressure on the media which included cases of provocation and verbal assault of journalists.

In general, the OSCE/ODIHR report shows that the two public TV channels respected the regulations for equal and balanced reporting on participants in the election campaign, promoting candidates in a positive and uncritical manner. In relation to private broadcasters, the OSCE/ODIHR Monitoring Mission registered reporting discrepancies. Private media sources such as Sitel, Kanal 5, and Alfa demonstrated unbalanced and biased approach in reporting on behalf of the ruling

<sup>114</sup> International monitoring mission for elections of the OSCE/ODIHR, Republic of Macedonia, Snap Parliamentary Elections, 11 December 2016, Report on the initial finds and conclusions. Accessed 7 January 2017: <http://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/fyrom/288296?download=true>

party, VMRO-DPMNE. These broadcasters allocated less time for media coverage for the activities of SDSM and employed a negative tone when they did, especially notable on Sitel. Other private broadcasters, such as Telma, Alsat-M and 24 Vesti, provided varied and often critical media coverage of the main participants in the election process in their informative programmes. The daily newspapers generally varied in reporting, with some inclinations towards certain parties.

The Electoral Code regulates the media coverage of the elections.<sup>115</sup> In accordance with the Electoral Code, the media is obliged to provide balanced, equal and unbiased reporting and media coverage of the election campaign. In the pre-election period, the Ad-hoc Committee for Observing Media Coverage was in charge of monitoring media reporting. This ad-hoc body was established within the Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services, as stipulated by the Pržino Agreement (Pržino 2) of the four largest political parties in Macedonia. The mandate of the Ad-hoc Committee was valid until the end of the election process. The monitoring focused on the implementation of the provisions stipulated by Articles 75, 75-a, 75-b, 75-c, 75-d, 75-e, 75-f, 76, 76-a, 76-b, 76-c, 76-d, and 77 from the Electoral Code related to media reporting during the pre-election period. These provisions provided equal conditions to all participants in the election campaign for access to all forms of electoral media presentation, as well as following the principle of proportionality according to the number of confirmed lists of candidates for MPs.

### Monitoring of the public broadcasting service MRT

In these elections, the election-related media reporting of the Public Broadcasting Service MRT was observed in two periods, from 21 to 30 November and from 1 to 9 December 2016. The objects of monitoring in the two periods were the First Programming Service MRT1, the Second Programming Service MRT2, the Macedonian Radio – the First Programming Service MR1 and the Macedonian Radio – the Third Programming Service – Programming in Albanian language MR3.

<sup>115</sup> For more information see: The role of public media, p.51 in the Handbook.

In the period from 21 to 30 November 2016, according to the Report on Conducted Monitoring<sup>116</sup> for the First Programming Service MRT1, the informative section complied with the principles stipulated by the “Rules for media coverage of election processes – for equal political presentation”. In accordance with these principles, the time of informing should be distributed in the following way: 30% to the parties in power, 30% to the parties in opposition, 10% to the parties that do not have their own representatives in the national Assembly and the final 30% reserved for daily events in the country and around the world. Moreover, the distribution of time for informing participants in the election campaign for the parliamentary elections should be in agreement with the principle of proportionality according to the number of the confirmed lists of candidates for MPs. The report shows that this distribution was observed and balance in informing was achieved.

The Report on Conducted Monitoring<sup>117</sup> for the Second Programming Service MRT2 shows a certain unbalanced distribution of time as stipulated by the Electoral Code. Thus, in the section “daily news from the country and the world” there was a certain increase in allocated time to the disadvantage of the time provided for the activities of the parties in power and in opposition. Moreover, the principle of proportionality according to the number of confirmed lists of candidates for MPs was not observed. Namely, 30% of the time allocated for the activities of the parties in power, the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE and DUI with seven confirmed candidate lists, was not equally distributed as one extra hour was allocated on behalf of DUI. Similar exceptions were registered in the distribution of the time allocated for the activities of the parties in the opposition (30%), where DPA, with five confirmed candidate lists, was allocated much more time than the coalition led by SDSM with seven candidate lists and the Coalition for Changes and Justice (CCJ) with six candidate lists. This unequal distribution was also registered in the 10% intended for the political parties not represented in the national Assembly, whereby no media coverage of the activities of the Coalition “VMRO for Macedonia” was provided.

<sup>116</sup> Written Report on Conducted Monitoring 21-30 November 2016 – MRT1, AAAMS. Accessed 7 January 2017: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/MRT\\_1\\_06.12.2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/MRT_1_06.12.2016.pdf)

<sup>117</sup> Written Report on Conducted Monitoring 21-30 November 2016 – MRT2, AAAMS. Accessed 7 January 2017: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/MRT\\_2\\_06.12.2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/MRT_2_06.12.2016.pdf)

The data from the Report on Conducted Monitoring<sup>118</sup> of the Macedonian Radio – the First Programming Service MR1 shows that more time was allotted to the section “daily events from the country and the world” than stipulated, as much as 39%. Moreover, the distribution of time for the activities of the participants in the election process was not proportional to the number of confirmed candidate lists. 30% of the time intended for the activities of the parties in power was distributed to favor the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE with a one hour difference to the disadvantage of DUI. In relation to the parties from the opposition, most of the time was allocated to the coalition led by SDSM (1 hour 35 minutes and 52 seconds), followed by DPA (27 minutes and 6 seconds) and CCJ (13 minutes and 29 seconds).

According to the Report on Conducted Monitoring<sup>119</sup> of the Macedonian Radio – the Third Programming Service – Programme in Albanian Language MR3, the total time allocated for the activities of participants in the election process was not distributed in proportion with the number of confirmed candidate lists. There was a difference in the time allocated for the parties in power. DUI was allocated 1 hour 5 minutes and 8 second, while the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE was allocated only 25 minutes and 17 seconds from the intended time. The time intended to cover the activities of the opposition was also not distributed proportionally, where DUI was allocated 43 minutes, while the coalition led by SDSM was allocated 32 minutes and 33 seconds and the Coalition for Changes and Justice – the Third Block (CCJ) only 4 minutes and 20 seconds.

Table 1: Representation of the political entities in the informative genres (21-30 November 2016)								
Source: AAAMS								
	MRT1		MRT2 Albanian language		Macedonian Radio 1		MR Albanian language	
<b>Activities for the campaigns of the political parties in power</b>								
	Duration	Percentage	Duration	Percentage	Duration	Percentage	Duration	Percentage
<b>VMRO-DPMNE and others</b>	01:16:25	51,05 %	01:03:51	33,73 %	01:46:08	69,98 %	00:25:17	27,96 %
<b>DUI</b>	01:13:16	48,95 %	02:05:28	66,27 %	00:45:32	30,02 %	01:05:08	72,04 %
<b>Total</b>	02:29:41	100 %	03:09:19	100 %	02:31:40	100 %	01:30:25	100 %
<b>Activities for the campaigns of the political parties in opposition</b>								
<b>SDSM and others</b>	01:02:18	41,05 %	00:57:11	31,19 %	01:35:52	70,26 %	00:32:33	40,70 %
<b>DPA</b>	00:40:43	26,83 %	01:48:33	59,21 %	00:27:06	19,86 %	00:43:05	53,88 %
<b>Coalition for Changes and Justice</b>	00:48:46	32,13 %	00:17:35	9,59 %	00:13:29	9,88 %	00:04:20	5,42 %
<b>Total</b>	02:31:47	100 %	03:03:19	100 %	02:16:27	100 %	01:19:58	100 %
<b>Activities for the campaigns of the political parties not in the Parliament</b>								
<b>Liberal Party</b>	00:09:24	18,07 %	00:02:20	3,31 %	00:08:51	20,73 %	00:02:57	8,72 %
<b>Levica</b>	00:12:16	23,58 %	00:02:27	3,47 %	00:09:04	21,24 %	00:00:34	1,68 %
<b>PDP</b>	00:01:59	3,81 %	00:17:22	24,62 %	00:00:41	1,60 %	00:03:48	11,24 %
<b>BESA</b>	00:06:48	13,07 %	00:24:34	34,82 %	00:02:43	6,36 %	00:10:50	32,04 %
<b>Alliance for the Albanians</b>	00:07:54	15,19 %	00:23:50	33,78 %	00:03:08	7,34 %	00:10:16	30,36 %
<b>VMRO for Macedonia</b>	00:13:40	26,27 %	/	/	00:18:14	42,72 %	00:05:24	15,97 %
<b>Total</b>	00:52:01	100 %	01:10:33	100 %	00:42:41	100 %	00:33:49	100 %

In the period from 1 to 9 December 2016, monitoring of the Programming Services of the Macedonian Radio and Television was also conducted. As in the first period, the First Programming Service MRT1

<sup>118</sup> Written Report on Conducted Monitoring 21 - 30 November 2016 – MR1, AAAMS. Accessed 7 January 2017: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/MRA\\_prv\\_programski\\_06.12.2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/MRA_prv_programski_06.12.2016.pdf)

<sup>119</sup> Written Report on Conducted Monitoring 21 - 30 November 2016 – MRA, AAAMS. Accessed 10 January 2017: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/Makedonsko\\_radio-tret\\_programski.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/Makedonsko_radio-tret_programski.pdf)

enabled equal distribution of the time allocated for the campaigns and the activities of participants in the election campaign, in accordance with the principle of proportionality. Within the 30% intended for the activities of the parties in power, the Report on Conducted Monitoring<sup>120</sup> shows almost equal distribution of the time between the two parties in power, namely 1 hour 8 minutes and 28 seconds and for the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE and 1 hour 5 minutes and 31 seconds for DUI. A similar tendency was registered in the media coverage of the activities of the parties in opposition and the parties not represented in the Parliament, where the principle of proportionality in accordance with the candidate lists was observed.

The Report on Conducted Monitoring<sup>121</sup> for the Second Programming Service MRT2 shows an unbalanced distribution of time according to the principle of proportionality stipulated by the Electoral Code. For the parties in power, MRT2 allocated 1 hour 56 minutes and 15 seconds for DUI and 59 minutes for the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE. In a similar way, the time for media coverage of the activities of the parties and coalitions in opposition was distributed. Thus, DPA was allocated 1 hour 45 minutes and 13 seconds, the coalition led by SDSM 47 minutes and 30 seconds and the Coalition for Changes and Justice – the Third Block 22 minutes and 8 seconds. In relation to the time allocated to the parties not represented in the Parliament, the Coalition “Alliance for the Albanians” was allocated 23 minutes and 3 seconds, the Movement BESA (30 minutes and 8 seconds), more than the Liberal Party (1 minute and 58 seconds), the Coalition “VMRO for Macedonia” (2 minutes and 11 seconds) and PDP (9 minutes and 41 seconds), which have more candidate lists. The increased time allocated to the parties from the Albanian block was analyzed in the Report based on the provision for inverse time distribution for the election campaigns from the “Rules on media coverage for election processes – for equal political presentation” chapter “Media coverage of the elections in the news”. This chapter stipulates that considering the specific character of the Second Programming Service of MRT intended for meeting the

informative requirements of the citizens from the non-majority ethnic communities in Macedonia, the distribution of time in the news among participants in the election process will be in the best interests of the political entities representing the non-majority communities.

According to the Report on Conducted Monitoring<sup>122</sup> of the Macedonian Radio – the First Programming Service MR1, much more time was allocated to the “daily events from the country and the world” during the monitoring period, as much as 39%. In relation to the time allocated for activities in the campaigns of the participants in the election process, the First Programme of the Macedonian Radio decided to provide equal distribution between the two comparative electoral groups: the coalitions led by VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM, which were allocated 1 hour and 30 minutes, on the one hand; and , DUI with 36 minutes as one of the ruling parties, DPA with 26 minutes and the Coalition for Changes and Justice with 19 minutes as parties from the opposition. The daily informative space intended for the political parties not represented in the Parliament, according to the report, was not fully observed.

The data from the Report on Conducted Monitoring<sup>123</sup> of the Macedonian Radio – the Third Programming Service – Programme in Albanian Language MR3, show that MR3 mainly observed the percentage of time distribution for the activities of the parties in power, in opposition and the parties not represented in the Parliament. On the other side, the Report shows that the Third Programming Service mainly followed the rule of inverse time distribution for the election campaigns in accordance with the “Rules on media coverage for election processes – for equal political presentation” in the chapter “Media coverage of the elections in the news”. Thus, the parties from the Albanian block, both those in power and in opposition, were allocated a significant amount time.

<sup>120</sup> Written Report on Conducted Monitoring 1 - 9 November 2016 – MRT1, AAVMS. Accessed 7 January 2017: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/MRT\\_1\\_16.12.2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/MRT_1_16.12.2016.pdf)

<sup>121</sup> Written Report on Conducted Monitoring 1 - 9 November 2016 – MRT2, AAVMS. Accessed 7 January 2017: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/MRT\\_2\\_16.12.2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/MRT_2_16.12.2016.pdf)

<sup>122</sup> Written Report on Conducted Monitoring 1 - 9 November 2016 – MR1, AAVMS. Accessed 7 January 2017: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/MRA\\_1\\_16.12.2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/MRA_1_16.12.2016.pdf)

<sup>123</sup> Written Report on Conducted Monitoring 1 - 9 November 2016 – MRA, AAVMS. Accessed 7 January 2017: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/MRA\\_3\\_16.12.2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/MRA_3_16.12.2016.pdf)

Table 2: Representation of the political entities in the informative genres (1-9 December 2016)

Source: AAAVMS

	MRT1		MRT2 Albanian language		Macedonian Radio 1		MR Albanian language	
<b>Activities for the campaigns of the political parties in power</b>								
	Duration	Percentage	Duration	Percentage	Duration	Percentage	Duration	Percentage
<b>VMRO-DPMNE and others</b>	01:08:28	51,10 %	00:59:26	33,83 %	01:30:54	71,51 %	00:28:30	35,46 %
<b>DUI</b>	01:05:31	48,90 %	01:56:15	66,17 %	00:36:13	28,49 %	00:51:53	64,54 %
<b>Total</b>	02:13:59	100 %	02:55:41	100 %	02:07:07	100 %	01:20:23	100 %
<b>Activities for the campaigns of the political parties in opposition</b>								
<b>SDSM and others</b>	00:52:52	39,97 %	00:47:30	27,17 %	01:30:34	66,43 %	00:29:10	37,36 %
<b>DPA</b>	00:37:07	28,07 %	01:45:13	60,18 %	00:26:01	19,08 %	00:43:18	55,47 %
<b>Coalition for Changes and Justice</b>	00:42:16	31,96 %	00:22:08	12,66 %	00:19:45	14,49 %	00:05:36	7,17 %
<b>Total</b>	02:12:15	100 %	02:54:51	100 %	02:16:20	100 %	01:18:04	100 %
<b>Activities for the campaigns of the political parties not in the Parliament</b>								
<b>Liberal Party</b>	00:07:26	15,68 %	00:01:58	2,93 %	00:05:51	14,92 %	00:00:56	3,06 %
<b>Levica</b>	00:08:41	18,31 %	/	/	00:03:37	9,23 %	00:01:06	3,60 %
<b>PDP</b>	00:02:52	6,05 %	00:09:41	14,45 %	00:01:07	2,85 %	00:04:03	13,27 %
<b>BESA</b>	00:09:03	19,09 %	00:30:08	44,96 %	00:03:54	9,95 %	00:10:08	33,21 %
<b>Alliance for the Albanians</b>	00:07:39	16,13 %	00:23:03	34,39 %	00:03:03	7,78 %	00:10:22	33,97 %
<b>VMRO for Macedonia</b>	00:11:44	24,75 %	00:02:11	3,26 %	00:21:40	55,27 %	00:03:56	12,89 %
<b>Total</b>	00:47:25	100 %	01:07:01	100 %	00:39:12	100 %	00:30:31	100 %

## Monitoring of private media

The reports on conducted monitoring of the private media in the period from 21 November to 9 December 2016 covered the media reporting in peak hours of the daily informative programmes during the election campaign. The reports, which analyze the first (I) and the second (II) part of the election campaign separately, from 21 to 30 November and from 1 to 9 December, show differences among the media in relation to the election-related media reporting.

Table 3: Representation of the political entities in the informative genres (21 November – 9 December 2016)

Source: AAAVMS

	24 Vesti		Alsot - M		Alfa		Kanal 5		Sitel		Telma	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
<b>VMRO-DPMNE and others</b>	00:35:34	00:29:33	00:12:16	00:07:41	02:09:01	01:46:21	03:07:26	02:45:51	03:28:09	03:11:03	00:36:53	00:15:25
<b>SDSM and others</b>	00:25:53	00:23:50	00:13:21	00:08:15	01:44:48	01:20:55	01:58:14	02:21:10	01:47:25	00:57:17	00:24:41	00:22:26
<b>DUI</b>	00:15:35	00:09:59	00:15:24	00:09:06	00:06:44	00:01:12	00:15:07	00:10:40	00:16:45	00:03:58	00:11:24	00:07:17
<b>DPA</b>	00:04:01	00:04:39	00:15:15	00:09:16	00:03:22	00:00:17	00:12:58	00:01:53	00:01:58	00:05:08	00:10:09	00:08:52
<b>VMRO for Macedonia</b>	00:11:24	00:14:28	00:01:15	/	00:02:26	/	/	00:04:01	/	/	00:12:17	00:13:57
<b>Coalition for Changes and Justice</b>	00:17:54	00:13:49	00:01:25	/	00:02:00	00:00:17	/	00:01:26	/	/	00:19:10	00:11:46
<b>Liberal Party</b>	/	00:00:53	/	/	00:00:34	/	00:01:21	/	00:04:46	00:01:55	00:03:04	00:03:02
<b>Levica</b>	/	00:10:24	/	/	00:04:12	00:06:36	/	00:01:31	00:06:35	00:00:48	00:09:05	00:05:30
<b>PDP</b>	/	/	/	/	/	/	00:01:01	/	/	/	00:00:54	/
<b>BESA</b>	00:01:02	00:01:23	00:08:50	00:06:44	00:00:34	/	/	/	/	/	00:02:55	00:06:53
<b>Alliance for the Albanians</b>	00:03:59	00:01:49	00:06:50	00:06:00	00:00:21	00:00:17	/	/	/	/	00:05:45	00:03:13

From the observed editions of the daily informative programmes in the first part<sup>124</sup> of the election campaign, the TV station 24 Vesti<sup>125</sup> allocated 1 hour 57 minutes and 40 seconds for the activities of the participants and candidates in the election campaign. The time provided for reporting about the four political entities with seven candidate lists was distributed in such a way that the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE was allocated the most time (35 minutes and 34 seconds), followed by the coalition led by SDSM (25 minutes and 53 seconds), DUI (15 minutes and 35 second) and the Coalition "VMRO for Macedonia" (11 minutes and 24 seconds). For CCJ, which had six candidate lists, 17 minutes and 54 seconds were allocated. For DPA, which had five candidate lists, 4 minutes and 1 second was allocated. Regarding the participants in the campaign with four candidate lists: the Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians" was allocated 3 minutes and 59 seconds, the Movement BESA – 1 minute and 2 seconds. There was no reporting about the activities of the Liberal Party, PDP and Levica. During the second part<sup>126</sup> of the campaign, considering the four political entities with seven candidate lists, the biggest amount of time was allocated to the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE (29 minutes and 33 seconds), followed by the coalition led by SDSM (23 minutes and 50 seconds), the Coalition "VMRO for Macedonia" (14 minutes and 28 seconds), and DUI (9 minutes and 59 seconds). For CCJ, the reporting covered 13 minutes and 49 seconds. Regarding the parties with five candidate lists, the TV station 24 Vesti distributed the time in the following way: Levica (10 minutes and 24 seconds), DPA (4 minutes and 39 seconds), and the Liberal Party (53 seconds). In relation to the participants in the campaign with four candidate lists, the time was distributed in the following way: the Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians" (1 minute and 49 seconds) and the Movement BESA (1 minute and 23 seconds).

In the first part<sup>127</sup> of the election campaign, Alsat-M allocated similar amounts of time for the activities of the two largest parties from the

<sup>124</sup> Written Report on Conducted Monitoring 21 - 30 November - 24 Vesti, AAVMS. Accessed 10 January 2017: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/24\\_Vesti\\_06.12.2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/24_Vesti_06.12.2016.pdf)

<sup>125</sup> The distribution of the informative time for the participants in the election campaign should be in agreement with the principle of proportionality according to the number of confirmed lists of candidates for MPs.

<sup>126</sup> Written Report on Conducted Monitoring 1 - 9 December – 24 Vesti, AAVMS. Accessed 10 January 2017: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/24\\_Vesti\\_16.12.2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/24_Vesti_16.12.2016.pdf)

<sup>127</sup> Written Report on Conducted Monitoring 21 - 30 November – Alsat-M, AAVMS. Accessed 10 January 2017: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/Alsat\\_06.12.2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/Alsat_06.12.2016.pdf)

Macedonian block: the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE (12 minutes and 16 seconds) and the coalition led by SDSM (13 minutes and 21 seconds). Alsat-M allocated for the two parties from the Albanian block represented in the previous Assembly: DUI (15 minutes and 24 seconds) and DPA (15 minutes and 15 seconds). The Movement BESA was allocated 8 minutes and 50 seconds and the Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians" 6 minutes and 50 seconds. The CCJ and the Coalition "VMRO for Macedonia" were allocated 1 minute and 24 seconds and 1 minute and 15 seconds respectively. The Liberal Party, Levica, and PDP were not covered at all. The second part<sup>128</sup> of the election campaign shows similar distribution of the reporting time. DUI and DPA were allocated more time, 9 minutes and 6 seconds and 9 minutes and 16 seconds respectively. The time allocated for the coalitions led by VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM covered 7 minutes and 41 seconds and 8 minutes and 15 seconds respectively. The Movement BESA and the Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians" received a similar amount of time, around 6 minutes. The Liberal Party, Levica, PDP, CCJ, and the Coalition "VMRO for Macedonia" were not covered at all.

The analysis of the first part<sup>129</sup> of the election campaign show that TV Alfa allocated 4 hours 14 minutes and 36 seconds for the activities of the participants in the campaign. Considering the four political entities with seven candidate lists, TV Alfa allocated more time to the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE (2 hours 9 minutes and 1 second), followed by the coalition led by SDSM (1 hour 44 minutes 48 seconds), then DUI (6 minutes 44 seconds) and the Coalition "VMRO for Macedonia" (2 minutes and 26 seconds). CCJ with six candidate lists was allocated 2 minutes. Considering the time allocated to the parties with five candidate lists: Levica was allocated 4 minutes and 12 seconds, DPA 3 minutes and 22 seconds and the Liberal Party 34 seconds. The Movement BESA and the Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians" with four candidate lists each, were allocated 34 seconds and 21 seconds respectively. There is no information about PDP. In the second part<sup>130</sup> of the campaign, TV

<sup>128</sup> Written Report on Conducted Monitoring 1 - 9 December – Alsat-M, AAVMS. Accessed 10 January 2017: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/Alsat-M\\_16.12.2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/Alsat-M_16.12.2016.pdf)

<sup>129</sup> Written Report on Conducted Monitoring 21 - 30 November – Alfa AAVMS. Accessed 10 January 2017: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/Alfa\\_06.12.2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/Alfa_06.12.2016.pdf)

<sup>130</sup> Written Report on Conducted Monitoring 1 - 9 December – Alfa AAVMS. Accessed 10 January 2017: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/Alfa\\_TV\\_16.12.2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/Alfa_TV_16.12.2016.pdf)

Alfa allocated 3 hours 15 minutes and 55 seconds for the activities of participants in the election campaign. The largest amount of time was allocated for the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE (1 hour 46 minutes and 21 seconds), followed by the coalition led by SDSM (1 hour 20 minutes and 55 seconds), Levica (6 minutes and 36 seconds), DUI (1 minute 12 seconds), as well as DPA, CCJ, and the Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians" (17 seconds each). There were no reports about four participants in the election campaign: the Coalition "VMRO for Macedonia", the Liberal Party, PDP and the Movement BESA.

In the two observed periods, TV Kanal 5 predominantly covered the campaign of VMRO-DPMNE and its coalition. From the analyzed reports in the first part<sup>131</sup> of the election campaign, of the 5 hours 36 minutes and 7 seconds allocated for the activities of participants in the election campaign, 3 hours 7 minutes and 26 seconds were allocated to the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE and 1 hour 58 minutes and 14 seconds were allocated for the coalition led by SDSM. Much less time was allocated for the other parties, while the activities of CCJ, Levica, the Coalition "VMRO for Macedonia", the Movement BESA and the Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians" were not covered at all. A similar tendency was observed in the second part<sup>132</sup> of the election campaign, with 5 hours 26 minutes and 32 seconds allocated for the activities of the participants in the campaign. The coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE was allocated 2 hours 45 minutes and 51 seconds, the coalition led by SDSM 2 hours 21 minutes and 10 seconds, DUI 10 minutes and 40 seconds and the Coalition "VMRO for Macedonia" 4 minutes and 1 second. Levica, DPA, and CCJ, were allocated less than 2 minutes each. There are no data for the Liberal Party, PDP, the Movement BESA and the Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians".

The report on election-related media coverage by TV Sitel, in the two observed periods<sup>133</sup>, observed a significant discrepancy in the distribution of the time, according to the principle of proportionality.

<sup>131</sup> Written Report on Conducted Monitoring 21 - 30 November – TV Kanal 5, AAVMS. Accessed 10 January 2017: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/TV\\_KAnal\\_5\\_06.12.2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/TV_KAnal_5_06.12.2016.pdf)

<sup>132</sup> Written Report on Conducted Monitoring 1 - 9 December – TV Kanal 5, AAVMS. Accessed 10 January 2017: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/TV\\_Kanal\\_5\\_16.12.2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/TV_Kanal_5_16.12.2016.pdf)

<sup>133</sup> Written Report on Conducted Monitoring 21 - 30 November – TV Sitel, AAVMS. Accessed 10 January 2017: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/TV\\_Sitel\\_06.12.2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/TV_Sitel_06.12.2016.pdf). Written Report on Conducted Monitoring 1 - 9 December – TV Sitel, AAVMS. Accessed 10 January 2017: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/Sitel\\_16.12.2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/Sitel_16.12.2016.pdf)

The coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE was allocated significantly more time, 3 hours 28 minutes and 9 seconds in the first and 3 hours 11 minutes and 3 seconds in the second part of monitoring. The coalition led by SDSM was allocated only 1 hour 47 minutes and 25 seconds in the first period and 57 minutes and 17 seconds in the second. TV Sitel allocated much less time to the other parties and coalitions. In both reports there is no media coverage for CCJ, the Coalition "VMRO for Macedonia", PDP, the Movement BESA and the Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians".

The analyzed editions in the first part<sup>134</sup> of the campaign show that TV Telma distributed the time for the four political entities with seven candidate lists in the following way: the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE (36 minutes and 53 seconds), the coalition led by SDSM (24 minutes and 41 seconds), DUI (11 minutes and 24 seconds) and the Coalition "VMRO for Macedonia" (12 minutes and 17 seconds). CCJ in this period was allocated 19 minutes and 10 seconds. The three participants with five candidate lists were covered in the following way: DPA (10 minutes and 9 seconds), Levica (9 minutes and 5 seconds) and the Liberal Party (3 minutes and 4 seconds). The Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians" was allocated 5 minutes and 45 seconds, while the Movement BESA received 2 minutes and 55 seconds. PDP was represented with only 54 seconds. In the second part<sup>135</sup> of the campaign, considering the four political entities with seven candidate lists, most of the media coverage time was allocated for the activities of the coalition led by SDSM (22 minutes and 26 seconds), followed by the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE (15 minutes and 25 seconds), the Coalition "VMRO for Macedonia" (13 minutes and 57 seconds) and DUI (7 minutes and 17 seconds). CCJ was allocated 11 minutes and 46 seconds. From the parties with five candidate lists: DPA (8 minutes and 52 seconds), Levica (5 minutes and 30 seconds) and the Liberal Party (3 minutes and 2 seconds). The distribution of media coverage time for the participants in the campaign with four candidate lists, was as follows: the Movement BESA (6 minutes and 53 seconds) and the Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians" (3 minutes and 13 seconds).

<sup>134</sup> Written Report on Conducted Monitoring 21 - 30 November – Telma, AAVMS. Accessed 10 January 2017: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/Telma\\_06.12.2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/Telma_06.12.2016.pdf)

<sup>135</sup> Written Report on Conducted Monitoring 1 - 9 December – Telma, AAVMS. Accessed 10 January 2017: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/Telma\\_16.12.2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/Telma_16.12.2016.pdf)

## RESULTS FROM THE 2016 SNAP PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS<sup>136</sup>

In the snap parliamentary elections which took place on 11 December 2016, out of 1,784,524 registered voters in Macedonia and 20,629 voters abroad, only 1,191,852 voters exercised their right to vote. The turnout in these elections was 66.79%, which was an increase from the voter turnout in the previous parliamentary elections in 2014 of 63%.

Six political parties and five coalitions took part in the elections with 58 lists of candidates, including the Coalition "For better Macedonia" led by the VMRO-DPMNE, DPA, DUI, the Coalition led by the SDSM, the Coalition for Changes and Justice – the Third Block, PDP, the Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians", LP, the Coalition "VMRO for Macedonia", the Movement BESA and Levica.

According to the final and official data from the SEC, the Coalition "For Better Macedonia", led by VMRO-DPMNE, won the majority of the votes in the snap parliamentary elections held on 11 December 2016. The coalition received 454,577 votes, equalling 38.14% of the total number of votes. As a result, the coalition won 51 mandates in parliament, which is 10 mandates less than in the previous parliamentary elections.

The coalition led by the largest opposition party SDSM holds the second position, having won 436,981 votes, equalling 36.66% of the total number of votes. As a result, the coalition won 49 mandates in parliament, a substantial increase from the 34 mandates won in the previous parliamentary elections. In these parliamentary elections, the results were very close between the two largest parties from the Macedonian block for the first time.

DUI holds the third position, the party which has been part of a government coalition with VMRO-DPMNE. DUI won 86,796 votes, equalling 7.28% of the total number of votes to win 10 mandates in

the National Assembly. In these elections, DUI lost support from the voters compared to the 2014 parliamentary elections, when the party won 19 mandates.

The Movement BESA holds the fourth position having won 57,868 votes, equalling 4.86% of the total number of votes. This is the first time for BESA to be represented in the Republic of Macedonia's Assembly. The party won 5 mandates.

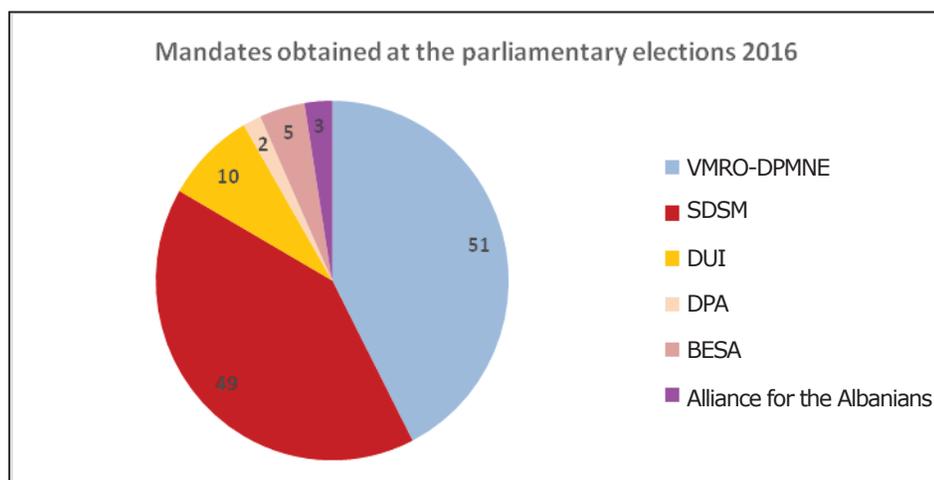
The Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians" holds the fifth position having won 35,121 votes, equalling 2.95% of the total number of votes. The coalition won 3 mandates and will be represented in the National Assembly for the first time.

DPA, the biggest rival of DUI, holds the sixth position after significantly weaker results in these elections. DPA won 30,964 votes, equalling 2.60% of the total number of votes. They received only 2 mandates in comparison to the 7 mandates they received in the previous parliamentary elections.

The remaining parties and coalitions, including the Coalition "VMRO for Macedonia", Levica, the Coalition for Changes and Justice – the Third Block, LP and PDP did not manage to secure their own mandates in the new composition of the National Assembly. The Coalition "VMRO for Macedonia" won 24,524 votes (2.06%), Levica won 12,120 votes (1.02%), the CCJ – the Third Block won 10,028 votes (0.84%), the LP won 3,840 votes (0.32%) and the PDP won 1,143 votes (0.10%).

None of the parties and coalitions managed to win sufficient votes in the Electoral District 7 to secure representatives for the diaspora in the National Assembly.

<sup>136</sup> All data related to the results of the snap parliamentary elections were taken from the official website of the State Election Commission. Accessed 29 December 2016: <https://rezultati.sec.mk/Parliamentary/Results?cs=mk-MK&r=r&rd=r1&eu=All&m=All&ps=All>



The following chart shows the relation between the parties and coalitions that secured positions in the Assembly by electoral district:

Electoral Unit	Registered voters in the Voters' List	Party/Coalition	Total number of votes	Total number of votes in %	Mandates won
<b>EIU 1</b>	295 858	SDSM and others	92 247	42,35 %	10
		VMRO and others	72 842	33,44 %	8
		BESA	11 597	5,32 %	1
		DUI	12 890	5,92 %	1
Turnout	<b>217 823 (73,62 %)</b>				
<b>EIU 2</b>	306 471	VMRO and others	73 712	36,15 %	9
		SDSM and others	69 842	34,25 %	8
		DUI	16 868	8,27 %	2
		BESA	16 119	7,90 %	1
Turnout	<b>203 923 (66,54 %)</b>				
<b>EIU 3</b>	280 727	VMRO and others	102 829	50,36 %	11
		SDSM and others	81 204	39,77 %	9
Turnout	<b>204 193 (72,74 %)</b>				

<b>EIU 4</b>	282 537	VMRO and others	101 617	47,96 %	10
		SDSM and others	94 780	44,73 %	10
Turnout	<b>211 897 (75,00 %)</b>				
<b>EIU 5</b>	290 433	VMRO and others	72 340	38,51 %	9
		SDSM and others	71 020	37,81 %	9
		Alliance for the Albanians	7 355	3,92 %	1
		DUI	13 982	7,44 %	1
Turnout	<b>187 824 (64,67 %)</b>				
<b>EIU 6</b>	307 817	DUI	40 547	25,67 %	6
		VMRO and others	26 193	16,58 %	4
		BESA	24 989	15,82 %	3
		SDSM and others	25 986	16,45 %	3
		Alliance for the Albanians	17 946	11,36 %	2
		DPA	16 162	10,23 %	2
Turnout	<b>157 960 (51,32 %)</b>				
<b>EIU 7</b>	20 573	VMRO and others	5 044	61,27 %	/
		SDSM and others	1 902	23,10 %	/
		DUI	886	10,76 %	/
		VMRO for Macedonia	157	1,91 %	/
Turnout	<b>8 232 (40,01 %)</b>				

## PROTECTION OF THE RIGHT TO VOTE<sup>137</sup>

The Electoral Code guarantees the protection of voting rights. According to the Electoral Code, each party promoting a list of candidates and each voter have the right to file a complaint to the State Election

<sup>137</sup> Electoral Code (refined text), unofficial version prepared by the Expert Service of the State Election Commission. Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No.40/06, 136/08, 148/08, 155/08, 163/08, 44/11, 51/11, 142/12, 31/13, 14/14, 30/14, 196/15, 35/16, 97/16, and 99/16. Accessed 19 October 2016: <http://www.sec.mk/izboren-zakonik/> (last visited: 19th October 2016); The Law amending and supplementing the Electoral Code Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 142, 1 August 2016. Accessed 19 October 2016: [http://www.avmu.mk/images/Zakon\\_za\\_izmenuvanje\\_i\\_dopolnuvanje\\_na\\_izborniot\\_zakonik\\_28\\_juli\\_2016.pdf](http://www.avmu.mk/images/Zakon_za_izmenuvanje_i_dopolnuvanje_na_izborniot_zakonik_28_juli_2016.pdf)

Commission if they consider their right to vote has been violated. The complaints filed by promoters of the lists can be related to the voting procedure or the summary and confirmation of results, while voters can file complaints if their rights have been violated during the procedure. There is an urgent procedure related to the protection of the voters' rights, hence filing a complaint and pressing charges in this respect cannot be submitted via the postal service.

Complaints made by the promoters of the lists have to be submitted to the SEC within a 48 hour period after voting ends, i.e. after the announcement of the initial results. The SEC is then obliged to make a decision in the 48 hour period after receiving the complaint. The SEC informs the party filing the complaint of its decision via email and the decision is considered to have been forwarded five hours after the email has been sent. In the case that the party filing the complaint receives a negative response from the SEC, it has the right to submit a complaint to the Constitutional Court against the SEC's decision within 24 hours of receiving the decision. The Court ought to reach a decision within 48 hours of receiving the complaint. The Constitutional Court can either confirm or restructure the decision of the SEC, making it legally binding, meaning there is no possibility for further complaints against this decision or any other legal protection whatsoever.

In the case of voting rights violations, voters can file a complaint to the SEC within 24 hours and the SEC is obliged to make a decision 4 hours after receiving the complaint. The decision made by the SEC can be appealed by submitting a complaint to the Constitutional Court within 24 hours of receiving the decision. If the deadlines are met during the voting process and the decision is in favour of the voter filing the complaint, then the voter will be enabled to exercise their right to vote.

Political parties and coalitions filed 16<sup>138</sup> complaints to the SEC within the deadline prescribed by law. Some of the complaints were related to the voting procedure and some to the procedure for summarizing and determining the results. The complaints were filed by SDSM and the

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<sup>138</sup> This is an initial figure. Later SDSM decided to withdraw two previously filed complaints, with the explanation that the complaints would not affect election results. Thus, the number of complaints taken into consideration was reduced to 14.

Movement BESA. The Movement BESA filed 8 complaints in total. Two complaints were related to Electoral District 6 and pertained to polling stations 1995, 1996, 1997, 1997/1, 1999, 2080, 2081 and 2083 in the municipality of Tetovo and to the polling station 0396/1 in the municipality of Gostivar. The other six complaints were filed in relation to Electoral District 2 regarding polling stations 2333/1, 2340 and 2339 in the municipality of Arachinovo, to the polling stations 1119/1 and 1120, the polling station 1105 in the municipality of Lipkovo, and in the municipality of Gazi Baba. SDSM filed 8 complaints related to voting in Electoral District 6. Five were related to polling stations 2011, 2010, 2025, 2024 and 2016 in the municipality of Tearce. The other three complaints were related to polling stations 1978, 1984 and 1983 in the municipality of Tetovo. After filing the complaints, SDSM decided to withdraw the two related to polling stations 1984 and 1983.

The SEC held sessions for three days to decide on each complaint. After reviewing the complaints, the SEC rejected all those filed by the SDSM and accepted only one complaint filed by the Movement BESA in relation to irregularities in polling station 0396/1 in the municipality of Gostivar. Prior to elections, BESA made an announcement that they would not file any complaints to the Constitutional Court due to lack of trust in the institutions.<sup>139</sup> Soon after, VMRO-DPMNE as the leader of the Coalition "For Better Macedonia" filed a complaint to the Constitutional Court against the SEC's decision to sustain the complaint filed by the Movement BESA in relation to the polling station 0396/1 in the municipality of Gostivar. The Constitutional Court sustained the complaint filed by the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, thus rejecting BESA's complaint.

The coalition led by SDSM was not satisfied with the decisions of the SEC in relation to the polling stations in Electoral District 6 and submitted four complaints to the Constitutional Court within the deadline prescribed by law. The Constitutional Court rejected three complaints submitted by SDSM as unfounded, but sustained the complaint submitted in relation to polling station 2011 in the municipality of Tearce, deciding to annul

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<sup>139</sup> SDSM filing complaints, BESA boycotting, VMRO-DPMNE thinking, 24 News, 26 December 2016. Accessed 17 January 2017: <http://24vesti.mk/sdsm-podnesuva-tuzh-bi-besa-bojkotira-vmro-dpmne-se-misli-0>

the results of this polling station. As a result, the SEC made a Decision<sup>140</sup> to repeat the voting on 25 December 2016, 14 days after the initial day of voting.

The decision for a revote opened the possibility for a change in election results due to the fact that the Coalition led by SDSM was lacking 303 votes in Electoral District 6 to receive an additional mandate. In the voting that took place at this polling station on 11 December, VMRO-DPMNE took the lead with 91 votes, while SDSM received 87 votes. After the revote on 25 December at polling station 2011 in Tearce, SDSM was in the lead with 245 votes in relation to the 149 votes for VMRO-DPMNE. However, the victory of SDSM at this polling station did not affect the final results. Thus, the initial distribution of 51 mandates for VMRO-DPMNE and 49 mandates for SDSM remained the same.

## EVALUATION OF THE ELECTIONS BY THE OBSERVERS

For the monitoring of the snap parliamentary elections on 11 December 2016, accreditation was given to 7,605 national and 642 international observers, 354 interpreters and 98 international journalists.<sup>141</sup> From national organisations, the largest number of observers came from the Citizens Association MOST, 3,599 in total. The Association for Humanitarian Activities SYNERGY from Štip was the second largest organisation with 3,387 observers participating. The remaining organisations had less accredited observers and included: CIVIL – Centre for Freedom (308 observers), the Association National Roma Centre (NRC) from Kumanovo (143), the Institute for Economic Strategies and International Relations from Ohrid (65), the Macedonian Centre for Culture and Development (52), and the Centre for Understanding and Institutional Cooperation from Skopje – CRIS (51).

The Mission of the OSCE/ODIHR was the largest international monitoring mission represented by 281 observers. Other international groups

participated, including: the United States Embassy (51 observers), the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE (27), the OSCE Mission in Skopje (24), the Association of the European Student Structures – AEGEE Europe (24), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (22), the European Union and the European Parliament (16). The Council for Public Diplomacy of Catalonia – DIPLOCAT, the International Study Centre for Elections – Lithuania and SILBA – Support for the Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy – Denmark had 15 observers each. The British Embassy in Skopje provided 12 observers, the French Embassy 8, and the German Embassy, the Italian Embassy and the Albanian Embassy 6. The Swiss Embassy, the Austrian Embassy and the Embassy of the Czech Republic had 2 observers each.

A total of 98 accredited international journalists monitored the election process. The most numerous team was that of the TV network Al Jazeera Balkan which was represented by 16 journalists. Other international media sources included: the State Turkish Radio Television – TRT (8 journalists), RTV 21 Prishtina (7), Radio Television Kosovo (6), Top Channel Tirana and the World Agency Reuters (5), Radio Television Serbia (4), ENG – the Association for Electronic News Greece (4), TV Clan Kosovo (4), TV KTV Koha Vision – Republic of Kosovo (4), ORF – Austria (2), TV Prva and B92 – Republic of Serbia (2), Radio Television Vojvodina (2), Voice of America (2), German national television ARD (1), Radio Television Slovenia (1), the European Pressphoto Agency (1), the Pixsell Agency – Republic of Croatia (1), the News Agency BETA PRESS Serbia (1).

The Mission of the OSCE/ODIHR<sup>142</sup> concluded in its preliminary monitoring report that the Election Day was peaceful, without any major incidents and with a great turnout of voters. The announcement of initial results from the electoral districts, published on the SEC's website in the evening after the elections, also received a positive evaluation. However, in spite of the positive evaluation given by observers, certain procedural irregularities were registered during the election process,

<sup>140</sup> Decision, SEC, 21 December 2016. Accessed 20 December 2016: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8ZpCwro9h-zRWR1Sms1c3R0Mk0/view>

<sup>141</sup> State Election Commission Snap Parliamentary Elections 11.12.2016. Accredited observers. Accessed 3 January 2017: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8ZpCwro9h-zR1FiS21IaTgwMIU/view>

<sup>142</sup> International monitoring mission for elections of the OSCE/ODIHR, Republic of Macedonia, Snap Parliamentary Elections, 11th December 2016, A report on initial finds and conclusions. Accessed at: <http://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/fyrom/288296?download=true> (last visited: 3rd January 2017).

primarily related to the counting of votes. Another issue pertained to the large number of people who were removed from the Voters' List during the process of its revision the control of the register of voters, which disabled certain citizens from voting on election day. There were cases of group voting registered on election day, cases of voter intimidation, unauthorized persons interfering with the work of the Election Boards and inappropriate sealing of ballot boxes. In relation to the Municipal Election Commissions (MEC), there were complaints about the lack of working space, bad organisation and the presence of a larger crowd of people. Additionally, more than half of the observed polling stations had not provided conditions for individual access to voters with disabilities. During the election campaign, there were registered cases of putting pressure on voters and their families, as well as on civil servants, the abuse of administrative resources and the buying of votes in the Roma community.

The OSCE observers gave a generally positive evaluation of the snap elections, which occurred without any large incidents and tensions. Some procedural problems were noticed during the voting on 7 December in the detention facility Idrizovo. These problems related to cases of voters with valid IDs who were not allowed to vote because their names were not on the Voters' List. Besides that, more than 500 convicts with expired IDs were not registered on the Voters' List. In relation to this, the OSCE Mission highlighted the fact that there is no procedure for renewing expired IDs for citizens currently serving prison sentences.

According to the report of the OSCE/ODIHR, the fundamental freedoms of participants for joining associations, for holding public gatherings and freedom of expression and the free running of election campaigns were all fully respected during the pre-election period. However, the Mission of OSCE highlighted the fact that the overall process was accompanied by a lack of public trust in the institutions and political governance. Another notable issue was the use of negative discourse in the campaign, particularly between the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition led by SDSM. The coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, which considered these elections to be a referendum for a unitary and

sovereign state, made accusations against the coalition led by SDSM regarding efforts to weaken the national identity of Macedonia. The coalition led by SDSM also made accusations against the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, mainly regarding the abuse of state authority and other criminal activities. A similar intensity in discourse was noted among parties in the Albanian block while campaigning in their communities. There were violent incidents registered during the election campaign, mainly related to vandalized party offices, damaged cars of party members and destroyed billboards.

In relation to the work conducted by the SEC, some of the main remarks related to a reduced level of transparency. Two indicators for this claim was the holding of sessions behind closed doors and the irregular announcement of decisions made by the SEC on its official website. An additional problem registered during the monitoring mission was the biased actions of SEC members during the decision-making process. Thus, observers noticed that the SEC members made decisions on disputable issues along party lines and interests. The biased nature of the decision-making process was an issue in other cases as well. For instance, while determining the order of candidate lists on the ballot papers via random selection, the lists were divided in two groups and the first positions on the ballot paper were assigned to the four parliamentary parties represented in the SEC: the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, the coalition led by SDSM, DUI and DPA. Such a procedure is considered discriminatory for the other candidates in the election process and it contradicts Position 7.6 from the OSCE Copenhagen Document<sup>143</sup> of 1990 and the standards proposed by the Council of Europe.

Another aspect addressed by the monitoring Mission of the OSCE/ODIHR regarded media coverage. The results from the monitoring revealed a political and ethnic division in the media, as well as a difference in media coverage by some public and private media entities. The two main TV channels, MRT1 and MRT2, enabled a balanced, positive and uncritical presentation of the participants in the election process in their

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<sup>143</sup> The OSCE Copenhagen Document from 1990, OSCE/ODIHR. Accessed 3 January 2017: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/14304?download=true>

news. However, some of the private media entities such as *Sitel*, *Kanal 5 (Channel 5)* and *Alfa*, distributed media coverage between VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM. In all of these three TV stations, the observers registered unbalanced and biased media coverage towards the ruling party and against the parties in opposition. *Telma*, *Alsat-M* and *24 Vesti (24 News)* provided varied and often critical coverage of the main participants in the election process in their informative broadcasting programmes. The Mission expressed its concern regarding self-censure and a lack of editorial independence among the media, due to the political and business interests of the owners themselves. In accordance with amendments and supplements from 2015, the law stipulates a ban on advertising financed by the Government and coverage of the activities of state officials supporting certain political parties during elections. However, activities of this kind were registered during the election campaign. Moreover, the OSCE observers highlighted the fact that certain fundamental media reforms stipulated in the Pržino Agreement had not yet been fully implemented.

The Citizens Association MOST<sup>144</sup> assessed a very high turnout of voters on election day. However, they noted certain irregularities in the voting procedure and incidents, such as bribing and putting pressure on voters, at some polling stations. Moreover, the MOST observers registered certain cases of group/family voting, disrupting the secrecy of voting, taking photos of the ballot papers behind the screens and voters who were not registered on the Voters' List. The election campaign was evaluated as very dynamic, having an intensified negative tone and harsh discourse, while placing the abuse of interethnic issues high on the participants' agendas. During the campaign, pressure was put on employees in the public sector to attend party gatherings and vote for the ruling party. Furthermore, certain state officials were registered to attend party events during working hours and abused public resources, such as state vehicles, for party interests. There were also cases of the illegal allocation of resources from the budget for initiating the construction or opening of facilities financed from public resources.

<sup>144</sup> Parliamentary elections 2016, Citizen's Association MOST. Accessed 4 January 2017: [http://www.most.org.mk/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=itemlist&task=category&id=160:parliamentary-elections-2016&Itemid=326&lang=mk](http://www.most.org.mk/index.php?option=com_k2&view=itemlist&task=category&id=160:parliamentary-elections-2016&Itemid=326&lang=mk)

The US Ambassador<sup>145</sup> to Macedonia, Jess Bailey, also evaluated the elections as favourable with certain procedural irregularities. In his statement, he called the future government to continue working on building the capacities of the SEC and to resolve the legal and structural issues related to the Voters' List. According to Ambassador Bailey, the December elections were just one step leading the country out of the crisis. He therefore called all the parties to enter the new Government, including those from the opposition, to combine their efforts to carry out the necessary reforms for the country's integration into the EU and NATO. The EU Ambassador to Macedonia, Samuel Žbogar<sup>146</sup>, also stated that the elections were successful and the citizens were enabled to express their will. In his view, the new Parliament and the new Government should continue carrying out the reforms necessary to integrate the country into the EU and NATO.

## EVALUATION OF THE ELECTIONS BY THE POLITICAL PARTIES

On 11 December 2016, several hours after closing the polling stations, the initial counting of the votes showed that there was a tight battle between the ruling party VMRO-DPMNE and the largest opposition party SDSM. The close nature of the results caused the two largest parties to come up with different interpretations of the election results and hastily announce their respective victories. The headquarter of SDSM was shortly closed up and the party members and supporters made a procession to the Government building where they celebrated their alleged victory. After a while, SDSM's leader, Zoran Zaev, addressed the gathering, stating: "You should be happy and proud. You have just written history. You will have what to tell to your children and grandchildren. I am proud of you. Macedonia is a proud country, happy country... We are waiting for the results, although the trends can only be rising, not falling now. Therefore, rejoice, the regime has fallen, life has

<sup>145</sup> Bailey for the elections: The EU and NATO membership is a unifying factor, Nova TV, 12 December 2016. Accessed 4 January 2017: <http://novatv.mk/bejli-za-izborite-chlenstvoto-vo-eu-i-nato-e-obedinuvachki-faktor/>

<sup>146</sup> Žbogar: The Pržino Agreement brought successful results, Indeks 24, 15 December 2016. Accessed 4 January 2017: <http://index24.mk/index.php/vesti/makedonija/item/4602-zhbogar-przhinskiot-dogovor-donese-uspeshni-izbori>

won.”<sup>147</sup> The party SDSM was satisfied with the manner of voting and the will of the citizens for change. However, they would later highlight that there were cases of putting pressure on voters, intimidating voters and buying votes on the Election Day.<sup>148</sup>

Soon after that, VMRO-DPMNE called a press conference at which Vlatko Gjørčev, one of the list carriers, addressed the Macedonian citizens and announced the victory of VMRO-DPMNE. Gjørčev invited the citizens to celebrate at the party’s headquarters and added that the elections were fair, democratic, open and inclusive, additionally calling for unity and an end to the crisis.<sup>149</sup> Half past midnight, the leader of VMRO-DPMNE, Nikola Gruevski announced victory for his party in the snap parliamentary elections and expressed his gratitude to all citizens who voted and supported the party. According to Gruevski, the support for his party was within the expected limits. The fact that Zaev received support from the Albanian electorate is something that the party would consider in the future as a lesson learned.<sup>150</sup>

Pavle Trajanov from the Democratic Union and the Coalition for Changes and Justice – the Third Block stated that the elections had shown a great divide among the citizens as the majority of citizens voted for one of the parties in opposition, 612,000 citizens in total. According to Trajanov, there were certain threats, pressures and clientelistic behavior made by the ruling parties in these elections. Instead of deepening the crisis with further protests and pressures on the SEC, he recommended constituting a new composition of the Parliament right after the announcement of the final results in order to establish a parliamentary majority comprised of the parties and representatives striving for change.<sup>151</sup>

<sup>147</sup> Last night both VMRO and SDSM announced their victories and started celebrating, *Alsati M*, 12 December 2016. Accessed 22 December 2016: <http://alsat.mk/News/299502/sinokja-vmro-i-sdsm-proglasija-pobedi-i-pochnaa-da-slavat>

<sup>148</sup> The results known, the suspense continues, *Radio Free Europe*, 12 December 2016. Accessed 22 December 2016: <http://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/28171268.html>

<sup>149</sup> Gjørčev: VMRO-DPMNE celebrates victory on elections, mandate holder Nikola Gruevski, *Vest*, 13 December 2016. Accessed 22 December 2016: <http://www.vest.mk/?ItemID=F503192513609A45B807E8910FAB7BA4&arc=1>

<sup>150</sup> A million-dollar question – Who won the elections?, *Deutsche Welle*, 12 December 2016. Accessed 22 December 2016: <http://www.vest.mk/?ItemID=F503192513609A45B807E8910FAB7BA4&arc=1>

<sup>151</sup> Democratic Union: Divided society. *Democratic Union*, 15 December 2016. Accessed 22 December 2016: [http://www.demokratskisojuz.org.mk/vesti-ns\\_article-demokratski-sojuz-podeleno-opshtestvo.nsp](http://www.demokratskisojuz.org.mk/vesti-ns_article-demokratski-sojuz-podeleno-opshtestvo.nsp)

Stojanče Angelov from the Coalition VMRO for Macedonia, who is the president of Dignity (*Dostoinstvo*), addressed the public on his Facebook profile. Angelov stated that although his Coalition had lost the elections, it had won a sufficient number of votes to impose itself as a third political option in Macedonia. Angelov added that despite these results, after the elections nothing would be the same in Macedonia anymore. He expressed his gratitude to all citizens who had voted in the elections, as well as to those who had voted for the Coalition VMRO for Macedonia.<sup>152</sup> He highlighted the fact that the smaller parties would find it difficult to secure representatives in the Assembly so long as Macedonia is divided into several electoral districts. Regardless of who would constitute the new Government, a deepened political crisis in Macedonia would be inevitable according to Angelov.<sup>153</sup>

Dejan Lutovski, a member of the Presidium of the party *Levica*, stated on the party’s official website that the mechanisms of pressures and threats directed at the voters played a significant role in these elections. Moreover, he added that bearing in mind the minimum financial resources his party used for the elections, as well as numerous limitations they faced as a party, the number of votes the party had won was satisfactory, in spite of their expectations for better results and the securing of mandates in the National Assembly.<sup>154</sup>

In the Albanian block, the parties had different positions. For the leader of DUI, Ali Ahmeti, his party was the winner among the Albanian parties. According to Ahmeti, the elections were peaceful and without problems signifying the country had made great progress and demonstrated maturity in organising elections. However, Ahmeti could not conceal the disappointment and dissatisfaction for the lost mandates, which for him was a loss only for the Albanians. He once more alluded to the fact that the Albanian electorate should not divide in small groups, but should remain together.<sup>155</sup>

<sup>152</sup> Facebook profile of Stojanče Angelov. Accessed 26 December 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/stojance.angelov?fref=ts>

<sup>153</sup> The Macedonian “Third Block” managed to secure one seat at the parliament. *The Untrinski Vesnik*, 12 December 2016. Accessed 26 December 2016: <http://utrinski.mk/?ItemID=0251B53A74077F4EB6E741225BB3DF4F>

<sup>154</sup> Elections 2016 – What next?, Dejan Lutovski – the Left, 15 December 2016. Accessed 22 December 2016: <https://levica.mk/2016/12/15/izbori-lutovski/>

<sup>155</sup> Ahmeti: DUI wins – Albanians lose mandates, *MIA*, 12 December 2016. Accessed 22 December 2016: [http://www.mia.mk/\(S\(cx23nzqr3gtnxf55p2nv4545\)\)/mk/Inside/RenderSingleNews/406/133481408](http://www.mia.mk/(S(cx23nzqr3gtnxf55p2nv4545))/mk/Inside/RenderSingleNews/406/133481408)

The leader of DPA, Menduh Taçi, took full responsibility for the unsatisfactory results for the party in the elections as president of the party and expressed his gratitude to all activists for their support. Taçi did not conceal the satisfaction for DUI's defeat among the Albanians and proclaimed BESA and NDP as winners in these elections. Additionally, he stated that DPA would provide unconditional support to BESA and NDP.<sup>156</sup>

The Movement BESA, which was the biggest surprise in these elections, expressed their satisfaction for the bad results of DUI. According to Bilal Kasami, BESA and NDP emerged as a new political offer, refreshing the political stage in Macedonia and acting in response to DUI's degrading policies.<sup>157</sup> However, in spite of their successful promotion in these elections, the Movement BESA pointed at examples of pressure and attempts by the government to bribe voters, which harmed the party with 50% of the votes.<sup>158</sup> This is why they announced filing complaints in relation to the Electoral District 2 and Electoral District 6.

Ziadin Sela from the Coalition Alliance for the Albanians and the president of the Movement for reforms – DPA, gave a statement for the elections and the election results. According to Sela, the Alliance got the message from the elections and accepted the results the way they were. Sela took this opportunity to address DUI and Ali Ahmeti, alluding to the fact that DUI is to blame for losing Albanian MPs. According to Sela, they are to blame for 10% extra votes in the Electoral District 6 in relation to the other constituencies.<sup>159</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

The eighth parliamentary elections since the independence of the Republic of Macedonia and the fourth consecutive snap elections in a row,

<sup>156</sup> Taçi – I take full responsibility for DPA's electoral result, Radio Free Europe, 12 December 2016. Accessed 22 December 2016: <http://vesti.mk/read/news/11288357/3968872/tachi-celosno-ja-prezemam-odgovornosta-za-izborniot-rezultat-na-dpa>

<sup>157</sup> Democracy wins, establishing coalitions and Government to come, MRT, 12 December 2016. Accessed 22 December 2016: <http://www.mrt.com.mk/node/36605>

<sup>158</sup> Old habits meet new elections, Deutsche Welle, 11 December 2016. Accessed 22 December 2016: [www.dw.com/mk/старите-навики-не-ги-одминаа-новите-избори/a-36729961](http://www.dw.com/mk/старите-навики-не-ги-одминаа-новите-избори/a-36729961)

<sup>159</sup> Albanians have won 20 mandates, BESA and the Alliance enter the Parliament, TV21 Macedonia, 21st December 2016. Accessed at: <http://tv21.tv/mk/?p=112317> (last visited: 26th December 2016).

were held on 11 December 2016 in a peaceful atmosphere and without major incidents. These elections were characterized by a voter turnout of 66.79%, which was the highest turnout of the four parliamentary elections since 2006. The election campaign had a similar character, beginning on the 21 November and lasting until 9 December 2016. During the pre-election period, the political parties and coalitions were enabled to freely promote their programmes and make contact with voters. However, negative and confrontational discourse among the participants in the elections was not lacking in the most recent election campaigns. The main topics dominating the election campaign were the political crisis in Macedonia, the economy, new jobs, federalization of the state, the bilingual issue and the expatriation of the young people.

In these elections, six of the eleven participating parties and coalitions spent more resources than they collected. The parties and coalitions with a positive difference between incomes and expenditures include: the coalition led by SDSM, the Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians," the Liberal Party, the Coalition "VMRO for Macedonia" and Levica. According to the submitted financial reports, the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE spent the largest amount of money 117,212,742 MKD (1,905,898 EUR). The coalition led by SDSM was second in line with expenditures of 33,923,911 MKD (551,608 EUR). Third in expenditures was DUI with 22,684,550 MKD (368,854 EUR). The Coalition "VMRO for Macedonia" spent 8,364,675 MKD (136,011 EUR), the Movement BESA 8,725,348 MKD (141,876 EUR), the Coalition for Changes and Justice – the Third Block 2,469,485 MKD (40,154 EUR), the Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians" 1,052,030 MKD (17,106 EUR), and DPA 2,044,210 MKD (33,239 EUR). The smaller parties such as the Liberal Party, Levica and PDP together spent 863,787 MKD (14,045 EUR) in total.

As in previous elections, the media played a significant role in shaping public opinion. Available reports regarding the media in the election cycle revealed unbalanced media coverage, as well as differences in coverage by public and private media sources. The national TV and radio broadcasting service reported mainly within the regulations for balanced media coverage of participants in the election campaign. Private media sources demonstrated a significant difference in the

way they covered and reported on the election process. Some of them provided unbalanced and biased media coverage on behalf of the ruling VMRO-DPMNE and with a negative tone for the opposition. However, there was certain media that managed to provide varied and often critical media coverage of the main participants in the election process in their informative programmes.

For the first time since the independence of Macedonia, in these parliamentary elections there was a “dead heat” between the two largest political parties in the Macedonian block, VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM. However, the election results awarded the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE with the largest number of mandates in the Assembly (51) with 38.14% of the total votes. The coalition led by SDSM was next in line with 36.66% of the total votes, securing them 49 mandates in the Assembly. DUI secured 10 mandates in the Assembly with 7.28% of the total votes. The Movement BESA and the Coalition “Alliance for the Albanians” which participated in these parliamentary elections for the first time, both achieved satisfactory results. The Movement BESA won 5 mandates with 4.86% of the total votes and the Coalition “Alliance for the Albanians” won 3 mandates with 2.95% of the total votes. DPA performed weakly, securing only 2 mandates or 2.60% of the total number of votes. The rest of the parties and coalitions participating in these elections did not win a sufficient number of votes to secure seats in the national Assembly. Additionally, there will be no representative from the diaspora in the new composition of Parliament as none of the parties or coalitions won the required number of votes.

In accordance with the deadlines, 16 complaints were submitted to the State Election Commission (SEC). The Movement BESA filed 8 complaints, while SDSM filed 8 complaints before withdrawing two of them. The SEC reviewed and rejected all of the complaints filed by SDSM as unfounded, sustaining only one complaint submitted by the Movement BESA within the deadline. Soon after, VMRO-DPMNE as leader of the Coalition “For Better Macedonia” filed a complaint to the Constitutional Court against the decision made by the SEC to accept the complaint submitted by the Movement BESA. The Constitutional Court sustained this objection and rejected the complaint filed by

BESA. The coalition led by SDSM then filed four complaints to the Constitutional Court, three of which were rejected as unfounded and one was sustained regarding polling station 2011 in the municipality of Tearce. The SEC annulled the voting in this polling station and made a decision for a revote, which took place on 25 December 2016. Although the coalition led by SDSM won more votes in the revote in polling station 2011 in the municipality of Tearce, it was not sufficient to change the electoral results from 11 December of the distribution of mandates, 51 for VMRO-DPMNE and 49 for SDSM.

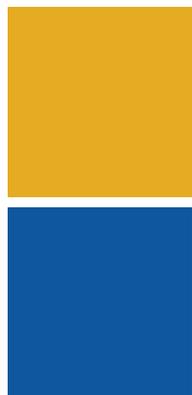
7,605 national and 642 international observers monitored the parliamentary elections. The general assessments of the monitoring missions were that the elections, particularly the voting on the election day, were conducted peacefully and without major incidents. The evaluation of the observers was that the parties were able to freely promote their candidates and that the freedom of joining associations and public gatherings was respected. However, there were certain irregularities registered in the election process. On the Election Day, certain cases of group voting were registered, as well as voter intimidation and inappropriate sealing of ballot boxes. During the election campaign, certain cases of putting pressure on some voters and their families were registered, pressure on some civil servants, cases of administrative abuse of resources and buying votes in the Roma community.

One of the main remarks of observers related to the SEC was the issue with transparency in functioning. There were sessions held behind closed doors and decisions of the SEC were irregularly published on their official website, which confirmed the decreased transparency in functioning. Moreover, the observers registered division among the members of the SEC along party lines in relation to the decisions and solutions for various disputable issues.

The political parties provided different interpretations of the election results. The coalitions led by VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM announced victory in these elections simultaneously. SDSM expressed their satisfaction from the way citizens voted as well as their willingness for

change, highlighting certain cases of putting pressure, intimidating and buying votes on election day. The coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE found the elections fair, democratic, open and inclusive and a step forward to resolve the crisis. Sojanče Angelov, from the Coalition “VMRO for Macedonia” stated that the votes won by the coalition were a sufficient proof that the party managed to impose itself as a viable third political option in Macedonia. He also added that Macedonia would be facing an inevitable and deep political crisis. In the Albanian block, the leader of DUI, Ali Ahmeti, expressed his disappointment for the lost mandates of the Albanians and advised the Albanian electorate not to divide itself into smaller groups, but rather to stay together. The leader of DPA, Menduh Taçi, assumed full responsibility for the negative results for his part, and gave his support for BESA and NDP. The Movement BESA, in addition to the positive results, highlighted certain cases of putting pressure and attempts of bribing voters by the government. The Coalition “Alliance for the Albanians” found the results acceptable, blaming DUI for the loss of Albanian representatives in the national Assembly.

On 30 December 2016, the constitutional session of the Republic of Macedonia’s Assembly was held in order to verify the mandates of the 120 newly elected representatives and assert the new composition of the Parliament. The former President of the Parliament, Trajko Veljanoski, chaired this session.



## **ELECTION ARCHIVE OF ELECTIONS IN MACEDONIA FROM 1990 TO DATE**

### **ELECTION ARCHIVE OF ELECTIONS IN MACEDONIA FROM 1990 TO DATE**

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation Office in the Republic of Macedonia and the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" - Skopje (IDSCS), as of March 2016 are implementing the joint project "**Election Archive of elections in Macedonia from 1990 to date**". The goal of this project is to provide a comprehensive report of the electoral processes in the country starting from 1990 until today. This project includes all previously organized elections, including presidential, parliamentary and local, and presents all available documents on the electoral processes in one place.

The need to implement such a project arises from the lack of an official state archive containing all documents and data related to the election cycles since the independence of the country. The Election Archive groups the documents into 7 sections:

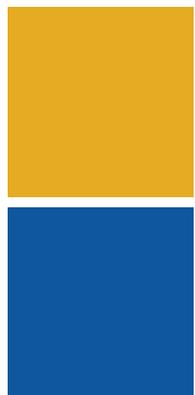
1. Documents on election announcements
2. Voters' list
3. Candidates' lists
4. Election results
5. Election reports
6. Monitoring reports by national and international organizations
7. Election Code

The Election Archive is updated in parallel with the elections and all relevant documents in the above sections are attached.

A crucial component of the Election Archive are the manuals for presidential, parliamentary and local elections prepared during the election period to reflect the results of the latest elections. These manuals are produced under the cooperation of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" - Skopje. So far three manuals have been prepared: for the local elections in

2013, the presidential elections in 2014 and the parliamentary elections in 2014. All manuals are available on the website of the Election Archive in Macedonian, Albanian and English languages.

Election Archive is accessible at the following link:  
<http://www.izbornaarhiva.mk>



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