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Societas Civilis - Skopje

**THE REPUBLIC
OF MACEDONIA'S
2017
LOCAL ELECTIONS
HANDBOOK**

SECOND UPDATED EDITION

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POLITICS

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INTRODUCTION TO THE 2017 LOCAL ELECTIONS

INTRODUCTION TO THE 2017 LOCAL ELECTIONS

The sixth local elections since the independence of the Republic of Macedonia will take place on 15th October 2017. The President of the Parliament, within his legal authority, called the local elections¹ on 6th August 2017.² Mayors and councilors will be elected in 80 local municipalities and the city of Skopje.

During the previous mandate of the local authorities, from March 2013 until May 2017, most of the mayoral seats were held by members of the Inner Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE), which won 55 mayoral seats and 559 positions of councilors. The runner-up in the 2013 elections was the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), which won 14 mayoral seats and 176 positions of councilors. The Social-Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) had mayors in 4 municipalities, and held 395 positions of municipal councilors. The second largest party with Albanian electorate, the Democratic Party of the Albanians (DPA), held two mayoral seats and 101 positions of councilors. Besides these parties, there was one mayor elected from each the Democratic Party of the Turks in Macedonia (DPTM), the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), and the Macedonian Roma Union (SRM). DPTM won 22 positions of councilors, while SRM got 11 and SNS 7 positions in the local municipal councils. Two independent candidates won mayoral seats and 55 positions of councilors. There were other parties that

¹ The full title of the decision is as follows: Decision to Call Local Elections for Members of the Municipal Councils and the City of Skopje's Council, as well as for Mayors of the Municipalities and the Mayor of the City of Skopje.

² "The local elections will take place on 15th October", Akademik MK. Accessed at: <http://www.akademik.mk/lokalnite-izbori-ke-se-odrzhat-na-15-oktomvri> (last visited on: 28th August 2017).

won only positions in the municipal councils. The National Democratic Revival (NDP) won 26 positions of councilors, the Democratic Renewal of Macedonia (DOM) 10, the National Movement for Macedonia (RMM) 9, the Movement for National Unity of the Turks (DNET) 5, the Party for European Future (PEI) 5, the United Democratic Forces of the Roma (ODSR) 4, the Social Democratic Union (SDU) 3, the Liberal Party (LP) 2, and the Social Democratic Party of Macedonia (SDSM) 1.

On the national level, VMRO-DPMNE had been in power since 2006, having won four consecutive parliamentary elections, which took place on 1st June 2008, 5th June 2011, and 27th April 2014. In the snap elections that were held on 11th December 2016, the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE won 2 positions in the Parliament more than the coalition led by SDSM. However, they did not succeed in creating a parliamentary majority or establishing the government.

Consequently, the 2017 Local Elections were preceded by a turbulent and dynamic period filled with many political disruptions and upheavals. After the snap elections on 11th December 2016, the several-year long political crisis culminated in a delay in constituting the Parliament and the election of a new President of the Assembly from the new parliamentary majority, for almost 5 months after the elections. The coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE won 51 mandates in the elections, and the coalition led by SDSM won 49 mandates. DUI won 10, BESA 5, the Alliance of the Albanians (AA) 3, and DPA 2 mandates.³ Prior to the start of the negotiations among the parties for establishing coalitions for the new government, on 7th January 2017, the leaders of the Albanian parties, i.e. DUI's Ali Ahmeti, BESA's Bilal Kasami, and the leader of the Alliance of the Albanians Zijadin Sela had a meeting in Tirana with the Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama, where they all signed the so-called "Declaration of the Albanian Parties in Macedonia",

³ "The Results from the Election of MPs in the Republic of Macedonia's Parliament held on 11th December 2016", the Republic of Macedonia's Assembly. Accessed at: <http://www.sobranie.mk/izborni-rezultati-2016.nspix> (last visited on: 29th August 2017).

which later became known as the "Albanian Platform", or the "Tirana Platform". According to the signees, the goal of the Platform was to secure that the unresolved issues of the Albanians in Macedonia would be a priority for the new government, regardless of which party would be forming it. The document⁴ prepared in Tirana contained seven points that encompass a set of demands for equality in accordance with the Ohrid Framework Agreement and the Constitution: creating a balanced regional development; respecting the rule of law; building trust in the interethnic relations; finding a solution for the name dispute; establishing good neighborly relations, and a fast Euro-Atlantic integration.

The President of the Republic, Gjorgje Ivanov, in accordance with his constitutional authority, gave the mandate for forming the new government to Nikola Gruevski on 9th January, as the leader of the party which had won the majority of positions in the Parliament, VMRO-DPMNE. Thereupon, VMRO-DPMNE started negotiations with the parties of the Albanians in order to form a parliamentary majority of 61 MPs and a new government.

The party BESA declared⁵ that it will not negotiate for any possible coalition with the parties VMRO-DPMNE and DUI due to the fact that members of both parties are incriminated in cases run by the Special Public Prosecution (SPP). The Alliance of the Albanians also refused to negotiate with VMRO-DPMNE due to the, as they reported, "anti-Albanian rhetoric" of certain members of that party.⁶ DUI accepted the possibility to negotiate with VMRO-DPMNE as their partners in the previous governments, and their teams started the negotiations on

⁴ "Joint Platform of the Albanian Parties", Fokus.mk. Accessed at: <http://fokus.mk/zaednichkata-platforma-na-albanskite-partii/> (last visited on: 29th August 2017).

⁵ "BESA refuses negotiations with incriminated politicians", Telma TV. Accessed at: <http://telma.com.mk/vesti/besa-ne-pregovara-so-inkriminirani-politichari> (Last visited on: 30.08.2017).

⁶ "BESA and the Alliance of the Albanians see Gruevski as anti-Albanian", Alsat-M, Accessed at: <http://www.alsat-m.tv/mk/Беса-и-Алијансата-за-Албанците-во-Грue/> (Last visited on: 25.09.2017).

19th January for preserving the coalition. However, on 30th January, both parties announced that they could not reach any agreement to form a coalition, and that their positions had diverged. VMRO-DPMNE's position was that they cannot cross their red lines with regard to DUI's demand for bilingualism on the entire state territory on the one hand, and revoking the SJO, due to the fact that it had become a party instrument of SDSM, on the other. At the same time, VMRO-DPMNE demanded⁷ calling new parliamentary elections as the only solution of the crisis. DUI announced that they had not reached a decision to establish the coalition due to the fact that in their inter-party debate there were not enough arguments in favor of the coalition. On 1st February, President Ivanov announced that he will not give the mandate for establishing the new government to Zoran Zaev, the leader of runner-up SDSM, until he provides signatures to confirm the support from the majority of the MPs in Parliament. He also requested a guarantee⁸ that the new mandate holder would protect the national interests and carry out a reform of the national security system. The parties BESA and DPA made it clear that their MPs would give their signatures in order to enable Zaev to get the mandate. On the other hand, on 6th February, SDSM started negotiations with DUI to form the parliamentary majority and the government. DUI's leader, Ali Ahmeti, promised to support Zaev with his party's signatures if he provided a written guarantee that SDSM would accept the demands from the "Declaration of the Albanian Parties". This guarantee was provided by Zaev on 13th February, but both parties refused to make the contents of the document public. On 24th February, DUI gave their MPs signatures to SDSM as support for Zaev to receive the mandate for the new composition of the government from President Ivanov, which secured the proof that he had the support of the majority of MPs in Parliament.

⁷ "Gruevski failed to form government now demands new elections", Radio Free Europe. Accessed at: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/28266302.html> (Last visited on: 30.08.2017).

⁸ "Announcement after consulting the political parties represented in the Republic of Macedonia's Assembly", President of the Republic of Macedonia. Accessed at: <http://president.mk/mk/2011-06-17-09-55-07/2011-07-19-10-40-39/4319.html> (Last visited on: 30.08.2017).

On 26th February, the leader of VMRO-DPMNE, Gruevski, published a post on Facebook, stating that Macedonia had been long under attack by, as he called them, "external power centres". Gruevski highlighted that these centers were carrying out an operation aiming at removing VMRO-DPMNE from power, and, by introducing Zaev, weakening the state and finally change the name and the identity of the Macedonians. On his Facebook profile, he called the people to defend the state.⁹ The following day, on 27th February, Zaev forwarded the signatures to President Ivanov, with the request to receive the mandate for establishing a new government as soon as possible. On the same day, the newly established initiative "For Joint Macedonia"¹⁰ initiated their daily protests against the acceptance of the "Albanian Platform" by Zaev, at the same time demanding to reject it in order to preserve the unitary character of the state. On 1st March, Ivanov again refused to give the mandate to Zaev, with the explanation¹¹ that the constitutional deadline has not been met, highlighting the fact that he would not give the mandate to anyone negotiating the implementation of foreign agendas, referring to the Platform of the Albanians. At the same time, Ivanov asked for international rejection of this platform which, as he stated "threatens the sovereignty and the unitary character of Macedonia".

In this period, EU's Enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn, EU's Foreign and Security Policy High Representative Federica Mogherini, and Brian Hoyt Yee, Deputy Assistant of the US State Secretary, visited Macedonia in order to apply pressure, so that the crisis would be overcome sooner, the new parliament constituted, and the new

⁹ Nikola Gruevski's statement, President of VMRO-DPMNE, Facebook. Accessed at: <https://www.facebook.com/NGruevski/posts/10155007364502716> (last visited on: 30.08.2017)

¹⁰ "The Citizens Initiative for Common Macedonia has made an announcement: Time has come for the Fourth Ilinden", Kurir. Accessed at: <http://kurir.mk/makedonija/vesti/graganskata-initsijativa-za-zaednichka-makedonija-objavi-proglas-dojde-vreme-za-chetvrtiot-ilinden/> (last visited on: 30.08.2017).

¹¹ Address of the President of the Republic of Macedonia, Gjorgje Ivanov (PhD)", President of the Republic of Macedonia. Accessed at: <http://president.mk/mk/2011-06-17-09-55-07/2011-07-19-10-40-39/4353.html> (last visited on: 30.08.2017).

government formed. Mogherini, during her visit, tried to convince Ivanov to give the mandate for establishing the government to the new parliamentary majority. At the same time Russia¹² announced its position: The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs described the situation in Macedonia as a result of the interference of NATO and the EU to make sure that Macedonians would accept the "Tirana Platform", which, in their opinion, was based on the map for a Great Albania. However, these visits of international high representatives did not substantially influence the political actors in Macedonia, with most of them adhering to their former positions.

On 27th March 2017, the Assembly continued its constitutional session that had started on 30th December 2016, which was presided by the previous President of the Parliament, Trajko Veljanovski from VMRO-DPMNE. Meanwhile, the MPs of VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM, did not file requests for establishing parliamentary groups, so that their representatives could evade the limitations set by the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly in relation to the number and length of discussions. The MPs of the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE used this opportunity to prolong the discussion on the election of the president and members of the Commission for Election and Appointments, which precedes the election of the President of the Assembly, until 27th April. The election of the president is necessary in order to arrange a session for the election of a new government. During this time the daily protests of the initiative "For Joint Macedonia" continued, always gathering in front of the Parliament building. Until that day, the protests had generally been peaceful. However, on 27th April, after the presiding Trajko Veljanovski had announced the end of the working day at the Assembly at 17:00h, the new parliamentary majority decided to continue the session with voting to move to the second issue from the agenda for that day, i.e. election of the President of the Assembly. The

¹² Comment by the Information and Press Department on the Greater Albania threat to stability in the Balkans", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. Accessed at: http://www.mid.ru/en/web/guest/maps/al/-/asset_publisher/U6ix5j-p8oEzV/content/id/2735157 (Last visited on: 25.09.2017)

MPs from the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, in an attempt to prevent this, surrounded and took over the speaker's podium in the plenary hall. In a tense and chaotic atmosphere, the representatives of the majority, in their part of the hall, voted in favor of moving to the next point of the agenda, and thereupon voted for DUI's MP Talat Xhaferi to become the new President of the Assembly.

These developments stirred part of the protesters from "For Joint Macedonia" who were in front of the Parliament building at that time to penetrate the protective fence and the police cordon, and they managed to reach the compartment where the MPs were located. The slow reaction of the police forces and the Parliament's security in preventing the intrusion was apparent. Part of the crowd that reached the Assembly soon attacked some of the MPs and journalists who were being moved into the Parliament's pressroom. During this incident, some of the representatives of the newly established parliamentary majority, including several journalists, were injured. SDSM leader and future government mandate holder Zoran Zaev was among the injured, while the leader of the coalition Alliance for the Albanians, Zijadin Sela, received more serious injuries. After the assault, Sela was taken to hospital and kept for treatment for several days

The representatives of the majority in the Assembly led by SDSM labeled the intrusion of the demonstrators as an "attempted murder" of some of their MPs, orchestrated by VMRO-DPMNE, and an attempt to provoke street conflicts among the citizens in order to call a state of emergency. The representatives of the new opposition led by VMRO-DPMNE characterized the event as a "violation of the Constitution and a coup" organized by SDSM, and said that the demonstrators had been completely provoked by SDSM to enter the Parliament building. The media called the incident "Black Friday". All the political parties and the international community condemned the events of 27th April, and the investigation is still examining the incidents.

According to the Electoral Code¹³ the mandates of the councilors elected in the 2013 Local Elections were supposed to expire in April 2017, and the mayors' mandates on 15th May 2017. Thus, the new local elections were supposed to take place in the first half of May 2017. However, due to the delay in constituting the Parliament, the deadline for calling the elections expired on 6th March.¹⁴ In order to overcome the possible legal discrepancies due to the expiry of the mandates, the Ministry of Local Self Government and the World Macedonian Congress filed two initiatives¹⁵ to the Constitutional Court: to reexamine the constitutional character of certain articles of the Law on Local Self Government and the Electoral Code. One of the initiatives addressed the article of the Law on Local Self Government which determines the councilors' mandates to expire prior to the mayors', insisting on revoking it since it creates inequality in the duration of mandates.

The initiative concerning the Electoral Code required annulling the provision that the election shall take place in the "first half of May". During the session held on 10th May, the Constitutional Court rejected both initiatives and brought forth the decision that both disputed articles are in accordance with the Constitution. A day earlier, on 9th May, the Association of the Local Self Government Units (ZELS),¹⁶ the members of which are all the municipalities and mayors, required the Assembly to extend the mandates of the elected officials on behalf of

¹³ 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, 54/11, 142/12, 31/13, 34/13, 14/14, 30/14, 196/15, 35/16, 97/16 и 99/16). Accessed at: https://www.sobranie.mk/content/Избори/ИЗБОРЕН%20ЗАКОНИК%20-%20ПРЕЧИСТЕН%20ТЕКСТ_%20МАЈ%202016.pdf (Last visited on: 28.08.2017).

¹⁴ "Local Elections to be postponed", The Nova Makedonija, 7th March 2017. Accessed at: <http://novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetail?title=Локалните-избори-пред-одложување-&id=cbe251d9-f7b6-4658-a754-e89b0f50ef17> (Last visited on: 28.08.2017).

¹⁵ Decision (U.No. 29/2017-0-0) from 10th May 2017. The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Macedonia. Accessed at: <http://www.ustavensud.mk/domino/WEBSUD.nsf> (Last visited on: 28.08.2017).

¹⁶ "ZELS: Assembly urged to extend mayors' and councilors' mandates", Telma, 9th May 2017. Accessed at: <http://telma.com.mk/vesti/zels-sobranieto-da-go-prodolzhi-mandatot-na-gradonachalnicite-i-sovetnicite> (Last visited on: 24.08.2017)

the municipalities, arguing that the functions need to be fulfilled in order to avoid illegal decision making.

After the events of 27th April, VMRO-DPMNE refused to acknowledge the election of the new President of the Assembly, DUI's Talat Xhaferi, with the explanation that the Constitution had been violated by the election procedure. This led to a delay for Mr Xhaferi's formally acquiring the position until 9th May, when the Official Gazette published the decision about the election of the new President of the Assembly.

On 1st May, the Deputy Assistant of the US State Secretary, Hoyt Yee, visited Macedonia for the second time in order to meet with President Ivanov and the leaders of the political parties involved in the recent events. After the meeting, the President's Office announced that if there is a true leadership among the heads of the parliamentary parties, the legal and political obstacles for determining a mandate for the constitution of the government are unsurpassable. In this announcement,¹⁷ Zaev was requested to provide guarantees for strengthening the unitary character of the state and for every step to be in accordance with the Constitution. On 17th May, he eventually presented a written letter of guarantee for the protection of the constitutional order of the country, after which Ivanov provided him with the mandate¹⁸ for the constitution of the new government. The Parliament continued its work with a session in which on 31st May the Government¹⁹ of the mandate holder Zoran Zaev from SDSM was elected.

¹⁷ "Meeting with the Deputy Assistant of the US State Secretary for European and Euro-Asian Affairs, Mr. Hoyt Brian Yee", President of the Republic of Macedonia, 1st May 2017. Accessed at: <http://president.mk/mk/2011-06-17-09-55-07/2011-09-03-11-41-54/4428.html> (Last visited on: 31.08.2017).

¹⁸ "President Ivanov handed over the mandate for the constitution of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia". President of the Republic of Macedonia, 17th May 2017. Accessed at: <http://president.mk/mk/2011-06-17-09-55-07/2011-09-03-11-36-59/4441.html> (Last visited on: 31.08.2017).

¹⁹ "New Government Elected in the Republic of Macedonia", The Government of the Republic of Macedonia, 1st June 2017. Accessed at: <http://vlada.mk/node/12802> (Last visited on: 31.08.2017).

On 1st June²⁰, the Assembly adopted the changes in the Electoral Code that replaced the term for holding the local elections in May 2017 by October 2017, with which the mandates of the presiding councilors and mayors were extended.

ELECTION PARTICIPANTS

There are 19 political entities that are represented on the electoral lists for mayors, either individually or in coalitions. However, none of them has nominated candidates for mayors in all of the 81 Local Self Government Units. The biggest number of candidates, 70, has been nominated by the coalition led by SDSM, six of which are women. VMRO-DPMNE and its coalition partners (in one case individually) have nominated 68 candidates for mayors in total, four of which are women. DUI has nominated 18 candidates, (only one woman), BESA ten (one woman), and DPA has nominated 7 candidates for mayors, none of which is a woman. The political party Alliance of the Albanians is promoting 6 candidates, the Social Democratic Party of Macedonia (SDPM) has put forward four and the Left three candidates, the coalition Alliance of the Albanians, the People's Movement for Macedonia (NDM) and the Democratic Party of the Turks in Macedonia (DPTM) have nominated two candidates each, while the parties Permanent Macedonian Radical Unification (TMRO), Movement for National Unity of the Turks (DNET), Citizens` Option for Macedonia (GROM), Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) and the Union of the Roma from Macedonia (SRM) have put forward one mayoral candidate each. There are 26 independent mayoral candidates, out of which only two are women. Out of the total 224 candidates for mayors, only 16 are women (7%). Unlike the legal obligation for the parties to promote a third of their candidates from the sex less represented on their lists for councilors, there is no such

²⁰ "Local Elections to take place on 15th October", TV Nova, 2nd June 2017. Accessed at: <http://tvnova.mk/vesti/makedonija/lokalnite-izbori-ke-se-odrzhat-na-15-ti-oktomvri/> (Last visited on: 24.08.2017).

obligation for mayoral candidates.²¹ All the participants in the elections have met this condition, since the electoral administration will reject any list that does not fulfill the legal obligations.

Regarding candidates for councilors, total of 373 lists were submitted by all parties, groups and coalitions involved in these local elections.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2017 LOCAL ELECTIONS

The amendment to the Electoral Code, in the section of Article 16 where the date for the elections was changed from May to October 2017, can be considered the start of the preparations. The Assembly adopted this amendment on 1st June 2017. The President of the Assembly, Talat Xhaferi, within his authority, called the local elections on 6th August. During its session on 5th September, the Government adopted the "Declarative Commitments for Free and Fair Elections",²² where it declares "its commitment towards advancing the electoral process and preventing pressure on the citizens". With this declaration, the Government stated its intention to form a Coordinative body that will monitor the compliance with the restrictions deriving from the Electoral Code in the period from the call for elections until their completion. It also announced its intention to publish a list of initiated projects that represent regular and current activities, and that it will request all municipalities including the City of Skopje to follow this example.

According to the Timetable for Conducting Elections, the participants in the campaigns were allowed to open their bank accounts earliest on 8th August 2017 (48 hours after the call for elections), and no later than

²¹ Article 64 from the Electoral Code.

²² "Declarative commitments for free and fair elections", Government of the Republic of Macedonia. Accessed at: <http://vlada.mk/sites/default/files/Декларативни%20заложиби%20за%20слободни%20и%20фер%20избори.pdf> (Last visited on: 25.09.2017).

48 hours after the candidate lists have been confirmed. The accounts are to be closed in a period of three months after the elections are concluded.

Even before the start of the election campaign, which, in accordance with the Electoral Code, started on 25th September, the largest parties started promoting some of their candidates for mayors and councilors. Among the first, as early as on 3rd September, Arben Taravari from the Alliance of the Albanians, currently Minister of Health, confirmed his intention to run for the mayoral position. SDSM and their coalition partners promoted some of their candidates for mayors in the Skopje municipalities and the City of Skopje on 5th September. The coalition of VMRO-DPMNE started the official promotion of their candidates for mayors on 13th September, when they announced some of the names for the Skopje municipalities and the City of Skopje. The parties then continued to announce the rest of the names of their candidates for mayors. VMRO-DPMNE framed the candidate announcement process with a great convention in Skopje. The Alliance of the Albanians had their promotional event on 25th September in Tetovo. SDSM presented their candidates at several smaller local events.

The starting date for collecting signatures to be presented to the authorized personnel at the State Election Commission (SEC), in order to promote the lists of candidates for mayors of the municipalities, i.e. the City of Skopje, and the lists of candidates for members of the municipal councils, i.e. the council of the City of Skopje, is set for 15 days after the elections are called. The timeframe for collecting signatures for the SEC started on 21st August and ended on 4th September 2017.

In the period between 21st August and 9th September 2017, the Voter List was publicly displayed, which enabled every citizen to confirm the accuracy of their data. The Voter List contains all adult citizens (over

18 years old) residing on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, holding biometric personal IDs. In addition, the Voter List contains citizens of the Republic of Macedonia residing or temporarily working abroad, but holding valid travel documents.

According to the SEC`s Timeline for Conducting Elections , it is obliged to announce the candidate lists for mayors and councilors on the polling stations in the municipalities 23 days prior to the elections.²³

In accordance with the determined deadlines and the abovementioned Timeline, the campaign starts on 25th September and ends on 13th October, while for the second round, the campaign concludes on 27th October 2017 at midnight.²⁴

RECENT AMENDMENTS TO THE ELECTORAL LEGISLATION²⁵

The latest amendments to the electoral legislation derive from the Przhino Agreement. In the 75th session, the Assembly brought forth a package of laws, including the Law Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code,²⁶ that derive from the Przhino Agreement and the leaders' meeting, aiming at creating conditions for fair and legitimate snap parliamentary elections. These amendments encompass the following key aspects of the election process:

²³ Full candidate lists for mayors and members of the councils are available at <https://kandidati.sec.mk/Default.aspx>

²⁴ Timetable for conducting election activities and carrying out the 2017 Local Elections for mayors and members of the councils for the municipalities and the City of Skopje. State Election Commission, 7th August 2017. Accessed at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8ZpCwro9h-zRHM2Qy1ndEM0VHM/view> (Last visited on: 5th September 2017).

²⁵ KAS, IDSCS, The Republic of Macedonia's 2016 Parliamentary Elections Handbook, second updated edition. Available at: http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_21607-1442-2-30.pdf?170131155919

²⁶ Law Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 196, 10th November 2015. Accessed at: <http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/63cc34eb402342698f7e82e59629175a.pdf> (Last visited on: 9th September 2017).

- The use of state premises, equipment, and transportation for the requirements of the campaign is strictly forbidden, except under specific provisions.
- As part of the amendments of the Electoral Code, it is intended to introduce a Code for Fair and Democratic Elections²⁷ to be signed by the political parties participating in the elections, starting from the day when the elections are called. With the Code, the participants are obliged not to apply pressure on the employees in the public and state administration or other institutions financed by the Republic of Macedonia's budget. In addition, the Code's role is to guarantee that the citizens' support, or lack of support, for any political party or candidate will not provoke any threats imposed by the participants in the election process, in relation to the citizens' employment or social security. In relation to the 2017 Local Elections, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, on 5th September 2017, brought forth the Declarative Commitments for Free and Fair Elections, which respond to Priebe's recommendations and the Przhino Agreements as of 2nd June 2015 and 20th July 2016, respectively. According to this declaration, a coordinative body should be established to control the process of compliance with the Electoral Code. With this declaration, the Government is obliged to publish a list of all initiated projects financed from the Budget of the Republic of Macedonia²⁸
- The composition of the SEC was changed and now includes nine instead of seven members. It currently comprises a president, vice president, and 7 members. The method of selecting

²⁷ Code for Fair and Democratic Elections, November 2016. Accessed at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8ZpCwro9h-zTGdoMmZIZjV4UkE/view> (Last visited on: 5th September 2017).

²⁸ Government of the Republic of Macedonia, Declarative Commitments for Free and Fair Elections, September 2017. Accessed at: <http://vlada.mk/sites/default/files/Декларативни%20заложи%20за%20слободни%20и%20фер%20избори.pdf> (last visited on: 25th September 2017).

the members of the SEC was also changed. With the new amendments, the political parties in power recommend three members, two of which are recommended by the governmental party with the largest group of MPs in the Assembly, and one member is recommended by the second largest party. The parties in opposition recommend three members, two of which are recommended by the opposition party with the largest number of MPs in the Assembly, and the third member is recommended by the second largest opposition party. Three expert members shall be selected by consensus. The amendment introduced the position of Secretary General of the SEC, with the intention to strengthen the administrative segment. The Secretary General is not part of the SEC's composition and is not entitled to vote.

- Additional amendments to the Electoral Code include provisions related to the Voter List. The SEC is appointed as the only authorized institution to run and update the Voter List. The SEC enables an electronic access to the Voter List in accordance with the provisions. The SEC publishes the Voter List on its website, enabling each citizen to file a request to the SEC without revealing their address publicly for security reasons. The SEC updates the Voter List once per month, and every 6 months issues a public call to the citizens to review their data. In addition, in order to determine the validity of the Voter List, each member of the SEC can look into the database of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for issued biometric IDs, as well as into the databases of other state organs and institutions. The SEC adopts a Rulebook on the methodology of running and updating the Voter List, based on regular examinations and statistics, cross-examinations of various databases and registers, field examinations and other suitable and recognized methods of checking, as well as a Rulebook on the methodology for full access, making changes

and deleting data from the Voter List, as well as a procedure for conducting field examinations in order to update it.

- The amendments to the Electoral Code envision an increase of the percentage of the less represented sex in the submitted candidate lists for members of the councils in the municipalities and the City of Skopje, from the current 33% to 40%. Hence, every third candidate should be from the less represented sex, and in addition, every tenth candidate should also be from the less represented sex.
- When it comes to media presentation, the amendments to the Electoral Code, for the first time, enlist the electronic media (Internet portals) as media which, just like radio broadcasting and printed media that cover the election process, are obliged to work in accordance with the Electoral Code. In addition, financing and donating resources to the political parties by the media and persons related to them is strictly forbidden, as well as broadcasting ads financed by the Republic of Macedonia's Budget and budgets of the municipalities and the City of Skopje. The amendments to the Electoral Code focus on enabling equal and balanced access for the political parties to the advertising space.

In 2017, two major changes were introduced to the Electoral Code. First, the date for holding local election was changed from May to October. The Republic of Macedonia's Assembly thus prolonged the mandates of the council members and the mayors received at the elections held on 24th March 2013 until the election of new council members and mayors in the first half of October 2017.²⁹ On 11th September 2017, a new amendment was introduced to the Electoral Code, which obliges the

²⁹ Law Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 67/17.

Republic of Macedonia's Assembly to harmonize the composition of the State Election Commission with the results of the last elections of MPs in the Republic of Macedonia's Assembly, no later than 30 days prior to the day of the elections.³⁰

³⁰ Law Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 125/17.



HISTORY OF THE LOCAL ELECTIONS IN MACEDONIA (1996-2013)

HISTORY OF THE LOCAL ELECTIONS IN MACEDONIA (1996-2013)

The first local elections in the independent Republic of Macedonia were held in 1996, when the average voter turnout for the election of councilors for the municipalities was 60.17%, while it was 53.20% for the City of Skopje. The average voter turnout for the election of mayors was 60.28%, while it was 53.20% for the City of Skopje. Due to irregularities in the voting process, in some municipalities the votes were annulled, meaning that the data do not include the results of the election of mayors and council members from 9 municipalities in total. These local elections were held in accordance with the territorial organization as of 1996, according to which 123 municipalities were established, with the City of Skopje as a separate unit.³¹ SDSM won the majority of mayoral positions, 51 in total, VMRO-DMPNE and MAAK-Conservative won 27 positions, and the Socialist Party won 19 positions.³² 1,495,288 voters had the right to vote.

During the local elections in 2000, there were considerable violations in the election process according to the international standards for free and democratic elections. The elections took place with a series of incidents and outbursts of violence, as well as intimidation of citizens. In the municipalities of Gostivar, Tetovo, Labunista, Dzepciste, and Mavrovi Anovi, the elections were accompanied with armed incidents.

³¹ The Law on Territorial Division of the Republic of Macedonia and Determination of the Areas of the Local Self-Government Units. Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, 49/1996, 14.09.1996. Accessed at: <http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/CAFFB1AA376347A0B1E3044B8FAC16C6.pdf> (last visited on: 28.08.2017)

³² State Election Commission, 1996 Local Elections: Final results of the local elections for mayors and members of councils of the municipalities and the City of Skopje. Skopje 1997. Accessed at: http://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/Локални%20избори%201996/5_Извештај%20од%20избори/Извештај%20од%20локални%20избори%201996_ДИК.pdf (last visited on: 24.09.2017)

In several electoral units of other municipalities the ballot boxes were opened and destroyed by force. Violence also occurred in various places during the second voting round. The mission of OSCE/ODIHR registered group voting in 25% of the monitored locations, in 8% of the locations an open voting was registered, and in 5% voting instead of other persons. After these elections, the SEC did not publish full and comprehensive results of the elections. In the first round, the coalition "For Macedonia Together" led by SDSM won 38% of the votes for mayors, the coalition of VMRO-DPMNE and Democratic Alternative (DA) 27%, DPA 13%, and PDP 6%.³³ The final results showed victory for the coalition of VMRO-DPMNE and Democratic Alternative "For Changes" in 48% of the municipalities, which implied 59 mayoral positions. The coalition led by SDSM "For Macedonia Together" won 32 mayoral positions.³⁴ 1,634,859 voters had the right to vote.

The local elections in 2005 повторно again did not meet the key international standards for universality, equality and secrecy of the right to vote. Unlike the previous ones, these elections were not marked with violence, but there was a considerable amount of irregularities in the western and northwestern regions of the country, as well as in Skopje. At the same time, the elections in 2005 were the first ones held according to the territorial organization as of 2004 which established 84 municipalities on the territory of Macedonia, preserving the status of the City of Skopje as a separate unit of local government.³⁵ The mission of OSCE/ODIHR registered 30 cases of stuffing the ballot boxes and over 50 cases of voting instead of other persons. In 9 municipalities,

³³ Ibid

³⁴ OSCE/ODIHR Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Municipal Elections 10 September 2000. OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report. Warsaw, 2000. Accessed at: <http://idscs.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/finalen-izvestaj-OSCE-ODIHR-2000.pdf> (last visited on: 28.08.2017).

³⁵ Law on Territorial Organization of the Local Self Government. Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No.55/2004, 16.08.2004. Accessed at: <http://www.pravo.org.mk/documentDetail.php?id=204> (last visited on: 28.08.2017)

among which the City of Skopje, as a result of the complaints related to the irregularities in the first voting round, the latter had to be repeated. The second round of voting was to take place at these locations as well, which resulted in delays of the second round that was then held on 10th April 2005. The voter turnout in the first round was 56.36%, in the second round on 27th March 53.66%, and on 10th April 35.6%. As a result of these elections, the coalition led by SDSM won 36 mayoral positions. VMRO-DPMNE and their coalition won 21 mayoral positions, DUI 15, VMRO-NP 3, DPA 2 and the Union of the Roma 1. Seven independent candidates became mayors, among which the candidate for the City of Skopje, Trifun Kostovski, who was supported by VMRO-DPMNE.³⁶ 1,711,293 voters had the right to vote.

The local elections in 2009, which were held on the same day as the presidential elections, were the first local elections which took place in general accordance with the international and OSCE standards for democratic elections. However, the OSCE/ODIHR mission still had major remarks related to the intimidation of voters during these elections. The monitoring report points at intimidation and pressure on the voters, particularly on those employed in the public administration as well as social welfare beneficiaries, who were threatened to vote for the ruling party.³⁷ In the 2009 elections there were also cases of family votes, voting instead of other persons (3% of the cases), one

³⁶ OSCE/ODIHR Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Local Elections 12th and 27th March and 10th April 2005. OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, Warsaw, 2005. Accessed at: http://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/Локални%20избори%202005/6_Извештаи%20од%20меѓународни%20и%20домашни%20набљудувачи/Финален%20набљудувачки%20извештај%20локални%20избори%202005_Македонија_ОБСЕ-ОДИХР_АНГ_оригинал.pdf (last visited on: 24.09.2017).

³⁷ OSCE/ODIHR Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Presidential and Municipal Elections 22 March and 5 April 2009. OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report. Warsaw, June 2009. Accessed at: http://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/Локални%20избори%202009/6_Извештаи%20од%20меѓународни%20и%20домашни%20набљудувачи/Финален%20набљудувачки%20извештај%20претседателски%20и%20локални%20избори%202009_Македонија_ОБСЕ-ОДИХР_АНГ_оригинал.pdf (last visited on: 28.08.2017)

person “assisting” several other voters (4%), intimidation of voters and members of electoral boards (EB) (1%), identical signatures in the registry of the Voters List (2%) and multiple voting (1%).³⁸ VMRO-DPMNE won the elections in 56 municipalities, DUI in 15, SDSM in 7, and DPA, ND, DPTM, SR, PDSM won one mayoral position each. Two independent candidates also won mayoral positions. A total of 1,792,082 voters had the right to vote.

The priority recommendations from 2009, which would be repeated in the report on the early parliamentary elections in 2011, require the government to take measures and deal with the pressure on citizens and their intimidation. Besides this, the OSCE/ODIHR report provided five other priority recommendations: to separate the state from the party; to eliminate all drawbacks and ambiguities in the Electoral Code; to review and update the Voters List; to take measures in order to settle conflicts of interest among those involved in politics who control the private radio broadcasting services; to introduce deadlines for court decisions related to objections by the Broadcasting Council. In both reports, OSCE/ODIHR recommends reviewing the Voters List, which was one of the recommendations that were fulfilled. The European Union recognized the Republic of Macedonia’s success achieved during the implementation of the elections and replicated the conclusions and recommendations of OSCE/ODIHR. The US Ambassador at the time, Philip Reeker, assessed the elections as well implemented.³⁹

The local elections in 2013 were held in a peaceful atmosphere, receiving positive assessment of the efficiency of their implementation, although certain drawbacks were highlighted. The latter were mainly related to the lack of conditions for securing equal competitive space among the candidates. There were certain remarks regarding the

overlapping of state and party activities, the financing of the campaign, the legal framework, as well as the media coverage.⁴⁰ In some rare cases, there were certain remarks related to violating the secrecy of voting, family voting and destroying campaign material. There were serious remarks about the media in relation to their division along ethnic and party lines.⁴¹ OSCE/ODIHR prepared a range of recommendations for overcoming the drawbacks. The general recommendations involved increasing the accuracy of the Voter List, protecting voters from intimidation, and amendments to the Electoral Code. Regarding the financing, the recommendations referred to changes in the relation between the donations from legal and physical entities, precising whether the limitations of the campaign expenses refer to both rounds of the elections, as well as more detailed reporting.⁴² Regarding the media, the recommendations referred to securing a more balanced presentation of the candidates by improving the Electoral Code, the Law on Radio Broadcasting, and addressing the discrepancies between them.⁴³ A total of 1,743,403 voters, distributed across 2976 stations, were entitled to vote. The new Law on Local Self Government was brought into force with these elections, which was the first time mayors and councilors were elected in a total of 81 municipalities, since the municipalities of Vraneštica, Drugovo, Zajas, and Oslomej had joined the municipality of Kičevo.⁴⁴ The turnout on these elections was rather high. In the first election round it reached 67%, while in the second round that took place in 29 municipalities the turnout reached 59%. The first round of

⁴⁰ OSCE/ODIHR Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Local Elections 24th March and 7th April 2013. OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report. Warsaw, 2013. Accessed at: <http://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/103832?download=true> (last visited on: 24th August 2017)

⁴¹ For more information see: KAS, IDSCS Republic of Macedonia’s 2013 Local Elections Handbook, second updated edition. Available at: http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_33811-1522-2-30.pdf?130315120539

⁴² OSCE/ODIHR Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Local Elections 24th March and 7th April 2013. OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report. Warsaw, 2013. Accessed at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/103411?download=true> (last visited on: 25th August 2017)

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ MOST: Final Report, Domestic Monitoring of the 2013 Local Elections, Skopje 2013. Accessed at: http://www.most.org.mk/images/MOST/Final%20Report_Local%20Elections%202013_ENG.PDF (last visited on: 25th August 2017)

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Popovski, R. Interview with Philip T. Reeker, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Macedonia. X/0 talks show, Kanal 5 TV. 8 June 2011

voting was repeated in the municipality of Dolneni, while due to the annulled results, the voting in the second round was repeated in the municipalities of Center, Dolneni, Struga, and Gjorče Petrov. The turnout on the third election day was 65%.⁴⁵ These local elections were dominated by VMRO-DPMNE, which won most of the mayoral positions in relation to the other parties. VMRO-DPMNE won 56 mayoral positions, DUI 14 mayors, SDSM 4, DPA 2, the Democratic Party of the Turks (DPTM), the Serbian Progressive Party in Macedonia (SNS) and The Union of Roma in Macedonia (SRM) won one mayor each, and two independent candidates were elected.⁴⁶

Table 1: Local Elections Turnout from 1996 until 2013,⁴⁷ for the first and second round.⁴⁸

Year	1996	2000	2005	2009	2013
Turnout	60 % (51%)	59% (53%)	56% (53%)	57% (43%)	67% (65%)

⁴⁵ State Election Commission, 2013 LOCAL ELECTIONS: <http://www.sec.mk/lokalni-izbori-2013/>

⁴⁶ For more information see: KAS, IDSCS Republic of Macedonia's 2013 Local Elections Handbook, second updated edition. Available at: http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_33810-1522-2-30.pdf?130315120532

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ The first percentage refers to the turnout in the first round, and the second percentage to the turnout in the second round. The percentages are rounded.

THE MACEDONIAN VOTING SYSTEM FOR LOCAL ELECTIONS⁴⁹

VOTING MODEL


In the Republic of Macedonia, the elections for **mayors in the Local Government Units** (LGUs) follow the majority rule, while the selection of council members in the Local Government Units is done by the proportional representation model. The elections for mayors and council members are held simultaneously in all municipalities **every four years in the first half of October**.⁵⁰ The President of the Assembly calls for new elections with a suitable act published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, and the period after the call for elections until the day of the elections should not be more than 90, or less than 70 days.

The mayors are elected by the **majority voting model**. The candidate who has won the majority of votes in the first round is appointed as mayor, if the turnout amounts to at least a third of the number of registered voters in the Voters List for the respective Local Government Unit. If none of the candidates fulfills the necessary conditions, the elections are repeated in the second round for the two candidates with the largest number of votes. If there is only one candidate participating in the elections, but he or she

⁴⁹ According to the 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, 54/11, 142/12, 31/13, 34/13, 14/14, 30/14, 196/15, 35/16, 97/16 and 99/16). Accessed at: https://www.sobranie.mk/content/Избори/ИЗБОРЕН%20ЗАКОНИК%20-%20ПРЕЧИСТЕН%20ТЕКСТ_%20МАЈ%202016.pdf (last visited on: 28.08.2017)

The recent amendments as of 1st June and 11th September 2017 are also taken into consideration (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia 67/17 and 125/17)

⁵⁰ With the recent amendments in the Electoral Code as of June 2017, Article 16 line 1, the phrase "in the first half of May" was replaced with the phrase "in the first half of October". This enabled the 2017 Local Elections to take place in the first half of October.



THE MACEDONIAN VOTING SYSTEM FOR LOCAL ELECTIONS

fails to win the necessary majority, the voting procedure is repeated. The second round of voting is conducted 14 days after the end of the first round. In the second round, the candidate with the majority of votes is appointed as mayor.

The **proportional representation model** is applied for the **election of council members** in the LGUs, and the D'Hondt formula is applied for distributing mandates. According to this formula, the total number of votes cast for the proposed candidate lists is divided first by 1, then by 2, then 3... right up to the number of seats to be allocated for the respective constituency. The distribution figures are ranged by size, and the highest distribution figures are taken into consideration when allocating the seats in the council. One candidate list is allocated as many seats in the council as there are highest distribution figures from those taken into consideration.

ELECTORAL ORGANS

The organs that conduct elections are the State Election Commission (SEC), the Municipal Election Commissions (MEC) and the Election Commission of the City of Skopje, the electoral boards, as well as the electoral boards in the diplomatic and consular offices.⁵¹ According to the changes in the Election Code foreseen by the Przhino Agreement,⁵² the SEC comprises nine members 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. Six

⁵¹ In the diplomatic and consular representative offices, the citizens who abide or are temporarily working abroad can vote only in the Republic of Macedonia's Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, while in the Local Elections the voting is enabled in the area of the municipality i.e. the City of Skopje.

⁵² European Commission, Agreement between the four political parties, 20 July 2016. Accessed at: http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia/press_corner/all_news/news/2016/2016-07-20_agreement_en.htm (Last visited on: 24th September 2017)

members of the SEC represent the political parties of the Assembly, and three expert members are elected from a list of applicants through a joint proposition of the leading and oppositional parties. The party in power with the largest number of MPs proposes two members and the second 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, whereas both should come from the members of the largest non-majority community. The SEC nominates a secretary general who is responsible for the experts' office and in charge of administrative, organizational and technical tasks.⁵³ With the recent amendments of 11th September 2017, a new article was added to the Electoral Code, which obliges the Assembly to harmonize the composition of the State Election Commission with the results of the last parliamentary elections, no later than 30 days before the election day.⁵⁴

The SEC is responsible for the **entries in the Voters List** where all adult citizens (over 18 years old) with permanent address on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia are registered, including those who temporarily live abroad and hold a valid identification document or passport. The citizens whose legal capacity has been terminated with a final court decision are not registered in the Voters List.

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

⁵³ KAS, IDSCS, The Republic of Macedonia's 2016 Parliamentary Elections Handbook, second updated edition. Available at: http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_21607-1442-2-30.pdf?170131155919

⁵⁴ Law amending and supplementing the Electoral Code, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No.125/17.

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.⁵⁵

The composition of the **electoral boards** is a combination of the employees from the state, public and municipality administration (the president, the vice president, two members and their deputies) and representatives from the political parties. The parties that are in opposition and have won most of the votes in the last parliamentary elections each propose one member and deputy for the board. The ruling parties that have won the last elections also each propose one member and deputy for the board. The duration of the mandate of the electoral board members is four years. The random selection of electoral board members (from the administration) is conducted by the MEC and the Electoral Commission of the City of Skopje for the electoral districts in question, following a legal act by the SEC.⁵⁶

In the municipalities with at least 20% minority population, the principle of equal and just representation is applied for the composition of the MEC and the Electoral Boards. The law prescribes each gender to be represented by at least 30% of the members of the electoral organs. The members of the MEC and the electoral boards cannot be selected or appointed by state officials in the Government, the Assembly or by employees in the state administration of the Ombudsman, the Ministries

⁵⁵ KAS, IDSCS, The Republic of Macedonia's 2016 Parliamentary Elections Handbook, second updated edition. Available at: http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_21607-1442-2-30.pdf?170131155919

⁵⁶ For more details see: Instructions for the way of appointing members of the election boards with recommendation from the political parties for the Local Elections that will take place on 15th October 2017. The State Election Commission. Accessed at: <http://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8ZpCwro9h-zdzFKTTFuTldBTGM/view> (last visited on: 4th September 2017)

of Justice, Defense, Internal Affairs, the Secretariat for Legislation, the State Statistical Office, the Crisis Management Centre, the technical and expert services of the Administrative Court, the SEC and the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC).

The electoral organs can make decisions only if there is a majority of members present during the sessions. Missing members of the MEC, the Electoral Committee of the City of Skopje and the Electoral Board can be replaced by their deputies who are also appointed by the SEC.

ELECTIVE RIGHTS

A candidate for mayor or council member can be any person over 18 years old with legal capacity. Persons sentenced to 6 months imprisonment and more with a final court decision whose sentence has not started yet, or who serve time for committed crimes, cannot run for these positions. Besides these conditions, the candidates for mayor or council member should maintain a permanent place of residence in the LGU they run for.

Contrary to the last local elections, there were no additional limitations for these local elections that were stipulated in the Law on Determining an Additional Condition for Holding Public Office (also known as the Lustration Law) since the bill is out of force.

RESTRICTIONS FOR CURRENT STATE OFFICIALS

The functions of councilor and mayor are professionally conducted, and they cannot coincide with the function of President of the Republic, President of the Republic of Macedonia's Government, minister, judge,

public prosecutor, public attorney, ombudsman, or other of public offices, elected or appointed by the Republic of Macedonia's Assembly and Government. The function of mayor can neither coincide with the function of MP, nor with the provision of expert or administrative services in the state administrative organs, nor with any other economic or profitable vocation, nor with any membership in administrative boards of public companies, public institutions, funds, agencies, institutes, and other legal entities, nor with the function of representative of the state and social capital in the trading companies. In addition, the function of mayor of the City of Skopje and the function of councilor in the City of Skopje's Council cannot coincide with the function of municipal mayor and the function of councilor of the municipalities in the area of the City of Skopje.

If Members of Government and deputy ministers are announced as candidates for mayors or council members (the same applies if they run for presidency or the position of MP), they are restricted in executing their activities within the functions they hold. The holder of such function who runs for mayor or council member has no access to the budget of the Republic of Macedonia, the public funds of the municipalities and the City of Skopje, the public companies' resources, the institutions and other legal entities under the state budget, as well as other facilities providing social services (kindergartens, schools, sports facilities etc.). These individuals can neither provide irregular income, pensions, social welfare, nor other payments related to the budget or other public funds. Moreover, these individuals cannot enter into a contract for alienating state capital nor sign collective agreements. These restrictions enter into force on the day when the decision for calling the elections is made and are valid until the day of concluding the elections for mayors and councilors, i.e. until the City of Skopje and the municipality councils are established.

In addition, in the period from the call for elections until the election day no new employment procedures can commence, neither any termination of employment can be concluded for state and public institutions, and all initiated procedures will be put on hold. In the period of 20 days before the start of the election campaign no subsidies will be allocated outside the regular monthly payments, and no promotional events for new construction projects or commissioning facilities under public financing are allowed. The Ministry of Finance is responsible for publicly announcing all budgetary payments outside regular salaries in a specific database, and is obliged to submit a financial report which will be published on their website prior to the elections.⁵⁷

THE NUMBER OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

The number of council members in each of the Local Government Units is determined in proportion to the size of the population living within the respective unit. The municipalities with less than 5000 inhabitants establish councils that consist of 9 members, between 5001 and 10,000 inhabitants – 11 members, between 10,001 and 20,000 inhabitants – 15 members, between 20,001 and 40,000 inhabitants – 19 members, between 40,001 and 60,000 inhabitants – 23 members, between 60,001 and 80,000 inhabitants – 27 members, between 80,000 and 100,000 inhabitants – 31 members, and over 100,000 inhabitants – 33 members. The City of Skopje Council consists of 45 members⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Article 8-a of the 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, 54/11, 142/12, 31/13, 34/13, 14/14, 30/14, 196/15, 35/16, 97/16 and 99/16). Accessed at: http://www.sobranie.mk/content/Избори/ИЗБОРЕН%20ЗАКОНИК%20-%20ПРЕЧИСТЕН%20ТЕКСТ_%20МАЈ%202016.pdf (last visited on: 28.08.2017)

⁵⁸ Article 34 of the Local Self Government Law, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 05/16.

THE PROCEDURE AND THE RIGHT TO APPOINT CANDIDATES FOR MAYORS AND COUNCILOR LISTS

The right to propose candidate lists for councilors and candidates for mayors is held by the registered political parties, individually or as part of coalitions, as well as groups of voters. Depending on the size of the LGU, the groups of voters have to collect a certain number of signatures: from 100 signatures for LGU with less than 10,000 inhabitants to 450 for LGU with more than 100,001 inhabitants, while for the City of Skopje, 1,000 signatures are required to run for mayor.

On the candidate list for councilors, a candidate belonging to the less represented gender should be placed on every third position.

The lists of candidates for mayors and council members are presented to the MEC at least 35 days before the elections take place. The MEC should publish the lists at least 25 days prior to the elections.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN⁵⁹

The election campaign starts 20 days before the elections take place and should finish 24 hours before the start of the elections. There cannot be any campaigning activities on the day of the elections. The election campaign for these elections commences on 25th September 2017 at midnight. The election campaign for the first round concludes

⁵⁹ 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 at: https://www.sobranie.mk/content/Избори/ИЗБОРЕН%20АКОНИК%20-%20ПРЕЧИСТЕН%20ТЕКСТ_%20МАЈ%202016.pdf (last visited on: 28.08.2017). KAS, IDSCS, The Republic of Macedonia's 2016 Parliamentary Elections Handbook, second updated edition. Available at: http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_21607-1442-2-30.pdf?170131155919

on 13th October 2017 at midnight, while the election campaign for the second round concludes on 27th October 2017 at midnight.⁶⁰

Within 48 hours after 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 latter 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. Donations can be in the form of money, goods, and services, but their 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 voter registered in the electoral unit in which they have submitted a candidate list, which is 70 denars less than the amount allowed in the 2014 elections.

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, nor from unidentified sources. With the new legislative changes, radio broadcasting companies, printed and electronic media

⁶⁰ Timeline for conducting election activities for implementing the 2017 Local Elections for members of the municipal council and the City of Skopje's Council, as well as for mayors of the municipalities and the City of Skopje. State Election Commission, 7th August 2017. Accessed at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8ZpCwro9h-zRHM2Qy1ndEMOVHM/view> (last visited on: 5th September 2017)

(internet portals), and persons related to them must not finance or donate to political parties, including campaigns. Related persons are considered to be family members, including relatives of the spouse or extramarital partner, persons who have a share in the equity, participate in the management, and persons who have been generating more than 30% of their income from advertising, TV shopping or sponsorship through based on a marketing or other contract.⁶¹

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 to file a financial report on the incomes and expenditures of the campaign – immediately but no later than 30 days from the end of the election campaign. Elected candidates for members of the councils i.e. for mayors are entitled to compensation from the state budget in the amount 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 after filing the financial report for the election campaign.

As part of the legislative changes introduced by the Przhino Agreement, from the day elections are called until they are finished, 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 public authorization by law.

If the rights of a candidate are violated during public appearances and announcements, they have the right to press charges. In such a case,

⁶¹ The term “related persons” is more precisely defined in the Law on Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 184 of 26 December 2013. Accessed at : <http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/b063254742a44129b8dfe1221762ddb4.pdf> (last visited on: 5th September 2017).

the competent general court will preside in urgency and the decision be announced in the public media.

THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC MEDIA⁶²

During the election campaign, the public radio broadcasting service, the commercial radio broadcasters and 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),⁶³ 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) 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.

Editors, journalists, program hosts and presenters who run 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 elections are finished.

⁶² 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, 54/11, 142/12, 31/13, 34/13, 14/14, 30/14, 196/15, 35/16, 97/16 и 99/16). Accessed at: <http://www.sec.mk/izboren-zakonik/> (last visited on: 4th September 2017).

KAS, IDSCS, The Republic of Macedonia’s 2016 Parliamentary Elections Handbook, second updated edition. Available at: http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_21607-1442-2-30.pdf?170131155919

⁶³ Law on Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 184/2013. Accessed at: http://www.ujp.gov.mk/files/attachment/0000/0697/Zakon_za_audio_i_audiovizuelni_uslugi_132_2014.pdf (last visited on: 5th September 2017).

The public broadcasting service, Macedonian Radio Television (MRTV), is obliged to inform the citizens on voting modalities 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 Przhino Agreement, 30% of the programs should relate to events in the country and around the world, 30% to activities of the parties 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 and 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 of 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 such 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 not allowed either. Radio broadcasters are compelled to record their programs from the day elections are called until their conclusion, and they should keep that material for 30 days after the

elections in order to provide it to the AAMS in case this data should be requested.

Media entities are obliged to determine their pricelists⁶⁴ 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 are allowed to broadcast 18 minutes of additional advertising per actual hour of broadcasting exclusively dedicated to paid political advertising. This allows them to sell 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. In case one political party wants its advertising of two subsequent hours to be merged, the media must alternate the representation of political parties in power and opposition accordingly. 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.

⁶⁴ The media pricelists for paid political advertising for participants in the election process for the 2017 Local Elections are available on the SEC's website, and can be retrieved here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8ZpCwro9h-zTVJ4cmlUYzFWUFU/view> (last visited on: 27th September 2017)

MONITORING THE ELECTIONS⁶⁵

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

⁶⁵ KAS, IDSCS, The Republic of Macedonia's 2016 Parliamentary Elections Handbook, second updated edition. Available at: http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_21607-1442-2-30.pdf?170131155919



POLITICAL PARTIES AND COALITIONS

POLITICAL PARTIES AND COALITIONS⁶⁶

VMRO-DPMNE



VMRO-DPMNE (VMRO – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity) declares itself a center-right people’s party within the parameters of Christian-Democratic ideology. In 2017, the party announced that it would preserve its values, but focus on wider legitimation as a civic right wing party. Since Macedonia’s independence, VMRO-DPMNE has been one of the two largest parties. It has participated in almost all the parliamentary and local elections, except the 1994 parliamentary elections when the party boycotted the second round. As a result of the third parliamentary elections, held in 1998, VMRO-DPMNE established the Government for the first time after having won 49 mandates in coalition with the Democratic Alternative, which won 13 seats, and PDPA-NDP (later DPA) with 11 seats, as well as several smaller parties. VMRO-DPMNE remained in power until 2002. However, during the conflict from May until November 2001, a broad coalition government was established, which included ministers from SDSM and LDP. In 2002, VMRO-DPMNE and their coalition partners won 33 seats in the Parliament, lost the elections and formed the opposition until 2006. In 2006, together

⁶⁶ The parties’ logos are taken from the Internet sites of the respective parties. The Internet is the source for each logo and photograph used in this document. Due to a lack of official data, for some of the political parties the contact information are not complete.

The arrangement of the political parties is alphabetical. The three largest parliamentary parties participating in the elections are the first on the list.

All the election results are taken from the State Election Commission. Available at: <http://www.sec.mk/izbori-arhiva/>

with the coalition “For a Better Macedonia”, they achieved victory in the parliamentary elections, winning 45 mandates in total and thus being entitled to establish the Government. During these elections, the party promoted its program for the first time, with specific deadlines, which was a novelty in the electoral competitions. Since then, VMRO-DPMNE has achieved victory in three other election cycles: in the snap parliamentary elections in 2008, 2011, and 2014. In the 2008 elections, the party won a record of 63 parliamentary seats together with the coalition “For a Better Macedonia”. In the 2011 snap parliamentary elections, VMRO-DPMNE won 56 seats together with the coalition. In the 2014 parliamentary elections, they won 61 out of 123 total seats. In the last parliamentary elections, held in 2016, VMRO-DPMNE won 51 parliamentary seats, which made it the most represented political party in the Republic of Macedonia’s Assembly. However, due to the newly established coalition between SDSM and DUI, VMRO-DPMNE went into opposition.

Ljubco Georgievski was the first leader of VMRO-DPMNE, from its founding until 2003. At the party congress in May 2003, Georgievski resigned, and Nikola Gruevski was elected and has led the party ever since. Gruevski was President of the Republic of Macedonia’s Government from 2006 until January 2016.

In the first local elections in 1996, VMRO-DPMNE, together with MAAK-Conservative, won mayoral positions in 27 municipalities. In the next local elections in 2000, the party won 59 mayoral positions, 37 of which it lost in 2005, i.e., together with its coalition partners and supporting an independent candidate for Skopje, it won 22 mayoral positions. In the next local elections held in 2009, the party won 56 mayoral positions, thus significantly restoring power on the local level. With the outcome of the 2009 local elections, VMRO-DPMNE imposed itself as a dominant power on a national as well as local level.

In the last local elections in 2013, the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE won 57 mayoral positions out of 80 municipalities in total, including the City of Skopje. The party also won 537 councilor positions in 68 municipalities.



For these local elections, the coalition of VMRO-DPMNE consists of 18 parties:⁶⁷ VMRO-DPMNE, Socialist Party of Macedonia, Democratic Party of the

Serbs in Macedonia, Citizens Option for Macedonia – GROM, Union of the Roma from Macedonia, Party of Justice, Party for Democratic Action of Macedonia, Party of the Vlachs in Macedonia, Workers` Agricultural Party of the Republic of Macedonia, New Liberal Party, Party of the United Democrats of Macedonia, Macedonian Alliance, (MAAK), Democratic Forces of the Roma, United Roma from Macedonia, Movement for National Unity of the Turks, Union of Tito’s Left Forces.⁶⁸

VMRO-DPMNE

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⁶⁷ The composition of the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE varies in some municipalities, while in the municipality of Tearce, VMRO-DPMNE has an independent nomination for mayor. Besides the municipality of Tearce, within the various coalitions, VMRO-DPMNE will promote their own candidates in 67 other municipalities and the City of Skopje.

⁶⁸ The Central Registry of the Republic of Macedonia. Accessed at: <http://crm.com.mk/DS/default.aspx?MainId=3> (last visited on: 20.09.2017).

DEMOCRATIC UNION FOR INTEGRATION



The Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) was formed by former representatives of the People's Liberation Army (ONA) which had initiated the military conflict in 2001. Ideologically, DUI declares itself as a center-left party aimed at advancing the rights of the Albanians, as well as full implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. The party was established in 2002 and took part in the parliamentary elections of the same year, winning the largest portion of votes among the Albanian electorate. Thus, DUI secured 16 parliamentary seats and subsequently became part of the Government led by SDSM. DUI was part of the Government from 2002 until 2006, and it was represented by the largest number of ministers ever coming from an Albanian party in the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. In the 2006 parliamentary elections, DUI won the majority of votes among the Albanian electorate (12.2%) and 17 seats in parliament, but after the unsuccessful negotiations with VMRO-DPMNE, it was not included in the Government coalition. As a result, DUI boycotted the work of the Assembly from 2006 until 2008, when snap parliamentary elections were called. In the 2008 parliamentary elections, DUI won 12.8% of the votes and 18 MPs, and as the largest political party representing ethnic Albanians joined the Government under the leadership of Nikola Gruevski. In the next parliamentary elections, in 2011, DUI again emerged as the third largest party in Macedonia, winning 14 parliamentary seats. In 2014, DUI won 19 seats and, again, formed the Government together with VMRO-DPMNE. In the most recent 2016 parliamentary elections, the party showed much weaker results, winning only 10 seats, partly due to the growth of the Alliance for the Albanians and BESA, as well as the transfer of votes to SDSM. However,

owing to the coalition with SDSM, DUI is again part of the Republic of Macedonia's Government.

The party has been lead by Ali Ahmeti since it was founded.

So far, DUI has participated in two election cycles for local elections. In both elections, 2005 and 2009, DUI won 15 mayoral positions, although in 2009 it lost Tetovo and Gostivar, two major municipalities with predominantly Albanian population. Since the 2013 local elections, DUI holds 14 mayoral positions.



In the local elections 2017, DUI will promote its own candidates in 18 municipalities, while in Bitola, Gazi Baba and Ohrid, they will promote joint candidate lists for councilors with BESA and the Alliance for the Albanians.

Democratic Union for Integration

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SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC UNION OF MACEDONIA



The Social Democratic Union of Macedonia declares itself a center-left, within the parameters of social-democratic ideology. At the moment, it is the second largest party in Macedonia. It was founded at the Congress on 21st April 1991 as a legal heir to the League of Communists of Macedonia – Party for Democratic Transformation (SKM-PDP). In the same year, the party changed its name to SDSM, and its ideology from communist to social-democratic. SDSM participated in all parliamentary and local elections since the Independence. In 1992, after the dismissal of the first expert Government, SDSM, although not backed by a majority in the Assembly, received the mandate to establish the first political Government of the Republic of Macedonia. In the period between 1994 and 1998, the party held the majority in the Assembly, having won 85 seats together with its coalition partners in the 1994 parliamentary elections, only to lose power in 1998 when they won only 27 seats. SDSM was the largest party in opposition until 2002, when it gained victory in the elections by securing 60 parliamentary seats, and together with its coalition partners stayed in power until the next parliamentary elections in 2006. In the 2006 parliamentary elections the coalition of SDSM won 32 seats. After that, SDSM was in the opposition until 2014, losing in three consecutive election cycles (2008, 2011, and 2014). In the snap parliamentary elections in 2008, together with their coalition partners, SDSM secured 27 parliamentary seats, and in the snap parliamentary elections in 2011, they won 42 seats with their partners. In the 2014 parliamentary elections, SDSM won 27 seats, and together with the coalition 34 MPs in total. In the 2016 parliamentary elections, SDSM won 49 seats, thus improving their result significantly in relation to the previous

parliamentary elections. The coalition led by SDSM, although with two MPs less than the coalition of VMRO-DPMNE, managed to establish the Government by forming a parliamentary majority with DUI and the Alliance for the Albanians.

Branko Crvenkovski led the party since Macedonia's independence and the transformation from SKM-PDP to SDSM in 1991, until 2004. He withdrew from this position after his victory in the snap presidential elections in 2004, when he became President of the Republic of Macedonia. At the party congress in November 2004, Vlado Bučkovski was elected party leader, and he remained in this position until the defeat in the 2006 elections. After the elections, Bučkovski ceased to enjoy the trust of the party membership, and at the early congress in November 2006, Radmila Šekerinska was elected head of the party. She remained in this position until June 2008, when she resigned following the defeat in the snap parliamentary elections. In September 2008, at the 8th SDSM congress, Zoran Zaev was elected leader of the party. In 2009, when his presidential mandate expired, Branko Crvenkovski was again elected leader of SDSM. He remained in this position until 2013, when he withdrew and appointed the current head of the party, Zoran Zaev.

In the local elections in 1996, SDSM won 54 mayoral positions, making them the most successful party of the elections. In the local elections in 2000, the coalition led by SDSM won 32 mayoral positions. In 2005 their success increased, and they won 36 mayoral positions, which, again, made them the most successful party. In 2009, SDSM lost most of the municipalities where it had been in power, winning only 6 mayoral positions, plus another mayoral position with its coalition. In the most recent local elections in 2013, SDSM won mayoral seats in 4 out of 80 municipalities in total.

Живот во Македонија ЗА СИТЕ

In these local elections, the coalition led by the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) will promote its candidates

for mayors in 70 municipalities. 22 political parties are members of the coalition: New Social-Democratic Party (NSDP), Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Democratic Union of the Vlachs in Macedonia (DSVM), New Alternative (NA), Party of the United Pensioners and Citizens of Macedonia (POPGM), Social Democratic Union (SDU), Liberal Party of Macedonia (LP), Democratic Union (DS), Serbian Progressive Party in Macedonia (SNSM), Democratic Renewal of Macedonia (DOM), Party for Full Emancipation of the Roma in Macedonia (PCER), Political Party Dignity (PPD), Party for Economic Changes (PEP21), Alliance for a Positive Macedonia (APM), Party for European Future (PEI), Party for Movement of the Turks in Macedonia (PDT), Serbian Party in Macedonia (SSM), Democratic Party of the Roma (DPR), United Party for Equality of the Roma (OPER), United for Macedonia (OM), Macedonian Unifying Reform Organization – Workers` Party (MORO).⁶⁹

Social Democratic Union of Macedonia

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⁶⁹ Central Registry of the Republic of Macedonia. Accessed at: <http://crm.com.mk/DS/default.aspx?MainId=3> (last visited on: 20th September 2017).

CITIZENS` OPTION FOR MACEDONIA – GROM



The Citizens` Option for Macedonia (GROM) is a political party positioned at the center, which was established in 2014. The party is lead by its founder Stevče Jakimovski. They took part in the 2014 presidential elections, with their candidate, Zoran Popovski, winning 3.6% of the total number of votes.

The party promoted their own candidates in the parliamentary elections of the same year and won one seat. In the 2016 parliamentary elections, GROM was part of the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE. The 2017 local elections will be the first time for GROM to promote their own candidate independently, running for the mayoral position in the municipality of Karpoš.

Citizens Option for Macedonia – GROM

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BESA MOVEMENT



The political party BESA Movement was established on 23rd March 2015 in Skopje. Their goal is to promote the interests of all citizens, and in particular the Albanians.

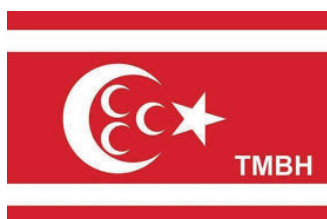
Their basic commitments are to equality, justice, freedom, wellbeing, and fight against corruption. The Movement points at the asymmetrical positioning of the state towards the peoples in it. In order to achieve their goals, BESA

strives for changes in the functioning of the system by advancing the universal values of humanism, improving democracy, eliminating every kind of discrimination, and building a legal state etc. This party appeared for the first time at the 2016 parliamentary elections, winning 5 seats in total, one in the first and the second Electoral Units and three in the sixth Electoral Unit (4.86% of the votes on national level). In the 2017 local elections, the party will promote their own candidates for mayors individually in 19 municipalities and the City of Skopje. For the municipalities of Bitola, Ohrid, and Gazi Baba, BESA will promote joint councilor lists with DUI and the Alliance for the Albanians.

Movement BESA

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MOVEMENT FOR NATIONAL UNITY OF THE TURKS



The Movement for National Unity of the Turks (DNET) is one of the political parties that are committed to the rights of the Turkish minority in the Republic of Macedonia. Ideologically, this political party is positioned in the center and led by Erdogan Saraç. The party appeared for the first time at the 2006 parliamentary elections. They did not show any significant results in these elections, neither in the next elections in 2008. In the 2011 parliamentary elections DNET was part of the coalition led by SDSM, winning only one seat. They did not take part in the elections in 2014, but in 2016 they joined the coalition with VMRO-DPMNE. In the

previous local elections, DNET won 9 councilors positions in the municipalities of Debar, Centar Župa, and Šuto Orizari. On these local elections, DNET is part of the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, except for the municipality of Dolneni where it will promote its own candidate for mayor, independently.

Movement for National Unity of the Turks

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DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF THE ALBANIANS



The Democratic Party of the Albanians was founded in June 1997 by uniting the Party for Democratic Prosperity of the Albanians (PDPA) and the National Democratic Party (NDP). PDPA was founded in 1994, after the radical leaders of the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP), Arben Xhaferi and Menduh Taçi, had left the mother party. DPA declares itself a center-right party and it strives for more rights for the Albanians in Macedonia, as well as redefining the constitutional frame set by the Ohrid Framework Agreement. In the elections in 1998, DPA won 11 parliamentary seats, and formed the Government of the Republic of Macedonia together with VMRO-DPMNE. During the 2011 conflict, DPA remained within the Government of the broad coalition, which later signed the Ohrid Agreement. One of the signees of the Ohrid Agreement was DPA's then leader Arben Xhaferi. When this government was reformed, DPA remained within the governmental coalition. In the next parliamentary elections in 2002, DPA won 5.2% of the votes and 7 mandates, switching

into opposition in the Assembly. DPA returned to power after the successful negotiations with VMRO-DPMNE, which won the elections in 2006. DPA won 7.5% of the votes, or 11 mandates, in these elections, less than their rival DUI. In the snap elections in 2008, DPA won 11 mandates again. After the snap parliamentary elections in 2008, the largest parliamentary party VMRO-DPMNE discontinued the traditional partnership with DPA by establishing a coalition with the largest Albanian party in the Parliament, DUI. In the snap parliamentary elections in 2011, DPA won 8 mandates, while in the parliamentary elections in 2014, it secured only 7 seats. In the snap parliamentary elections in 2016, DPA received 2.6% of the votes on national level, winning 2 MPs in the Electoral Unit 6, which is 5 MPs less than in the previous parliamentary elections.

The head of DPA is Menduh Taçi, who was appointed to this position on 30th June 2007. Taçi acquired this position after the resignation of the previous leader, Arben Xhaferi.

In the elections in 2005, DPA won two mayoral positions in coalition with PDP, and in the next elections in 2009, it won one mayoral position in Tetovo. In the local elections in 2013, the party won the mayoral position in the municipality of Struga, but mayor Zijadin Sela later separated from the party. Besides the only mayoral position, DPA succeeded in winning 103 councilor positions. On the local elections in October 2017, the Democratic Party of Albanians will promote their own candidates for mayors in 16 municipalities and the City of Skopje.

Democratic Party of the Albanians

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DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF THE TURKS IN MACEDONIA



The Democratic Party of the Turks in Macedonia (DPTM) represents the ethnic Turks in the Republic of Macedonia. The party's leader is Bejkan Iljas. In the 2016 parliamentary elections, DPTM joined the coalition with VMRO-DPMNE, winning one parliamentary seat. In the last local elections from 2013, the party won 20 councilor positions. In these local elections, the party will promote their candidates within the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, except in the municipalities of Vrapčište and Centar Župa, where DPTM promotes their own candidates.

Democratic Party of the Turks in Macedonia

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COALITION "ALLIANCE FOR THE ALBANIANS" (UNITETI, NDP)



The Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians" is a union of the parties Movement for Reforms of DPA, Uniteti and NDP. The Coalition's leaders are the head of the Movement for Reforms of DPA, Zijadin Sela, the leader of the National Democratic Revival, Vesel Memedi, and the head of Uniteti, Gezim Ostreni. The main commitments of the Coalition are related to full equality of the Albanians in Macedonia, promoting the Albanian language as a second official language in Macedonia, equal distribution of the budget, and the functioning of the Special Public Prosecution (SJO), which is regulated by the Constitution. This coalition won 3 parliamentary seats in the in the 2016 elections, one

of which in the Electoral Unit 5 and two in the Electoral Unit 6. The political party is now part of the governmental coalition.

In 2017, Zijadin Sela left the Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians" and established the political party "Alliance for the Albanians", leaving the political parties Uniteti and NDP in the coalition. The Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians" has promoted their candidates for mayors in the municipalities of Gostivar and Debar.

Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians" (Uniteti, NDP)

www.uniteti.org

www.rdk.mk

THE LEFT



The Left is a new political party founded in the end of 2015. The party has a leftist orientation and strives for anti-capitalism, anti-nationalism, anti-militarism, anti-clericalism, and anti-conservatism. The main focus of the party is the workers and basic human rights, and it represents, primarily, the poor, underprivileged, marginalized, and disadvantaged. This party took part in the 2016 parliamentary elections for the first time, winning 12120 votes in total, i.e. 1.02% of the votes on national level. In the 2017 local elections, they will promote their candidates for mayors in the City of Skopje and the municipalities of Gazi Baba and Center.

The Left

ul. Gjuro Gjaković br.20, vlez 1, kat 3, lokal br.12

1200 Skopje

contact@levica.mk

www.levica.mk

PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT FOR MACEDONIA



The People's Movement for Macedonia was founded in May 2002 as a party with national orientation, based on the traditions of the Macedonian people, which strives for improving the social state and introducing a tax for the rich. NDM's leader is Janko Bačev. In the 2013 Local Elections, the party won 9 councilor positions in 8 municipalities. The party did not take part in the 2016 parliamentary elections, due to the fact that the State Election Commission rejected the candidate lists of the party. In the 2017 local elections, the party will promote their own candidates independently in 11 municipalities and the City of Skopje.

People's Movement for Macedonia

ul. Dame Gruev br. 10

1000 Skopje

ndm@ndm.org.mk

www.ndm.org.mk

PARTY FOR DEMOCRATIC PROSPERITY



The Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) is the oldest party of the Albanians in Macedonia, founded in 1990. The party joined DPA after the parliamentary elections. It reactivated in January 2014, with Abduladi Vejselli as their leader, an MP in three previous compositions of the Assembly. In the 1990s, PDP had been the largest parliamentary party representing the interests of the Albanians in

Macedonia, and they were a coalition partner in the governments of SDSM at several times. 1994, the radical wing separated from the party and founded DPA. Ever since, PDP has been seen as a moderate political party. They strive for full equality of the Albanians in Macedonia's political, economic, social and cultural sphere, for their national language and for harmonious interethnic relations based on the democratic principles of equality and true justice. In the 2016 parliamentary elections, the Party for Democratic Prosperity got 1143 votes (0.1%), not winning any parliamentary seat.

In the 1996 Local Elections, the party won 12 mayoral positions. The results in the local elections in 2000 were much weaker, and PDP won only three mayoral positions. In the 2005 local elections, PDP formed a coalition with DPA, winning 2 mayoral positions, in the municipalities of Želino and Saraj. In the 2009 local elections, the party won only 328 votes without any mayoral position. In 2013, PDP did not participate in the local elections.

In the 2017 Local Elections, PDP will promote their candidate for mayor in the municipality of Bogovinje, while in the municipalities of Gazi Baba, Želino, Lipkovo, Studeničani and Tetovo they will promote candidate lists for councilors only.

Party for Democratic Prosperity

ul. Karaorman br. 62

1200 Tetovo

https://www.facebook.com/PPDzyrtare/?ref=br_rs

POLITICAL PARTY "ALLIANCE FOR THE ALBANIANS"



The Alliance for the Albanians is a political party under the leadership of Zijadin Sela, which separated from the Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians". This party derives from the Movement for Reforms of DPA, and it was registered as a political party just before the local elections under the name "Alliance for the Albanians", which was disputed by the leadership of Uniteti and NDP. The Alliance for the Albanians will participate in the elections independently, with their own candidates for mayors in 15 municipalities and the City of Skopje. In the municipalities of Bitola, Gazi Baba, and Ohrid, they will promote joint candidate lists for councilors together with the parties DUI and BESA.

Political Party Alliance for the Albanians

ul. Ilinden bb.

1200 Tetovo

info@ndryshe.eu

www.ndryshe.eu

UNION OF ROMA IN MACEDONIA



The Union of Roma in Macedonia (SRM) is a party that represents the interests of the Roma ethnic community in Macedonia. They are active on the political stage since 1996. The leader of the party is Amdi Bajram. In the period between 1998 and 2002, they had only one MP in the Republic of Macedonia's Assembly. Since 2006, SRM has been represented in parliament with one seat, within the coalitions led by VMRO-DPMNE. In the 2009 local elections, SRM won 6 councilor positions and one mayoral position in the municipality of Šuto Orizari.

It won the same mayoral position in the 2013 local elections as well, in addition to 11 councilor positions. In the 2017 elections, SRM is part of the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE. However, in the municipality of Šuto Orizari. They will promote their own candidate for mayor and candidate list for councilors independently.

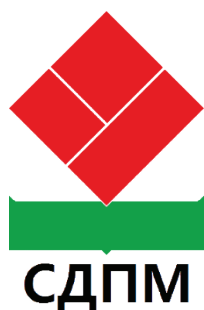
Union of Roma in Macedonia

Šuto Orizari 50

1000 Skopje

<https://www.facebook.com/partija.srm.5>

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF MACEDONIA (SDPM)



The Social Democratic Party of Macedonia (SDPM) was established in 1990. Its first leader was Slavko Milosavljevski. SDPM is a left oriented party positioning itself within the social-democratic ideology. Its current leader is Branko Janevski, with his third consecutive mandate as the leader of the party. Since Macedonia's independence, this party has taken part in several election cycles, without any significant success. In the 2011 parliamentary elections, SDPM won 1807 votes (0.16%). In the 2013 local elections, SDPM promoted its candidates for mayors and councilors independently, without winning any mayoral or councilor positions. The party did not take part in the 2016 parliamentary elections due to the fact that the State Election Commission rejected their candidate lists. In the 2017 local elections, SDPM will promote their own candidates in the municipalities of Gostivar, Zrnovci, Kočani, and Makedonski Brod.

Social Democratic Party of Macedonia

bul.JNA br.54 zgrada br.1, vlez 1 prizemje

1200 Skopje

PERMANENT MACEDONIAN RADICAL UNIFICATION - TMRO



The Permanent Macedonian Radical Unification (TMRO) is a political party founded in 2002. Its ideology is right-oriented, promoting conservative values of conservatism and Macedonian patriotism. Their understanding of the state of Macedonia is as a national state of the Macedonian people. The leader and founder of the party is Vančo Šehtanski. The party achieved insignificant results in the parliamentary elections in 2006 and 2008. In the 2011 parliamentary elections, the party joined the coalition with VMRO-DPMNE and remained within it for the elections in 2014 and 2016. In the 2017 local elections, TMRO will promote its independent candidates for mayors in the municipalities of Kavadarci and the City of Skopje.

Permanent Macedonian Radical Unification – TMRO

Bul. Jane Sandanski 116-3/10

1000 Skopje

t_tmro@yahoo.com

<http://tmro-mk.weebly.com/>



OVERVIEW OF CANDIDATES FOR MAYORS FOR THE 2017 LOCAL ELECTIONS

OVERVIEW OF MAYORAL CANDIDATES⁷⁰

Statistical regions and municipalities in the Republic of Macedonia



Territorial organization of the Republic of Macedonia
Source: State Statistical Office

In this part the mayoral candidates for the 2017 local elections are presented. The nominated persons in 29 municipalities and the City of

⁷⁰ All images were downloaded from internet sources, with a specific reference being made to the link of the corresponding source. The images mostly used are those downloaded from the official Facebook profiles of the mayoral candidates. The photos of the candidates from VMRO-DPMNE are taken from the website: <http://novaera.mk/>, while the photos of the candidates from SDSM are taken from the website <http://zivotzasite.mk/>.

Skopje⁷¹ are presented with their curriculum vitae and photo.⁷² The candidates for the remaining municipalities are listed.

The extensive overview encompasses only the largest municipalities, including all municipalities in the City of Skopje. The criteria for the inclusion of the municipalities in the sample were urban status, population size (only the large ones are included), ethnic structure (we tried to include as many multiethnic municipalities as possible), and the number of nominated mayoral candidates.



City of Skopje

Area	1854 km ²
Population	506 926
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (66.75%) Albanians (20.49%) Romani (4.36%) Serbs (2.82%) Turks (1.7)
Number of Councilors	45
Budget for 2016 ⁷³	6 651 736 000
Address	Ilinden No. 82 Skopje
Telephone	02/ 3 297 255 02/ 3 297 536 02/ 3 297 265 02/ 3 297 236
Website	http://www.skopje.gov.mk

⁷¹ The presentation of the mayoral candidates in 29 municipalities and in the City of Skopje has been done by following the alphabetical order of the initial letter of the candidate's surname.

⁷² The resumes and/or photos of some of the candidates are not presented herewith due to the lack of information. The overview of the mayoral candidates refers to the candidates who have been announced by the State Election Commission. The official list is available at <https://kandidati.sec.mk>.

⁷³ The budgets of all municipalities as referred to in this manual are expressed in MK Denars.

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE CITY OF SKOPJE



*Naim Bajrami (Political Party of Alliance for Albanians)*⁷⁴ is a lawyer by profession. He graduated in political sciences from the Faculty of Law „Justinian I” at the “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” University in Skopje. In 2017, Naim Bajrami was appointed Second Spokesperson to the Government of the Republic of Macedonia as a nominated member of the political party of the Alliance for Albanians.



*Koce Trajanovski (VMRO-DPMNE)*⁷⁵ is the current Mayor of the City of Skopje, executing his second mandate. He has held this position since the 2009 local elections. Before this tenure, from 2005 to 2009, he was mayor of the Skopje Municipality of Gazi Baba. As from 2008, he was president of the Association of the Units of Local Self-Government (ZELS). From 1998 to 2005, he was a Member of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia. Before starting to engage in politics, he had run his own computer company, and for 15 years he had worked for MZT-Hepos. Trajanovski graduated from the Faculty of Mechanics in Skopje. He is 61 years old.



*Gjorgji Todorov (The People's Movement for Macedonia)*⁷⁶ is a member of the Executive Committee of NDM. Todorov was a Member of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia during the term 1998-2002, representing the political party VMRO-Macedonian. He graduated from the Faculty of Technical Sciences from the Department of Traffic. He worked as Head of the Dispatching Centre of the Public Traffic Enterprise in Skopje. Also, he was the Vice-President for Traffic in the City Committee for Urbanism, Communal and Accommodation Affairs, Traffic and Environment Protection at the City of Skopje. He was born in 1958 in Skopje.

⁷⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/naim.bajrami.10>

⁷⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/koce.trajanovski/>

⁷⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/Народно-Движење-За-Македонија-1017491648264591/>



*Bekim Fazliu (DPA)*⁷⁷ is a former DPA-nominated Member of Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia. He was an MP during the 2011-2014 and 2014-2016 terms. Before assuming the function of MP, Bekim Fazliu was Mayor of the Saraj Municipality for one term. He graduated from the Faculty of Law in Skopje. He was born in 1979 in Skopje.



*Nafie Selmani (BESA)*⁷⁸ is employed in the municipal administration in the City of Skopje, in the Sector for Support to the Mayor in the area of public relations.



*Marija Johns (The Left)*⁷⁹ has worked as a translator from Macedonian into English and English into Macedonian for more than 10 years. She has worked as a youth journalist for culture for „Mlad Borec“ and „Studentski Zbor“ as well as for some minor radio stations in Skopje. She has also worked as a sales assistant and cook in Skopje, as a room-maid, waitress, marketing agent for advertising space in a financial editorial in London; as a teacher of Macedonian for foreigners and as an English teacher in Skopje, Morocco, Hungary and Great Britain. She studied theater directing, law, comparative literature, English language and art in Skopje and London. She is 39 years old.



*Petre Shilegov (SDSM)*⁸⁰ is the Vice-President of SDSM, and Member of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia. Prior to this function, he was spokesperson of SDSM. In the 2014 parliamentary elections, Petre Shilegov was the front-runner in the Electoral Unit 2, whereas in the 2016 Parliamentary Elections, he was the front-runner in the Electoral Unit 6. He was born in Skopje in 1969. He graduated from the Law Faculty „Justinian I“ at the „Ss Cyril and Methodius“ University in Skopje. Prior to his MP function, Shilegov worked as a lawyer at attorney.



*Vancho Shehtanski (TMRO)*⁸¹ is leader and founder of the party Permanent Macedonian Radical Unification (TMRO). He graduated from the Law Faculty at the „Ss Cyril and Methodius“ University in Skopje in 1996, and passed his bar exam in 1998. He is a lawyer at attorney by profession. In 2009, he was appointed the first Director of the Agency for Management of Seized and Forfeited Assets, whereas in the period of 2010 to 2017, he was the Director of the State Inspectorate for Local Self-Government. He was President of the Football Club Vardar in 2008 and 2010 respectively. He was born in 1972 in Skopje.

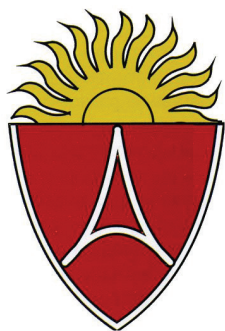
⁷⁷ http://www.sobranie.mk/demokratska-partija-na-albancite-ns_article-bekim-fazliu-11.nspk

⁷⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/nafie.selmani>

⁷⁹ <https://levica.mk/gradonachalnik-skopje/>

⁸⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/p.shilegov/>

⁸¹ <https://www.facebook.com/TMROMK>



Municipality of Aerodrom

Area	21 km ²
Population	72 009
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (89.4%) Serbs (4.28%) Albanians (1.41%)
Number of Councilors	27
Budget for 2016	1 072 418 000
Address	Jane Sandanski No. 109 b Skopje
Telephone	02/ 2 400 970
Website	http://www.aerodrom.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF AERODROM



*Ivica Konevski (VMRO-DPMNE)*⁸² has been Mayor of the Aerodrom Municipality since 2009. From 2006 until his election as a Mayor, he was Director General of the Public Enterprise for Management of Housing and Business Premises of the Republic of Macedonia. In 2005 and 2006, he was Councilor in the City of Skopje. Konevski is a graduated lawyer with a passed bar exam. He is 34 years old.



*Zlatko Marin*⁸³ is President of the Municipal Organization of SDSM in Aerodrom. By profession he is a professor of physical and health education.

⁸² <https://www.facebook.com/IvicaKonevski/>
⁸³ <https://www.facebook.com/Zlatko.Marin>



Municipality of Butel

Area	55 km ²
Population	36 154
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (62.25%) Albanians (25.19%) Turks (3.61%) Serbs (4.28%) Bosniaks (2.68%) Romani (1.55%)
Number of Councilors	19
Budget for 2016	433 925 000
Address	Butelska No. 4 Skopje
Telephone	02/ 2 600 506
Website	http://www.opstinabutel.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF BUTEL

Vlatko Damjanovski (NDM)



*Darko Kostovski (VMRO-DPMNE)*⁸⁴ is a Councilor in the Municipality of Butel, elected in the 2013 Local Elections. He is employed in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. He was recently appointed the the function of spokesperson of VMRO-DPMNE. Kostovski graduated in political sciences. He is 29 years old.

⁸⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/darkokostovskizabutel/>



*Ermond Miftari (DPA)*⁸⁵ works as a speech therapist in the Institute for Rehabilitation of Children and Youth. Miftari graduated in defectology from the Faculty of Defectology (Department of Speech Therapy) at Zagreb University.



*Velimir Smilevski (SDSM)*⁸⁶ is the current Vice-President of the municipal organization of SDSM Butel. He is SDSM Councilor in the Butel Municipal Council. Smilevski is an entrepreneur and a company owner.



*Naser Curi (BESA)*⁸⁷ graduated in pedagogy from the Faculty of Pedagogy at the „Ss Cyril and Methodius“ University in Skopje. From 1996 to 2004, Naser Curi worked in the primary school „Emin Duraku“, Skopje region. As from 2004, he was employed in the primary school „Zivko Brajkovski“ in Butel as a teacher of Albanian language and literature. From 2005 to 2009, Curi was Councilor in the Council of the City of Skopje, nominated by the National Democratic Party.



Municipality of Gazi Baba

Area	92 km ²
Population	72 617
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (73.67%) Serbs (17.22%) Albanians (2.89%) Romani (2.87)
Number of Councilors	27
Budget for 2016	924 385 000
Address	Arhimedova No. 2 Skopje
Telephone	02/ 3 226 655
Website	http://www.gazibaba.gov.mk/

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF GAZI BABA



*Borce Georgievski (SDSM)*⁸⁸ is the President of the Municipal Organization of SDSM Gazi Baba. Since 2013, he has been a Councilor in the Municipal Council of Gazi Baba.

⁸⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/ermond.miftari>

⁸⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/velimiramsmilevski>

⁸⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/NaserCurri2017/>

⁸⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/BorceGeorgievskiZaGaziBaba/>



*Toni Trajkovski (VMRO-DPMNE)*⁸⁹ currently executes his second mandate as a Mayor of the Municipality of Gazi Baba. Until his election as mayor in 2009, he was employed in the Shareholding Company „Elem“, and prior to this, he worked as an engineer in the Shareholding Company „ESM“. In 2005 he was elected Councilor in the Municipal Council of Gazi Baba, whereas in 2008 he was appointed President of the Municipal Council. Trajkovski graduated from the Faculty of Mechanics in Skopje in 2001. He is 43 years old.



*Zoran Trpceviski (The Left)*⁹⁰ is a former non-commissioned officer in the Army of the Republic of Macedonia. As from 2007, he has been a military pensioner. He completed his secondary military school in Sarajevo. He is 43 years old.



Municipality of Gjorce Petrov

Area	67 km ²
Population	41 634
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (85.16%) Serbs (4.16%) Albanians (3.84%) Romani (3%)
Number of Councilors	23
Budget for 2016	500 994 000
Address	Gjorce Petrov No. 73 Skopje
Telephone	02/ 2 039 307
Website	http://www.opstinagpetrov.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF GJORCE PETROV



*Vlado Misajlovski (VMRO-DPMNE)*⁹¹ is a former Minister of Transport and Communications in the Government of VMRO-DPMNE in the period from May 2015 to May 2017. Prior to this function, he assumed the post of Director of the Public Enterprise for National Roads. Before this, Misajlovski had performed the functions of State Secretary in the Ministry of Transport and Communications and State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Misajlovski graduated in political sciences, and has undertaken masters` studies in European and International diplomacy and politics. He is 32 years old.

⁸⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1080561723>

⁹⁰ <https://levica.mk/gradonachalnik-gazi-baba/>

⁹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/misajlovskivlado/>



*Aleksandar Naumovski (SDSM)*⁹² was appointed Director of the Investigative Prison Skopje in Shuto Orizari in August 2017. This is Naumovski's second subsequent candidature for mayor of the municipality of Gjorce Petrov. Prior to his current post, he worked in an insurance company, as a manager in the private sector and as entrepreneur. In the period from 2006 to 2011, he was associate to the Ministry of Justice, and he also worked as Advisor for Legal Affairs to the Director General of the Central Register of the Republic of Macedonia. Naumovski has obtained his Masters and BS degrees from the Law Faculty „Justinian I“ in Skopje . He was born in Skopje in 1977.



Municipality of Karpoš

Area	35 km ²
Population	59 666
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (88.51%) Albanians (3.27%) Serbs (3.66%) Romani (1.03%)
Number of Councilors	23
Budget for 2016	1 978 462 000
Address	Radika No. 9 Skopje
Telephone	02/ 3 061 353
Website	http://www.karpos.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF KARPOŠ



*Stefan Bogoev (SDSM)*⁹³ is currently a Member of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia. He is also former President of the Social-Democratic Youth of Macedonia. Stefan Bogoev graduated in economics and currently undertakes his masters studies in applied economics at the University American College- Skopje. He was born in 1989 in Skopje.

⁹² <https://www.facebook.com/AleksandarNaumoskizaGorce/>

⁹³ <https://www.facebook.com/bogoevstefan/>



STEVCHJE JAKIMOVSKI (GROM)⁹⁴ currently executes his third mandate as Mayor of the Municipality of Karpoš. He executed his first and his second mayoral mandates in the period from 2000 to 2003 and from 2009 to 2013. In 2003, he was appointed Minister of Economy, whereas in the period from December 2004 to 2006 he performed the function of Minister of Labour and Social Policy. Following the completion of his ministerial mandate, he worked in his private company. Before starting his political career, he was occupied with his private business, and he also was Director of Katlanovo Tours. Jakimovski graduated from the Faculty of Economics in Skopje. He is 56 years old.



*Municipality
of Kisela Voda*

Area	47 km ²
Population	57 236
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (91.69%) Serbs (2.49%) Romani (1.25%) Vlachs (1.13%)
Number of Councilors	23
Budget for 2016	1 000 135 000
Address	Petar Deljan No. 17 Skopje
Telephone	02/ 2 785 400
Website	http://www.kiselavoda.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF KISELA VODA



Johan Tarchulovski (VMRO-DPMNE)⁹⁵ is a Member of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, elected in the 2016 Parliamentary Elections. Before he was elected MP he worked as an entrepreneur. In the period from 1999 to 2004, Tarchulovski was Escort Inspector in the Security Service to the President of the Republic of Macedonia Boris Trajkovski. Due to certain activities in the 2001 conflict, he was accused and convicted by the Prosecution of the Hague Tribunal for violation of laws and warfare customs. He was extradicted to the Hague on 16 March 2005. He served six years in the Scheveningen prison, while the remaining two years he served in the city of Diez, Germany. In April 2013, Tarchulovski was released and he returned to Macedonia, where he then took up the function of organizational secretary of VMRO-DPMNE.

⁹⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/stevco.jakimovski.12>

⁹⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/Johan.Tarchulovski/>



*Filip Temelkovski (SDSM)*⁹⁶ has been President of the Municipal Organization of SDSM Kisela Voda since 2013. From 2008 to 2009, Filip Temelkovski was Secretary General of the Social-Democratic Youth of Macedonia. He has also performed other party functions. Apart from politics, Filip Temelkovski works in the catering sector.



Municipality of Saraj

Area	241 km ²
Population	35 408
Ethnic structure of the population	Albanians (91.53%) Macedonians (3.89%) Bosniaks (3.16%)
Number of Councilors	19
Budget for 2016	/
Address	Recreational Centre Saraj bb Municipality of Saraj
Telephone	02/ 2 057 990 02/ 2 057 996
Website	http://www.saraj.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF SARAJ



*Ekrem Alija (Political Party Alliance for the Albanians)*⁹⁷



*Sefedin Aliu (DPA)*⁹⁸

⁹⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/TemelkovskiFilip/>

⁹⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/Ekrem-Alija-Faqja-Zyrtare-1963399940651792/>

⁹⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/Saraj.co/>



*Bashkim Bakiu (BESA)*⁹⁹ is a researcher and founder of the Research Institute for Policies and Good Governance in Skopje. Bakiu graduated in political sciences from the Law Faculty „Justinian I“ in Skopje, and obtained his masters degree on the subject of comparative local development under the masters program coordinated by the University of Trento, Italy. Presently, Bakiu is a PhD candidate at the University of “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” in Skopje.



*Blerim Bexheti (DUI)*¹⁰⁰ is a member of the DUI Central Presidency. In 2009, he was elected Mayor of the Municipality of Saraj and he was appointed member of the ZELS Governing Board. He performed these functions until 2011, when he was appointed Minister of Justice. Earlier, in the period from 2006 to 2009, on two occasions he was elected DUI nominated Member of the Parliament of Republic of Macedonia. In the period from 2005 to 2006, he ran his own law at attorney office, whereas from 2002 to 2005, he worked as Senior Advisor in the Ministry of Justice. Bexheti graduated in law and has his bar exam passed as appropriate. He is 41 years old.



Municipality of Centar

Area	10 km ²
Population	45 412
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (85.4%) Serbs (4.49%) Albanians (3.23%) Romani (2.14%) Turks (1.08%) Vlachs (1.01%)
Number of Councilors	23
Budget for 2016	1 503 504 000
Address	Str. Mihail Cokov nn Skopje
Telephone	02/ 3 203 600
Website	http://www.opstinacentar.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF CENTAR



*Sasha Bogdanovic (SDSM)*¹⁰¹ was born in 1985 in Postojna, Slovenia. He has been member of SDSM since 2001, whereas in 2009 he became member of the Executive Board of the Municipal Organization of SDSM Centar, and in 2014, he became its President. He graduated from the Faculty of Political Sciences at the „Ss Cyril and Methodius“ University in Skopje. Presently he is Director of the Public Enterprise Parking Premises of the Municipality of Centar.

⁹⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/bashkimbakiuofficial/>
¹⁰⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/bexhetii/>

¹⁰¹ <https://www.facebook.com/sasha.bogdanovikj/>



*Dejan Jovanovski (VMRO-DPMNE)*¹⁰² has been member of VMRO-DPMNE's Executive Committee since 2017. In 2016, he was briefly appointed Secretary General of the Macedonian Basketball Federation (MBF), but after only one month, he rescinded from this function. In the period from 2012 to 2013, Jovanovski was Sport Director of the BC Rabotnichki, and after this he worked in the Agency for Youth and Sports. He is a former professional basketball player and had played for a number of basketball clubs in Macedonian and abroad. He was a member of the Macedonian national basketball team. Jovanovski is 44 years old.



*Aleksandar Mitrov (The Left)*¹⁰³ works as a tour guide in Spanish and English and as Argentine tango instructor. He has working experience in a number of areas, starting from sale, catering, financial institution for rapid money transfer, projects in the area of fostering and promotion of workers rights, introduction of electronic register in the kindergartens of RM etc. In 2008, he was one of the founders of the Movement for Social Justice „Lenka“. Mitrov graduated in political sciences and international relations. He is 34 years old.



Municipality of Čair

Area	4 km ²
Population	64 773
Ethnic structure of the population	Albanians (57%) Macedonians (24.13%) Turks (6.95%) Romani (4.76%) Bosniaks (4.55%)
Number of Councilors	27
Budget for 2016	1 363 866 359
Address	Hristijan Todorovski No. 5 Skopje
Telephone	02/ 5 101 855
Website	http://cair.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF ČAIR



*Faruk Avdiu (Political Party Alliance for the Albanians)*¹⁰⁴ has worked as professor in the secondary school SUGS Arseni Jovkov in Skopje since 2010. In 2009, he graduated from the Law Faculty at the Tetovo State University. He was born in 1985 in Skopje.



*Ismailj Bojda (NDM)*¹⁰⁵ is President of the Alliance of Macedonians of Islamic confession and President of the Union of Gorani. He was born in 1954 in the village of Brod in the area of Gora in Kosovo.

¹⁰² <https://www.facebook.com/DejanTimCentar/>

¹⁰³ <https://levica.mk/gradonachalnik-centar/>

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/faruk.avdiu.7>

¹⁰⁵ <http://facebook.com/ibojda>



*Visar Ganiu (DUI)*¹⁰⁶ performed the function of Deputy Minister of Education and Science. After submitting his mayoral candidature for the Municipality of Čair, he resigned from his post in the Ministry. Prior to this, as from 2004 he worked in the Tetovo State University as junior professor assistant and assistant on the subject: Theory and methodology of sports training. In 2009, he was appointed docent, and as from 2013 extracurricular professor. He graduated from the Faculty of Physical Culture at the Tetovo State University. He was born in 1978 in Skopje.



*Zecirija Ibraimi (BESA)*¹⁰⁷ is a Member of the the Parliament of RM elected in the 2016 Parliamentary Elections. He is a member of the Party Central Presidency. Prior to assuming his Deputy function, he worked as scientific staff at the Institute for the Spiritual and Cultural Heritage of the Albanians, Skopje. Zecirija graduated from the Faculty of Philology. He is 40 years old.



*Idriz Orana (DPA)*¹⁰⁸ is a surgeon in the Clinical Centre in Skopje. He was DPA Councilor in the last municipal council in the City of Skopje. Until 2017, Orana was Vice-President of the Medical Chamber of Macedonia.



*Nermin Telovska (VMRO-DPMNE)*¹⁰⁹ is member of VMRO-DPMNE's Executive Committee. She is a defectologist and speech therapist and President of the Board of Speech Therapists under the auspices of the Union of Defectologists of Macedonia. Telovska is a specialist in psychomotor reeducation and relaxation, in speech diffluent disorders, and she holds masters degrees in defectology (speech therapy). She is 52 years old.

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/VisarGaniu.Cair/>
<http://www.mia.mk/en/Inside/RenderSingleGalleryTest/133852564/1?month=9&year=2017&day=12&desc=1>

¹⁰⁷ http://sobranie.mk/dvizenje-besa-2016-ns_article-zekjirija-ibrahimi-16.nspix

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/idriz.orana.1>

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/Nermin.Telovska.Makedonija/>



*Municipality of
Shuto Orizari*

Area	7 km ²
Population	22 017
Ethnic structure of the population	Romani (60.6%) Albanians (30.32%) Macedonians (6.53%)
Number of Councilors	19
Budget for 2016	248 393 000
Address	Vietnamska nn Skopje
Telephone	02/ 2 650 584
Website	http://www.sutoorizari.org.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF SHUTO ORIZARI



*Elvis Bajram (SRM)*¹¹⁰ has been Mayor of the Municipality of Shuto Orizari since 2009. Prior to assuming his mayoral post, he was President of the Municipal Council of Shuto Orizari. He runs a family business and has completed primary education. He is 36 years old.



*Kurto Dudush (SDSM)*¹¹¹ has been a Member of the Parliament of Republic of Macedonia since 2016. He graduated in business management from the MIT University in Skopje. He was born in Skopje in 1974.

¹¹⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/Elvis-Bajram-1609731929079429/>

¹¹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/kucoo.dudush>

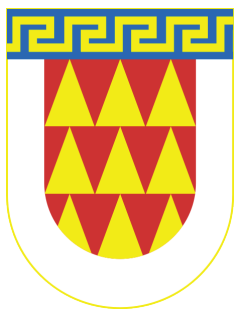
Faik Sadiki (DPA)

Muhamed Curi (BESA)



*Hhela Chajani (DUI)*¹¹² works as officer at the Secretariat for Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. He graduated in law from the Law Faculty at the „Ss Cyril and Methodius“ University in Skopje.

¹¹² <https://www.facebook.com/xhelalC>



Municipality
of Bitola

Area	792 km ²
Population	95 385
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (88.71%) Albanians (4.36%)
Number of Councilors	31
Budget for 2016	1 618 668 311
Address	1 st May, No. 61 Bitola
Telephone	047/ 234 234
Website	http://www.bitola.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF BITOLA



*Zoran Ilioski (VMRO-DPMNE)*¹¹³ performs his second mandate as a Member of the Parliament of RM. He was elected MP in the 2014 Parliamentary Elections for the first time. Ilioski is a member of the party's Executive Committee. Prior to being elected MP, he was Director of the Public Enterprise "Water Supply". Ilioski graduated in electrical engineering and is 55 years old.



*Jorgo Ogdenovski (independent candidate)*¹¹⁴ is a professional actor. He has his own company for production of movies and TV serials. Also, he is the founder of the humanitarian organization „For better health“ Bitola, aimed at serving the needs of the Bitola hospital. He has produced 4 feature films in Hollywood, USA, one of which in coproduction with the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia. He graduated from the Faculty of Economics in Skopje. He is 62 years old.



*Natasha Petrovska (SDSM)*¹¹⁵ is Councilor in the Municipal Council of Bitola and SDSM Coordinator to the Municipal Council. Prior to this, for one mandate she was a member of the SDSM Executive Board, whereas for two mandates she was a member of the Executive Board of the Municipal Organization of SDSM in Bitola. She is a Master of Human Resources Management from the University of Tourism and Management, and she works as a mathematics professor at the Technical School „Gjorgji Naumov“. She completed her secondary education in the gymnasium Josip Broz Tito in Bitola. She was born in Bitola in 1971.



*Kjircho Toshkov (independent candidate)*¹¹⁶ is an independent mayoral candidate for Bitola municipality. He is employed in the Shareholding Company ELEM, subsidiary REK Bitola.

¹¹⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/jorgo.ogdenovski>

¹¹⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/SoLjubovZaBitola/>

¹¹⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/Кирчо-Ташков-1936150186642999/>

¹¹³ <https://www.facebook.com/zoraniloskibitola/>



Municipality
of Veles

Area	464 km ²
Population	55 108
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (84.86%) Albanians (4.17%) Turks (3.13%) Romani (1.45%)
Number of Councilors	23
Budget for 2016	906 299 344
Address	Panko Brashnar No. 1 Veles
Telephone	043/ 232 966
Website	http://www.veles.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF VELES



*Ace Kocevski (SDSM)*¹¹⁷ was Mayor of the Municipality of Veles for two mandates in the period from 2000 to 2009 and Under-Secretary in the Ministry of Local Self-Government from 1999 to 2000. He was a Member of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia in the period from 1994 to 1998. During his studies, he was President of the Youth Organization of the University „Ss Cyril and Methodius“ from 1982 to 1983. He is a construction engineer by vocation. He is 56 years old.



*Slavcho Chadiev (VMRO-DPMNE)*¹¹⁸ is Mayor of the Municipality of Veles, elected in the 2013 Local Elections. Prior to assuming this function, he was Councilor and President of the Municipal Council of Veles for two mandates, from 2005 respectively. Chadiev has obtained his masters degree in defectology– surdologist and works in the Public Health Institution “General Hospital” Veles, ORL Department. He is Vice-President of the Union of Defectologists of Macedonia, long-year collaborator to the Union of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Persons of the Republic of Macedonia and of the Department for Deaf Persons “Koco Racin” Bitola, as well as to the subsidiaries of the Union of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Persons and the Union of Blind Persons in Veles. He graduated from the Faculty of Defectology in Belgrade. He is 58 years old.

Goce Chushkov (NDM) is a former member of VMRO-DPMNE. He has worked for many years as Director of the Agro-Combine Lozar in Veles. He completed his secondary education in the gymnasium „Kocho Racin“ in Veles. He was born in Veles in 1965s.

¹¹⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/kocevskiace/>

¹¹⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/cadievslavco/>



Municipality of Gevgelija

Area	485 km ²
Population	22 988
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (96.82%) Serbs (1.6%)
Number of Councilors	19
Budget for 2016	733 066 292
Address	Dimitar Vlahov No. 4 Gevgelija
Telephone	034/ 213 843
Website	http://gevgelija.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF GEVGELIJA



*Sasho Pockov (SDSM)*¹¹⁹ is Member of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia. He graduated from the Faculty of Economics and is a Master of Economic Sciences. In the 2009 Local Elections Sasho Pockov was top candidate of the SDSM Councilors List and was then elected Councilor in the Municipal Council of Gevgelija for the mandate 2009-2013. In 2009, he was elected President of the Municipal Organization of SDSM Gevgelija He was born in Gevgelija in 1966.



*Ivan Frangov (VMRO-DPMNE)*¹²⁰ executes his second mandate as Mayor of the Municipality of Gevgelija. Previously, from 2007, he worked as Head of the Tax Department of the Public Revenue Office in Gevgelija. From 2002 to 2007, he worked for the private company „Solun 53“ ShC Gevgelija, first as Head of Marketing, and then as executive member of the Board of Directors. He graduated from the Faculty of Economics in Skopje, from the Department of Foreign Trade and Marketing. He is 47 years old.

¹¹⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/sashopockov/>

¹²⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/frangovivan/>



Municipality of Gostivar

Area	519 km ²
Population	81 042
Ethnic structure of the population	Albanians (66.68%) Macedonians (19.59%) Turks (9.86%) Romani (2.76%)
Number of Councilors	31
Budget for 2016	1 096 684 000
Address	Braca Ginoski No. 61 Gostivar
Telephone	042/ 213 511
Website	http://www.gostivari.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF GOSTIVAR



*Asaf Ademi (BESA)*¹²¹ was Ambassador of the Republic of Macedonia to Denmark until 2016. Before he was appointed Ambassador in 2009, he worked as Advisor to the Minister of Environment and Physical Planning. From 2007 to 2009, Ademi was Head of the Sector for Urban Planning and Environment in the Municipality of Gostivar. From 2005 to 2007 he was Head of the Sector for Economic Development in the municipality, whereas from 2004 to 2005, he was Advisor for Infrastructure to the Mayor. Ademi holds a BS and MS in engineering.

¹²¹ <https://www.facebook.com/asaf.ademi>



*Nevzat Bejta (DUI)*¹²² is Mayor of the Municipality of Gostivar, elected in the 2013 Local Elections. He was Mayor of the Municipality in the period 2005-2009. From 2011 to February 2013, he was Minister of Local Self-Government in the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. In 2005, he was elected Mayor of the Municipality of Gostivar and Vice-President of ZELS. In the 2002 to 2005 term, he was Member of the Parliament of RM. In 2000, he was elected Councilor in the Municipal Council of Gostivar. Prior to this post, he had worked as a professor of history in the village of Chegrane and in Gostivar. He graduated from the History Department of the Faculty of Philosophy in Prishtina and obtained his Masters` degree at Tirana University. He is 55 years old.



*Shpat Iseini (Coalition Alliance for the Albanians)*¹²³ is President of the Youth Forum of the Political Party National Democratic Renewal. He is a student of political sciences at the University of South-Eastern Europe. He is 25 years old.



*Sebadin Izairi (DPA)*¹²⁴ graduated in political sciences and is a member of the party central presidency. He was born in the village of Chegrane, Gostivar area.

¹²² <https://www.facebook.com/NevzatBejtaFaqjaZyrtare/>

¹²³ <https://www.facebook.com/shpat.iseini.3>

¹²⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/PDSH-Dega-Gostivar-Zgjedhjet-Lokale-2017-175041466403620/>

Lenka Jovanovska (SDPM)



*Dafina Stojanoska (VMRO-DPMNE)*¹²⁵ is a Member of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, elected in the 2016 elections. Before she was elected MP, Stojanoska was Councilor in the Municipality of Gostivar, elected in the 2013 Local Elections. From June 2015 until July 2017, Stojanoska was member of VMRO-DPMNE's Executive Committee. She graduated in dental science and is currently a Masters Degree candidate. She is 43 years old.



*Arben Taravari (Political Party Alliance for the Albanians)*¹²⁶ is currently Minister of Health. Before he was appointed to this function, he worked as a medical practitioner. He is a senior scientific collaborator for the subject of neurology at the University Clinic for Neurology. He was appointed Head of the Department for Migraines, Headaches and other Painful Syndromes at the University Clinic for Neurology, as well as President of the Board of the University Clinic for Neurology. Taravari is the author of several publications in the area of neurology, which are used as manuals for the students of medicine in Macedonia, Kosovo and Albania. He is 44 years old.

¹²⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/Дафина-Стојаноска-1799978110245044/>

¹²⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/arbentaravari.mk/>



Municipality
of Debar

Area	145 km ²
Population	19 542
Ethnic structure of the population	Albanians (58.07%) Macedonians (20.01%) Turks (13.73%) Romani (5.53%)
Number of Councilors	15
Budget for 2016	279 204 000
Address	8 September No. 72 Debar
Telephone	046/ 831 196
Website	http://www.dibra.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF DEBAR



*Arben Agoli (Political Party Alliance for the Albanians)*¹²⁷ is employed in the Primary Health Institution Pediatrics in Debar. He is a pediatrician by profession.



*Dragan Klopchevski (VMRO-DPMNE)*¹²⁸ is a medical practitioner in a health institution in Debar. He graduated from the Medical Faculty in Skopje, and completed his secondary education at the Gymnasium in Debar.



*Ruzddi Llamba (DUI)*¹²⁹ is currently Mayor of the Municipality of Debar, elected in the 2013 Local Elections. Before he assumed this function, as from 2009 he was lecturer at the Department for Oriental Philology at the Tetovo State University and mufti at the Debar Muftiate. He has worked for the Islamic Religious Community of Macedonia since 1995 and at the Faculty for Islamic Studies in Skopje from 1993 to 1995 and again from 2009 to date. From 1980 to 1991, he worked at the Islamic Religious Community and was lecturing at the Prishtina University. He has translated literature from Arabic and Turkish, and has also published his own books. He graduated from the Department of Oriental Languages at the Faculty of Philology at Prishtina University, where he also obtained his masters degree of philological sciences. He is 63 years old.

Petrit Kljenja (DPA)



*Xhemal Chuli (BESA)*¹³⁰ is a professor at the Prishtina University. He holds a PhD in political sciences from the University of South-Eastern Europe in Skopje, and he has worked as a religious official in the Islamic Religious Community in the Debar region.



*Shkelkim Xhafa (Coalition Alliance for the Albanians)*¹³¹ is President of the Debar branch of the Uniteti party. He is economist by profession. He has graduated from the Faculty of Economics at Prishtina University.

¹²⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/dr.arbenagolli>

¹²⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/Драган-Клопчевски-311904212552932/>

¹²⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/mr.ruzhdi.lata>

¹³⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/xhemal.cupi.5>

¹³¹ <https://www.facebook.com/shkelqimxhafa2/>



Municipality
of Delchevo

Area	423 km ²
Population	17 505
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (95.04%) Romani (3.72%)
Number of Councilors	15
Budget for 2016	287 115 000
Address	Svetozar Markovic No. 1 Delchevo
Telephone	033/ 411 550
Website	http://www.delcevo.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF DELCHEVO



*Goran Trajkovski (SDSM)*¹³² is SDSM Councilor in the Municipal Council of Delchevo. In the last local elections Goran Trajkovski was top candidate of the SDSM councilor list. From 2010 to 2013, he was president of the SDSM municipal organization in Delchevo.



*Ivan Sokolov (VMRO-DPMNE)*¹³³ is a member of the Republic Council for Traffic Safety. From 2006 to 2014, he was a member of the Governing Board of the Public Enterprise for Pastures Management. He has completed secondary education. He is 56 years old.

¹³² <https://www.facebook.com/GoranTrajkovskiZaDelcevo/>

¹³³ <https://www.facebook.com/ivansokolovmk>

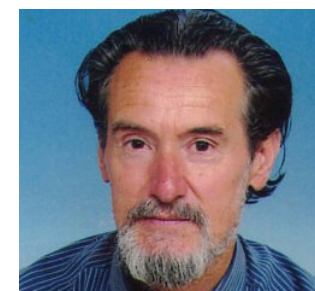


Municipality
of Kavadarci

Area	1132 km ²
Population	38 741
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (96.79%) Romani (1.75%)
Number of Councilors	19
Budget for 2016	811 013 000
Address	Marshal Tito square bb Kavadarci
Telephone	043/ 416 130
Website	http://www.kavadarci.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF KAVADARCI

Verica Arsova (TMRO)



*Boris Davidov (independent candidate)*¹³⁴ was Councilor in the Municipal Council of Kavadarci in the period 2009-2013. He has worked as a professor and has run his private business, developing trade relations with Turkey and China. Prior to this occupation, he was a military officer in Pula, and was later employed in the Municipal administration of Kavadarci. He graduated from the Military Academy in Belgrade. He is 70 years old.



*Mitko Janchev (VMRO-DPMNE)*¹³⁵ is the owner and manager of DPTU Kozuvchanka from Kavadarci, a private company for production of mineral water in Macedonia. Janchev is an engineer by vocation. He graduated in geology from the "Goce Delchev" University in Shtip and obtained his masters degree on the same subject from the Department of Technical Sciences, Petrology, Mineralogy and Geochemistry. He is 36 years old.

¹³⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/boris.davidov.73>

¹³⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/MitkoJanchev/>



*Betiane Kitev (SDSM)*¹³⁶ is a Member of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia. Prior to this function, he was a Councilor in the Municipal Council of Kavadarci for the mandate 2009-2013. He is a master of political sciences and has obtained his degree from the Law Faculty in Skopje. In October in 2008, he graduated from the Department of Political Studies at the same Faculty. He was born in Skopje in 1985.



*Municipality
of Kičevo*

Area	839 km ²
Population	56 734
Ethnic structure of the population	Albanians (54.51%) Macedonians (35.74%) Turks (5.28%) Romani (2.87%)
Number of Councilors	23
Budget for 2016	518 683 000
Address	Boris Kidrich No. 1 Kičevo
Telephone	045/ 223 001
Website	http://www.kicevo.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF KIČEVO



*Fatmir Dehari (DUI)*¹³⁷ is currently Mayor of the Municipality of Kičevo. He was elected in the 2013 Local Elections. From 2009 to 2013, he was Mayor of the Municipality of Oslomej, when in 2013, pursuant to the Law on Territorial Organization, the municipality had merged with Kičevo, together with the municipalities of Zajas, Drugovo and Vraneshtica. Before 2009, he had performed the function of Deputy Minister of Interior and Deputy Director of State Security and Counterintelligence, and immediately before assuming the mayoral post he was Director of the Macedonian Postal Services in the Postal Services Unit of Kičevo. He graduated from the Faculty of Physical Education at Prishtina University. He is 42 years old.



*Vlatko Sajkoski (VMRO-DPMNE)*¹³⁸ is a former member of the State Election Commission (2011 to 2014). He graduated from the Law Faculty in Skopje. In the period 2006-2008, he worked as Director of the PE for Water Supply „Studenchica“ in Kičevo. He was born in 1976 in Ohrid.

¹³⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/Бетиан-Китев-274855852624468/>

¹³⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/Fatmir-Dehari-Faqja-Zyrtare-149762858516336/>

¹³⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/VSajkoski/>



Municipality of Kochani

Area	382 km ²
Population	38 092
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (93.12%) Romani (5.12%)
Number of Councilors	19
Budget for 2016	524 375 400
Address	Rade Kratovche No. 1 Kochani
Telephone	033/ 274 001
Website	http://www.kocani.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF KOCHANI



*Ratko Dimitrovski (VMRO-DPMNE)*¹³⁹ is currently Mayor of the Municipality of Kochani, a function which he had already executed from 2009 until 2013. From 2006 to 2009, he was a Member of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, and a founder of the publishing house „Evropa 92”, which is one of the leading printing houses in Macedonia. In the period from 1977 to 1990 he worked in the printing houses „Kiro Dandaro” – Bitola and „Mladost” – Kochani. He graduated in graphic engineering in Zagreb. Dimitrovski is 60 years old.



*Nikolcho Ilijev (SDSM)*¹⁴⁰ is an entrepreneur from Kochani and Director of the INT Company. He is not a member of SDSM, but has been nominated as a nonparty candidate by the party organs.

Metodi Jovanov (SDPM)

¹³⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/RatkoDimitrovski/>

¹⁴⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/Nikolco-Ilijev-174501533098459/>



Municipality of Kriva Palanka

Area	481 km ²
Population	20 820
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (96.06%) Romani (3.21%)
Number of Councilors	19
Budget for 2016	355 338 500
Address	Joakim Osogovski No. 175 Kriva Palanka
Telephone	031/ 372 130
Website	http://www.krivapalanka.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF KRIVA PALANKA



*Arsencho Aleksovski (VMRO-DPMNE)*¹⁴¹ executes his second mandate as Mayor of the Municipality of Kriva Palanka. Prior to assuming this post in 2009, he was owner of the private company „Tranšped Trejd DOOEL” which he had founded and was running until 2006. Previously, he had worked for 13 years in the „Tranšped Komerč” as Head of the company branch „Deve Bair”. In the period from 1986 to 1991, he worked in the Forestry Enterprise „Osogovo” in Kriva Palanka. Previously, he had worked as inspector in the Ministry of Interior. He graduated in law and is 56 years old.

¹⁴¹ <https://www.facebook.com/Arsenco.Gradonacalnik/>



*Borjancho Micevski (SDSM)*¹⁴² is a Councilor in the Municipal Council of Kriva Palanka and President of the SDSM Municipal Organization in Kriva Palanka. In the 2013 Local Elections, Borjancho Micevski was top candidate of the Councilor List of the SDSM-led Alliance for the Future in Kriva Palanka. He graduated from the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics in Skopje. He is a member of the Kriva Palanka local council for prevention and of the local council for the national platform for reduction of risks from accidents and disasters at local and regional level. He was born in Kriva Palanka in 1971.



Municipality of Kumanovo

Area	509 km ²
Population	105 484
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (60.43%) Albanians (25.87%) Serbs (8.59%) Romani (4.03%)
Number of Councilors	33
Budget for 2016	1 793 766 626
Address	11 Oktomvri bb Kumanovo
Telephone	031/ 475 800 031/ 438 633
Website	http://www.kumanovo.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF KUMANOVO



*Zoran Gjorgjevski (VMRO-DPMNE)*¹⁴³ presently executes his second mandate as Member of the Parliament of RM. He was first elected MP in the 2014 Parliamentary Elections. This is Gjorgjevski's second candidature for Mayor of the Municipality of Kumanovo after he was not elected in the 2013 elections. Previously, he was Head of the Surgery Department at the General Hospital in Kumanovo. From 2002 to 2010, he was Head of the Surgery Department. He graduated from the Medical Faculty and holds his specialization in general surgery. He is 58 years old.

¹⁴² <https://www.facebook.com/borjanchom/>

¹⁴³ <https://www.facebook.com/drzorangjorgjevski/>



*Maksim Dimitrievski (SDSM)*¹⁴⁴ is a Member of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, elected in the 2016 Parliamentary Elections. He has been a party member and member of the SDSM Leadership in Kumanovo for many years. For several years, Maksim Dimitrievski had performed the function of President of the Municipal Council of Kumanovo, but resigned from this post due to his MP nomination. Apart from his political engagement, he has been a private entrepreneur since 1998. He was born in Kumanovo in 1975.



*Bashkim Osmani (political party Alliance for the Albanians)*¹⁴⁵



*Driton Sulejmani (BESA)*¹⁴⁶ is a member of the BESA political party Presidency. He completed his secondary education in the gymnasium Goce Delchev in Kumanovo. He studied at the Faculty for Business Administration at the University of South-Eastern Europe. Sulejmani is a professor at the secondary school Cvetan Dimov in Skopje.

Besnik Memeti (DPA)



Municipality of Negotino

Area	414 km ²
Population	19 045
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (92.48%) Serbs (3.26%) Romani (2.36%) Turks (1.26%)
Number of Councilors	15
Budget for 2016	550 921 000
Address	Aco Adzi Ilov No. 32 Negotino
Telephone	043/ 361 045
Website	http://negotino.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF NEGOTINO

Gjorgji Ajtov (independent)



*Toni Delkov (SDSM)*¹⁴⁷ has been a Councilor in the Municipal Council of Negotino since the 2013 Local Elections. He is a private entrepreneur and former sportsman and handball player for the HC Povardarie.

¹⁴⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/Maksim-Dimitrievski-590981394365638/>

¹⁴⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/Bashkim-Osmani-913318788820470/>

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/driton.sulejmani.906>

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/pg/delkovtoni>



*Zlatko Penkov (VMRO-DPMNE)*¹⁴⁸ has worked for the past 6 years as Head of the Local Unit Negotino. He completed his primary education in the Primary School Goce Delchev in Negotino and his secondary education in the gymnasium Josip Broz Tito in Negotino. He graduated from the Faculty of Agriculture at the "Ss Cyril and Methodius" University in Skopje. He has worked with private companies for several years. He has acquired experience in agricultural production by performing activities in the DZP Dubrovo in Dubrovo. Also, he has worked for the EU Project for the National Register of Vineyards at the MAFW: Local Unit Negotino. He was born in Negotino in 1971.



Municipality of Ohrid

Area	390 km ²
Population	55 749
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (84.93%) Albanians (5.31%) Turks (1.26%)
Number of Councilors	23
Budget for 2016	1 108 502 627
Address	Dimitar Vlahov No. 57 Ohrid
Telephone	046/ 262 492
Website	http://www.ohrid.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF OHRID



*Jovan Stojanoski (SDSM)*¹⁴⁹ has been a SDSM member for many years and is presently coordinator of the SDSM Councilor group in the municipality of Ohrid. As from 2003, he has worked as a professor at the Faculty of Tourism and Catering in Ohrid. He graduated and acquired his masters degree from the Faculty of Economics at the "Ss Cyril and Methodius" University in Skopje. He obtained his PhD in the area of International Tourism from the "St Kliment Ohridski" University in Bitola. He was born in 1970.



*Stevche Stevoski (independent candidate)*¹⁵⁰ graduated from the Faculty of Security, with a specialization taken in organized crime in the state and public enterprises. Stevche Stevoski was born in 1967 in the village of Elshani, Ohrid area.

¹⁴⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/zlatko.penkov.9>

¹⁴⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/prof.dr.jovan.stojanoski/>

¹⁵⁰ <http://ohridpress.com.mk/?p=73794>



*Mitko Tilevski (VMRO-DPMNE)*¹⁵¹ is a medical practitioner in the Special Hospital for Orthopedics and Traumatology „St. Erazmo“ in Ohrid. Until recently, Tilevski was Director of this Public Health Institution. From 1998 to 2002, he was Member of the Parliament of RM. Tilevski is a pediatrician specialist and has graduated from the Faculty of Medicine. He is 55 years old.



*Municipality
of Prilep*

Area	1194 km ²
Population	76 768
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (92.35%) Romani (5.77%) Turks (1.19%)
Number of Councilors	27
Budget for 2016	1 165 284 000
Address	Prilepski braniteli bb Prilep
Telephone	048/ 401 701
Website	http://www.prilep.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF PRILEP



*Ilija Jovanoski (SDSM)*¹⁵² is coordinator of the Councilor Group of SDSM in the Municipal Council of Prilep for the mandate 2013-2017. He is a doctor by vocation. In 2017, Ilija Jovanoski was appointed Director of the General Hospital in Prilep. He has been Vice-President of the Macedonian Medical Association since 2002. He was born in Prilep in 1956.



*Marjan Risteski (VMRO-DPMNE)*¹⁵³ currently executes his third mandate as Mayor of the Municipality of Prilep. He was first elected Mayor in the 2005 Local Elections. As from that year, he has been a member of the ZELS Governing Board. Before he assumed the post of mayor, he worked as a public utilities inpector in the local self-government in Prilep. He graduated from the Faculty of Economics in Prilep. He is 45 years old.

¹⁵¹ <https://www.facebook.com/mitkotilevski/>

¹⁵² <https://www.facebook.com/ilija.jovanoski.90>

¹⁵³ <https://www.facebook.com/gradonacalnikip/>



Municipality
of Resen

Area	739 km ²
Population	16 825
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (76.07%) Turks (10.68%) Albanians (9.13%)
Number of Councilors	15
Budget for 2016	300 071 623
Address	Car Samuil Square No. 20 Resen
Telephone	047/ 551 481
Website	http://www.resen.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF RESEN



Živko Gošarevski (SDSM)¹⁵⁴ is a Councilor in the Municipal Council of Resen, elected in the 2013 elections. He has been a member of SDSM for many years. Živko Gosharevski is owner of a private dental office.



Gjoko Strezovski (VMRO-DPMNE)¹⁵⁵ currently executes his first mandate as Mayor of the Municipality of Resen. Before he assumed this post following the 2013 Local Elections, he worked in the Ministry of Interior as Spokesperson of the Bitola Sector for Internal Affairs (SVR), but due to his mayoral candidature he had to put this appointment on hold. Previously, he worked as Senior Advisor in the Cabinet of the Minister of Interior and as Head of the Department for Internal Affairs of Resen. Strezovski graduated from the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and has obtained his masters degree in management of education. He is 53 years old.



Municipality
of Struga

Area	507 km ²
Population	65 375
Ethnic structure of the population	Albanians (56.85%) Macedonians (32.09%) Turks (5.72%)
Number of Councilors	27
Budget for 2016	914 947 000
Address	Mother Tereas Square bb Struga
Telephone	046/ 781 223
Website	http://www.struga.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF STRUGA



Vasil Aštalkoski (SDSM)¹⁵⁶ graduated in Customs and Freight Forwarding Management from the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality in Ohrid. He has held several various positions in the private and civic sector. He has been appointed Deputy Director of the Penitentiary Institution in Struga. He was born in Struga in 1976.



Ramiz Merko (DUI)¹⁵⁷ is a Minister without portfolio in the Government, responsible for foreign investments. Before he was appointed to this position, he was an MP at the Republic of Macedonia's Assembly in the period between 2014 and 2016. From 2005 until 2013, Merko was Mayor of the municipality of Struga in two consecutive mandates. From 2003 until 2005, he was in charge of the Health Fund in Struga, and from 1983 until 1999, he was a senior officer at the Agency for Financial Support of Agriculture and Rural Development. He graduated in economy and is 60 years old.

¹⁵⁴ <http://www.ohridsky.com/живко-гошаревски-е-кандидатот-на-сдсм/>
¹⁵⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/Гјоко-Стрезовски-512017292217770/>

¹⁵⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/Васил-Ашталкоски-Кандидат-за-градоначалник-на-општина-Струга-349623068811442/>
¹⁵⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/Ramiz-Merko-Faqja-Zyrtare-1470970386454894/>



*Nasto Polioski (NDM)*¹⁵⁸ is the former vice president of VMRO-DPMNE's border committee for Europe. In 1999 Palioski, was elected president of the Macedonian congress for Europe. He has lived in Munich for more than 40 years.



*Zijadin Sela (political party Alliance for the Albanians)*¹⁵⁹ is an MP in the current composition of the Republic of Macedonia's Assembly. He previously resigned from the position of Mayor of the municipality of Struga, which he held from 2013 until 2016. Zijadin Sela had been an MP in the Republic of Macedonia's Assembly in the period between 2011 and 2013. He is leader of the political party Alliance for the Albanians. He completed his secondary education in Prishtina, and continued his studies at the Medical Faculty of Tirana University. He was born in 1972 in the village of Livada, Struga.



*Sejad Solakoski (VMRO-DPMNE)*¹⁶⁰ is a medical doctor. He graduated in Medicine from the Pleven Faculty in Bulgaria, general practice. Selakovski is employed at the Private Health Institution Poliklinika Meniks in Labuništa as a family doctor. He has been a member of VMRO-DPMNE since 2014 and is 37 years old.



Municipality of Strumica

Area	32 km ²
Population	54 676
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (32.09%) Turks (6.87%)
Number of Councilors	23
Budget for 2016	1 075 947 734
Address	Sando Masev No.1 Strumica
Telephone	034/ 348 030
Website	http://www.strumica.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF STRUMICA



*Marjan Bajraktarov (VMRO-DPMNE)*¹⁶¹ is an oral surgeon with his private dental practice in Strumica. In the period between 2009 and 2013, he was a member of the Municipal Council of Strumica, and from 2005 until 2007 he was president of the municipal branch of VMRO-DPMNE in Strumica. Bajraktarov graduated in dentistry, with a specialization in oral surgery. He is 52 years old.



*Kosta Janevski (SDSM)*¹⁶² is an MP from SDSM at the Republic of Macedonia's Assembly. Prior to this position, Kosta Janevski was a member of the Municipal Council of Strumica since the local elections in 2013. He specializes in internal medicine. He was born in Štip 1960.

¹⁵⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/nasto.palioski.3>

¹⁵⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/ZiadinS/>

¹⁶⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/solakoskisejad/>

¹⁶¹ <https://www.facebook.com/MarjanBajraktarov/>

¹⁶² <https://www.facebook.com/kostajanevski4/>



Municipality
of Tetovo

Area	1080 km ²
Population	86 580
Ethnic structure of the population	Albanians (70.32%) Macedonians (23.16%) Romni (2,72%) Turks (2,17%)
Number of Councilors	31
Budget for 2016	1 967 097 578
Address	Dervish Cara bb Tetovo
Telephone	044/ 511 930
Website	http://www.tetova.gov.mk



*Bardulj Dauti (DPA)*¹⁶⁴ is an MP in the Republic of Macedonia's Assembly, elected in the 2016 Parliamentary Elections. He is the vice-President of DPA. Dauti holds a PhD in Economic Sciences from the University of Ljubljana. He is a professor at the University for Business and Technology in Pristina, as well as the State University in Tetovo. He is 35 years old.



*Bilal Kasami (BESA)*¹⁶⁵ is the President of the political party BESA. He has completed his graduate, postgraduate and doctor studies at the Economy Faculty, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. From 2002 until 2004, Bilal Kasami was employed at the Customs Administration of the Republic of Macedonia, and from 2004 until 2006 he was appointed State Secretary at the Ministry of Economy. In 2009, he was employed in the private sector, while from 2009 until 2011 he was a professor at the International Balkan University. He was born in Tetovo in 1975.



*Goran Manojlovski (VMRO-DPMNE)*¹⁶⁶ is an MP at the Republic of Macedonia's Assembly, elected in the elections in 2016. In the previous 2013 Local Elections, he ran for the mayor's seat in Tetovo. He is the president of the municipal branch of VMRO-DPMNE in Tetovo. Manojlovski is a medical doctor, specialist in internal medicine, and interventional cardiologist. He is 40 years old.



*Adnan Neziri (political party Alliance for the Albanians)*¹⁶⁷ graduated from the University of Pristina. He completed his secondary education at the Secondary School "Kiril Pejčinović" in Tetovo. In the period between 2009 and 2013, he worked as financial manager in the municipality of Tetovo. Neziri was the first president of the Tetovo branch of the Movement for Reforms in DPA under the leadership of Zijadin Sela.

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF TETOVO



*Teuta Arifi (DUI)*¹⁶³ is the current Mayor of the municipality of Tetovo, elected in the 2013 Local Elections. In the period from 2011 until February 2013, she was Vice-President of the Government for European Affairs. She resigned from this position to run for the mayoral position in Tetovo. She was an MP at the Republic of Macedonia's Assembly from 2002 until 2011. She is a PhD in Philology. She was a professor at the Philology Faculty, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, as well as at the South East European University, where she was also Dean of the Faculty of Pedagogy from 2001 until 2006. Before her political career she was active in several civic organizations. Arifi is a writer and author of several scientific publications. She is 47 years old.

¹⁶³ <https://www.facebook.com/teutaarifiofficial/>

¹⁶⁴ http://sobranie.mk/demokratska-partija-na-albancite-2016-ns_article-bardulj-dauti-16.nsp

¹⁶⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/bilalkasami1/>

¹⁶⁶ http://sobranie.mk/vmro-dpmne-2016-ns_article-goran-manojlovski-16.nsp

¹⁶⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/adnannezirii>



Municipality
of Štip

Area	556 km ²
Population	47 796
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonian (87.19%) Romani (4.59%) Vlach (4.34%) Turks (2.66%)
Number of Councilors	23
Budget for 2016	916 879 000
Address	Vasil Glavinov bb Štip
Telephone	032/ 266 600
Website	http://www.stip.gov.mk

MAYORAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF ŠTIP



*Blagoj Bočvarski (SDSM)*¹⁶⁸ is an MP from SDSM in the current composition of the Parliament, and vice-President of SDSM since 2017. He graduated from the Faculty of Architecture in Skopje. He has been a member of SDSM since 2002, and since 2013 he has been a member of the executive board of the party. In 2017 he became member of the Central Board. Before his mandate as an MP, he worked as an architect in a private construction company. He was born in Štip in 1985.



*Ilčo Zahariev (VMRO-DPMNE)*¹⁶⁹ was elected Mayor of the Municipality of Štip in the 2013 Local Elections. He was the Executive of the Bureau for Medicinal Products between 2001 and 2003, and from 2006 until 2013. In 2005 and 2006 he was a member and president of the Municipal Council of Štip. From 1985 until 2006, he had been the executive manager of the working unit of pharmacies in the Medical Centre in Štip. He has worked as a visiting professor at the Secondary Medical School. He holds an MA in Pharmaceutics. Zahariev is 56 years old.

¹⁶⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/bocvarski>

¹⁶⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/ilcozahariev1/>

MUNICIPALITY	MAYORAL CANDIDATE	SUBMITTERS OF CANDIDATURES
Aračinovo	Isuf Bislimi Ali Ismail Milikije Halimi Isen Ramadani	DUI Movement BESA Coalition led by SDSM Political party Alliance for the Albanians
Berovo	Nikola Atanasov Zvonko Pekevski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE Coalition led by SDSM
Bogdanci	Nikola Roglev Blaže Šipov	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE Coalition led by SDSM
Bogovinje	Minur Asani Berzah Bejtulahu Elvir Iseni Albon Xhemaili Vebi Xhemaili	Movement BESA DUI DPA Political party Alliance for the Albanians PDP
Bosilevo	Zoran Zimbakov Ljupč Kolev	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE Coalition led by SDSM
Brvenica	Seljatin Jusufi Enver Pajaziti Mirko Stojanovski Stojan Todorovski	Movement BESA Group of voters Coalition led by SDSM Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Valandovo	Pero Kostadinov Stojan Manolev Nikolče Čurlinovski	Coalition led by SDSM Group of voters Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE

Vasilevo	Marjan Janev Vančo Stojanov	Coalition led by SDSM Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Vevčani	Sašo Jankoski Cvetomir Ugrinovski	Coalition led by SDSM Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Vinica	Ivica Dimitrov Martin Pavlov	Coalition led by SDSM Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Vrapčište	Erdal Ahmedi Sami Aliji Daut Demiri Rexhep Rexhepi Gajur Rushiti Isen Shabani	DPTM DPA Coalition led by SDSM Movement BESA DUI Political party Alliance for the Albanians
Gradsko	Robert Bešovski Ivanče Ivanov Gligur Kocev Žaklina Čauševska	Coalition led by SDSM Group of voters Group of voters Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Debarca	Jadranka Biban Zoran Nogačeski Igor Trajkoski	Group of voters Coalition led by SDSM Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Demir Kapija	Trajče Dimitriev Lazar Petrov	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE Coalition led by SDSM
Demir Hisar	Ljupčo Blaževski Marjanče Stojanovski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE Coalition led by SDSM

Dojran	Toni Acev Ango Angov Snežana Maneva Borče Stamov	Group of voters Coalition led by SDSM Group of voters Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Dolneni	Erol Abdiu Exhevit Ajdaroski Peco Vajgaleski Zekirija Jusufi Bilal Karishik Ismet Qamili Xhemil Qamili	DPA Movement for National Unity of the Turks Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE Political party Alliance for the Albanians Coalition led by SDSM Movement BESA DUI
Želino	Sali Ajdini Reshat Alii Fatmir Izairi Blerim Sejdi	DPA Political party Alliance for the Albanians DUI Movement BESA
Zelenikovo	Borče Gievski Aleksandar Manevski	Coalition led by SDSM Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Zrnovci	Kiro Kocev Vančo Mitev Metodi Nikolov Blaže Stankov	Social Democratic Party of Macedonia - SDPM Coalition led by SDSM Group of voters Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Ilinden	Martina Ivkovska Žika Stojanovski	Coalition led by SDSM Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE

Jegunovce	Orhan Amiti Darko Blažeski Besar Emini Toni Koceski	DUI Coalition led by SDSM Movement BESA Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Karbinci	Zoran Minov Jordan Nasev Goran Paunov	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE Coalition led by SDSM People's Movement for Macedonia
Konče	Blagoj Iliev Blagoj Jovanov	Coalition led by SDSM Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Kratovo	Mite Andonovski Ljupčo Bojadžiev	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE Coalition led by SDSM
Krivogaštani	Toni Zatkoski Rubinco Shefteroski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE Coalition led by SDSM
Kruševo	Gjorgji Damčeski Tome Hristoski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE Coalition led by SDSM
Lipkovo	Bekim Afuzi Erkan Arifi Bardil Destani Shaban Zendeli Hadi Osmani	Political party Alliance for the Albanians DUI DPA Movement BESA Coalition led by SDSM
Lozovo	Aco Velkovski Gorjan Ivanov Jordan Ilievski	Coalition led by SDSM People's Movement for Macedonia Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE

Mavrovo and Rostuša	Alim Bilali	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Nahmir Gale	Group of voters
	Medat Kurtovski	Coalition led by SDSM
Makedonska Kamenica	Darko Mitevski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Sonja Stamenkova	Coalition led by SDSM
Makedonski Brod	Milosim Vojneski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Žarko Zlateski	Group of voters
	Živko Siljanoski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Dragiša Terzioski	Social Democratic Party of Macedonia - SDPM
Mogila	Jasmina Gulevska	Coalition led by SDSM
	Stevo Pivkovski	Group of voters
	Zoranče Sakurmovski	People's Movement for Macedonia
Novaci	Lazar Kotevski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Ljube Kuzmanovski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Peco Micevski	Group of voters
Novo Selo	Blažo Velkov	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Boro Stojčev	Coalition led by SDSM
	Dragan Trajkov	People's Movement for Macedonia
Petrovec	Zvonko Cvetkovski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Borče Mitevski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Pehčevo	Igor Popovski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Dragan Trenčovski	Coalition led by SDSM

Plasnica	Shpresim Ajroski Ismail Jahoski	Coalition led by SDSM DUI
Probištip	Dragan Anastasov	Coalition led by SDSM
	Goran Stoilkovski	Group of voters
	Toni Tonevski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Radoviš	Jure Gjorgjiev	Group of voters
	Gerasim Konzulov	Coalition led by SDSM
	Saško Nikolov	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Rankovce	Robert Simonovski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Ivica Toševski	Group of voters
Rosoman	Branko Janev	Coalition led by SDSM
	Stojanče Lazov	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Sveti Nikole	Sašo Velkovski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Zoran Tasev	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Sopište	Dalibor Bogdanovski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Stefče Trpkovski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Staro Nagoričane	Elena Jaćimović	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Žaklina Jovanovska	Coalition led by SDSM
	Miloš Stijmanovski	People's Movement for Macedonia
Studeničani	Mexhit Imeri	Political party Alliance for the Albanians
	Femi Jonuzi	DUI
	Rexhep Memedi	Movement BESA
	Akija Mustafovski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Azem Sadiki	DPA

Tearce	Isen Asani	DUI
	Nevzat Velii	Political party Alliance for the Albanians
	Vojo Gogovski	VMRO-DPMNE
	Amir Eljezi	Movement BESA
	Ruhan Ilazi	DPA
	Bobi Petruševski	Coalition led by SDSM
Centar Župa	Arijan Ibrahim	Democratic Party of the Turks in Macedonia
	Nevaip Ismail	Coalition led by SDSM
Čaška	Zoran Zdravevski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Gorančo Panovski	People's Movement for Macedonia
	Goran Stojanovski	Coalition led by SDSM
Češinovo-Obleševo	Gorančo Zašov	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Gorančo Krstev	Coalition led by SDSM
Čučer Sandevo	Jovan Pejkovski	Group of voters
	Aco Popovski	Group of voters
	Goran Čekalović	People's Movement for Macedonia



THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA'S 2017 LOCAL ELECTIONS – RESULTS, CAMPAIGN, ASSESSMENTS

INTRODUCTION

The sixth local elections since the Republic of Macedonia's independence took place on the 15th October 2017. The elections were carried out in 80 municipalities and the City of Skopje, and the council members were elected according to the proportional model. Hospitalized and disadvantaged persons, as well as those on home detention, and those imprisoned in penal correctional facilities, voted a day prior to the Voting Day in both cycles, i.e. on the 14th and the 28th October. Out of 1,814,644 registered voters in the Voter List, the turnout was 1,079,876 voters in total, reaching 59.51% in the first round. In the second round of the elections, the turnout declined, reaching 51.92%. This compares to the previous local elections in March 2013, when the turnout reached 66.81% in the first and 64.9% in the second round.¹⁷⁰

According to previous dynamics, the local elections in the Republic of Macedonia used to take place every four years in the second half of March. However, due to the political turmoil and processes that occurred during 2016 and 2017, the 2017 Local Elections were delayed and took place in October. The voting process was carried out by a three-level election administration, with the support of the State Election Commission (SEC) as a professionally elected body, as well as the municipal election commissions as non-professional organs, and 3,480 election boards that carried out the elections at the polling stations.

In 80 municipalities and the City of Skopje there were 223 candidates in total running for mayoral positions. There were 17 political entities, out of which 3 coalitions and 14 political parties, which promoted their own candidates. Those political entities were: The Coalition "For a Better Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE, the Coalition led by SDSM, the

¹⁷⁰ See Turnout on Local Elections, the State Election Commission. Turnout in the first round: <https://rezultati2017.sec.mk/Local/Results?cs=mk-MK&r=r&rd=r1> Turnout in the second round: <https://rezultati.sec.mk/Local/Results?cs=mk-MK&r=r&rd=r1> (last visited on: 14.11.2017)

Coalition "Alliance of the Albanians (UNITETI, NDP)", VMRO-DPMNE¹⁷¹, the Democratic Union for Integration, the Citizens Option for Macedonia, the Movement BESA, the Movement for National Unity of the Turks, the Democratic Party of the Albanians, the Democratic Party of the Turks in Macedonia, the Left, the People's Movement for Macedonia, the Party for Democratic Prosperity, the political party Alliance of the Albanians, the Roma Union of Macedonia, the Social-Democratic Party of Macedonia, the Permanent Macedonian Radical Unification (TMORO). With regard to the members of the councils for the municipalities and the City of Skopje, there were 373 candidate lists promoting candidates for councilors from 19 political entities in total.¹⁷²

The local elections were called on the 6th August, which initiated the deadlines for their completion. The election campaign for the first round officially started on 25th September and was concluded on 13th October at midnight. The second round of the local elections took place on 29th October, and there was a re-voting only in the municipality of Chair, which was held on 12th November. The elections were monitored by 6.082 observers in total, out of which 5.609 were national and 473 international observers¹⁷³. The general evaluation by the observers was that the local elections were well managed and carried out in a peaceful atmosphere, with isolated incidents and certain inconsistencies in some of the polling stations. One of the main critiques relates to the undermining of the necessary separation between the state and the party, particularly due to the promises made by the Prime Minister for governmental support, concerning the municipalities with mayors from the ruling party. The media reporting and coverage of the candidates was generally evaluated as unbiased, thus stimulating the political

¹⁷¹ VMRO-DPMNE participated on its own in the municipality of Tearce.

¹⁷² Besides the 17 political entities listed above, two additional political entities promoted their own candidates for councilors, i.e. two coalition parties with BESA, the Alliance of the Albanians led by DUI (in Bitola, Ohrid, and Gazi Baba), and Femih Bejrulov in Gazi Baba.

¹⁷³ Table of accredited observers – 2017 Local Elections, State Election Commission, Accessed at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8ZpCwro9h-zMVBKUEdVQjZkTnM/view> (last visited on: 09.11.2017).

debate. The ruling parties assessed the elections as fair and democratic, while the opposition parties deemed them illegitimate.

The elections drastically changed the relation of mayoral position between the two largest political parties, VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM. The coalition led by SDSM won 57 mayoral positions, which is 53 mayoral positions more than in the previous elections. The coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE won 5 mayoral positions, i.e. 51 less compared the previous elections. DUI won 10 mayoral positions, which is less by 4 in relation to the previous elections. The Political party Alliance of the Albanians, which had its first promotion as a separate political entity in these local elections, managed to secure 3 mayoral positions, and one mayoral position was secured by BESA, DPA, and DPT each, while 3 mayoral positions were won by independent candidates¹⁷⁴.

This handbook provides a detailed review of the election campaign, the incomes and expenses of the parties and coalitions during the election campaign, as well as media reporting, the election results, information about the respect for and the protection of voters' rights, the assessment of the elections by the observers and the political parties, as well as a summary and conclusions about the overall election cycle.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND FINANCING

The campaign for the first round of the local elections officially started on 25th September and went on until the 13th October at midnight. The campaign for the second round continued right after Election Day on 15th October and went on until 27th October at midnight. The second round of the local elections took place on 29th October. Another

¹⁷⁴ See the results from the local elections, State Election Commission. Results from the first round: <https://rezultati2017.sec.mk/Local/Results?cs=mk-MK&r=r&rd=r1>. Results from the second round: <https://rezultati.sec.mk/Local/Results?cs=mk-MK&r=r&rd=r1>. (last visited on: 14.11.2017).

revote, i.e. a third round took place only at one polling station in the municipality of Čair on 12th November.

The parties primarily applied the usual promotional methods, such as public gatherings, meetings with the citizens, a “door-to-door” campaign, TV advertising, and a notably much greater representation in the social media. Despite the fact that a great part of the candidates was running positive campaigns, the fierce and negative rhetoric was not lacking this time either. The main focus during the campaign was on issues related to the allegations of corruption of former and current state officials, the migrant and refugee crisis, air pollution and environmental issues, new job positions, the economy, young people’s emigration, as well as specific problems that are of concern for the municipalities.

According to the OSCE/ODIHR Monitoring Mission, during the election campaign the parties had the opportunity to run their campaigns freely, with respect for the freedom of peaceful public gathering and expression. However, after the first round, the Mission stated that there were solid findings related to buying votes, pressure put on voters, and isolated cases of violence, which had taken place during the pre-election period. According to the observers, the monitored media provided unbiased media coverage for all contestants and supported the possibility for a political debate, and although certain procedural irregularities were noted, on Voting Day, it was all neat and tidy. They pointed out that several isolated incidents were registered during the campaign, notably an assault on Elvis Bajram, a mayoral candidate for the municipality of Šuto Orizari.

During the first round campaign, on 27th September, there was an armed attack on independent councilor candidate Alit Abazi in Kičevo. He succumbed to his injuries 10 days later. His chief electoral officer, Destan Abdiu, was wounded. The Prosecution investigating the event

rejected any political motivation and relation of this event with the electoral process.¹⁷⁵

As part of the campaign, beside the regular media promotions and discussions, there were many debates organized among mayoral candidates at most of the nationally broadcasting TV stations. It was noted that SDSM candidates largely rejected to participate in debates organized by TV stations associated with VMRO-DPMNE such as Nova and Alfa. Likewise, VMRO-DPMNE candidates rejected to participate in debates organized by TV stations which they perceive to be associated with SDSM, such as Telma and 24 Vesti. As a result, there was no real direct TV duel between the candidates from SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE for the Mayor of Skopje, Petre Šilegov and Koce Trajanvoski.

This election cycle’s peculiarity was that the candidates from the major parties mostly restrained from offensive rhetoric on ethnic grounds. Moreover, some of the parties in fact tried to get attention from voters from other ethnic communities. This was true especially for the coalition lead by SDSM, which openly supported DUI’s candidates in several municipalities, such as Čair, Tetovo, and Struga, and the municipalities of Aračinovo and Šuto Orizari with predominantly Albanian and Roma populations. DUI, on the other hand, openly called for their members and supporters in Skopje and Kumanovo to vote for SDSM’s candidates. Another special feature of this campaign was the fact that VMRO-DPMNE promoted their election slogans and materials in both Macedonian and Albanian in several municipalities with mixed ethnic population and in several media. The party Alliance of the Albanians, lead by Zijadin Sela, on the other hand, based its campaign solely on ethnic grounds. In three municipalities, some of the parties of the Albanians established coalitions and had joint promotions during the campaign. DUI, the Movement Besa, and the Alliance of the Albanians

¹⁷⁵ “Independent candidate from Kicevo dies 10 days after attack” Telma, 5 October 2017. Accessed at: <http://telma.com.mk/vesti/pochina-nezavisniot-kandidat-od-kicevo-de-vest-dena-po-napadot> (last visited on 15th November 2017).

promoted joint candidate lists for councilors in the municipalities of Gazi Baba, Bitola, and Ohrid.

The coalition led by SDSM was running its campaign as a sequel to the campaign for the December 2016 Parliamentary Elections, using the same slogan "Life in Macedonia for all". At a certain point during the campaign, this coalition, besides offering solutions for citizens' problems, continued its negative campaign against the competitors from VMRO-DPMNE which had been initiated during the the parliamentary elections and which relates the candidates as individuals to the corruption scandals or to other party members who are under investigation or facing charges. The coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE ran their campaign under the slogan "A new era begins" and "Always labour, always Macedonia". The campaign mainly focused on offering solutions for local issues, but also reminded of the previous achievements of the party. This coalition also tried to balance up with a negative campaign against its competitors by relating individual candidates from the competing SDSM to alleged threats from migrants from the Middle East and refugee insurgency on the one hand, and to corruption findings at the other. DUI's promotional campaign for mayoral candidates and members of the municipal councils was carried out under the slogan "For the municipality we love". In the campaign, apart from promising solutions to long-lasting local problems in the communities, DUI related to higher values such as "tolerance, solidarity, reconciliation, consensus, responsibility, brave decisions and Euro-American spirit" and their commitment to "construct a legal state and society where the rule of law will be obeyed by all". The Movement Besa's campaign slogan was "For a new life". In the public gatherings and in the promotional materials, the candidates promised to provide solutions to the long-lasting problems in the municipalities with Albanian population. The party also used the method of negative campaign against their opponents from DUI, implicating them in the corruption scandals. The Alliance of the Albanians ran their campaign under the slogan "With knowledge and courage". The party directed its activities mainly towards the citizens of

Albanian belonging, and in certain cases there was a clear and open use of nationalistic hate-speech. In some parts of the campaign there was a notably negative attitude towards citizens belonging to other nationalities, as well as towards the party DUI.

The monitoring that took place within the framework of "My choice" carried out by the Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation (MCMS) and IDSCS provided the possibility to observe the mayoral candidates' presence online.¹⁷⁶ Another specific feature of these elections was that all the candidates for the major municipalities had their own profiles on Facebook, where they promoted their activities. The candidates did not mainly have their own webpages, but one common website that related to the whole campaign of their party or coalition.

According to the analysis of the financial reports on the resources spent in the campaign prior to the first and second rounds of the local elections which was forwarded to the SEC, the State Audit Office (SAO) and the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), the major parties VMRO-DPMNE, SDSM, DUI, the Movement Besa, DPA, the party Alliance of the Albanians, the Coalition Alliance for the Albanians, GROM and the Left, spent 135,026,558 MKD (2,195,553 EUR) in total. These parties, according to the available reports,¹⁷⁷ claim to have collected 106,615,601 MKD (1,733,587 EUR) in total from donations and membership fees.

VMRO-DPMNE had the largest expenditure for the campaign, totaling 69,989,767 MKD (1,138,044 EUR), i.e. almost half of the total sum. VMRO-DPMNE reported income in the amount of 33,058,102 MKD (537,530 EUR) during the campaign from donations and membership fees. According to the reported incomes, SDSM collected the largest

¹⁷⁶ The candidates on Facebook, My choice. Accessed at: <http://mojotizbor.mk/izbori2017/kandidati/714-kandidatite-na-facebook-mk.html> (last visited on 13.11.2017).

¹⁷⁷ Reports of the Political Parties, State Audit Office. Accessed at: <http://www.dzr.mk/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabindex=0&tabid=1073> (last visited on 14.11.2017).

amount of resources from donations, i.e. 52,765,931 MKD (857,982 EUR). They reported to have spent 31,203,177 MKD (506,982 EUR) during the campaign.

DUI reported to have spent 21,303,915 MKD (346,405 EUR) on the campaign and collected 9,962,500 MKD (161,991 EUR). Major expenditures can be noted with the Movement Besa as well, which had spent 7,081,719 MKD (115,149 EUR) on promotional activities, and reported having received donations and membership fees in the amount of 4,579,610 MKD (74,465 EUR). The party Alliance of the Albanians reported expenditures amounting to 1,366,272 MKD (22,215 EUR), i.e. one million denars less than the amount collected from donations and membership fees (2,362,570 MKD (38,415 EUR)).

Summary Review of Income and Expenditures for the Political Parties:

Political Party	Total Income	Total Expenditures	Balance
VMRO-DPMNE	33,058,102	69,989,767	-36,931,665
SDSM	52,765,931	31,203,177	21,562,754
DUI	9,962,500	21,303,915	-11,341,415
DPA	626,000	730,855	-104,855
BESA	4,579,610	7,081,719	-2,502,109
The Left	119,908	281,114	-161,206
Political Party Alliance of the Albanians	2,362,570	1,366,272	996,298
Coalition Alliance of the Albanians	1,267,500	1,265,930	1,570
GROM	1,873,480	1,803,809	69,671
Total in MKD	106,615,601	135,026,558	-28,410,957
Total in EUR	1,733,587	2,195,553	-461,966

MEDIA

The media reporting on the elections was monitored by the Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services (AAVMS) from the moment the elections were called and during the campaign prior to the two rounds of voting. AAVMS is a body that is legally bound to monitor the electronic media in the election process. According to them, most media services respected the journalistic standards and enabled equal representation of diverse standpoints on current political and social topics and issues. However, AAVMS points out that a small number of media services have been registered to broadcast reports that qualify as pseudo-events or pseudo-news, created by political parties as political promises or as criticism of political opponents. Notably, two TV stations had broadcast a range of such reports in favor of one political option, which implies disrespect for the professional principle of equal treatment of diverse viewpoints.

During the campaign period for the first round of the local elections from 5th to 13th October, the Agency registered¹⁷⁸ that the programme services at a national level generally secured equal conditions for access to all forms of election media presentation. They stated that a great many of them put significant efforts into organizing debates and duels between different participants in the election process. On the other hand, they highlighted that some candidates participated in the informative election broadcasting shows with certain media services, and avoided to respond to the invitations of others. According to AAVMS, the media in Macedonian language focused on the campaigns of the two coalitions with the largest number of confirmed candidate lists for mayors and councilors – the ones led by SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE, respectively. The media that were broadcasting in Albanian and Macedonian languages at the same time had a quantitatively more balanced approach towards reporting, whereas qualitatively, both types of media were trying to secure equal treatment.

¹⁷⁸ The Radiobroadcasters secured equal condition for access to programmes in the first round of the local elections, AAVMS, 19.10.2017. Accessed at: <http://avmu.mk/радиодифузерите-обезбедија-еднакви/> (Last visited on: 15.11.2017).

The Agency confirmed that in the campaign period prior to the first round of voting, several media services such as TV Alfa, TV Alsat-M, TV Nova, TV 24 Vesti, TV Kompani 21-M, and TV Star violated the Election Laws, and pressed charges against them accordingly. Against TV Alfa, charges were pressed for not securing balanced media coverage of the 2017 Local Elections in the overall programme during the first ten days of the election campaign, as well as due to broadcasting reports with public opinion survey results after the expiry of the legally set deadline.

AAVMS also registered violations of the Election Laws by The TV stations Alsat-M and TV Nova for crossing the limit for paid political advertising. TV 24 Vesti violated the law by disrespecting the rules for publishing results of public opinion surveys, i.e. without the obligatory data about the survey contractor, the methodology applied, the range and structure of respondents and the period when the survey was carried out. Against TV Kompani 21-M and TV Star, charges have been pressed for broadcasting paid political advertising in special informative programmes.

When covering the campaign prior to the second round of voting, from 18th to 27th October, the Agency stated¹⁷⁹ that the media services had reduced the intensity of reporting. Two media services, TV Nova and TV Alfa, were registered to have violated the requirement for unbiased media coverage of the elections. Their overall programme was estimated to be more inclined towards the viewpoints of the Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE. The Agency announced they would be pressing charges against the two TV stations within the authorized jurisdiction.

Two more media services were registered to have violated the Election Laws.¹⁸⁰ The first case applies to the First Programming Service of the Macedonian Radio (Radio Skopje) for broadcasting statements by Minister of Agriculture Ljupčo Nikolovski in a programme for farmers

¹⁷⁹ Small range of information from the campaign in the second round, two TV stations did not secure unbiased media coverage, AAVMS, 03.11.2017. Accessed at: <http://avmu.mk/мал-обем-информации-од-кампањата-во-вт/> (Last visited on 15.11.2017).

¹⁸⁰ Two new violations of the Election Laws registered, AAVMS, 30.10.2017. Accessed at: <http://avmu.mk/констатирани-две-нови-прекршувања-на/> (Last visited on 14.11.2017).

during the period of election silence. The second case is related to TV Nova, which violated the limitations for paid political marketing. This TV station, broadcast more than the allowed 8 minutes for paid political advertising per real hour of programme for the political parties in opposition on two occasions, on 26th and 27th October.

AAVMS also noted that the provision stipulated in the Election Laws about how to allocate time in the daily informative emissions of the programme services of the Macedonian Radio and Television is not suitable for journalistic reporting in a public service of this kind. According to this provision, MRTV is obliged to secure equal access to the informative programme, so that 30% of the time would be dedicated to information related to daily events in the country and the world, 30% of the time for the activities of the political parties in power, 30% of the time for the activities of the political parties in opposition, and 10% of the time for the activities of the political parties that are not represented in the Assembly. According to AAVMS, this obligation creates difficulties for the public service either to maintain its function of a public service that should primarily inform the citizens about current events in the country and the world, or to withhold this information from its audience in order not to cross the limit of 30%. According to the Agency, this is difficult to achieve, having in mind that the service is supposed to stick to all these provisions even in situations like in the second election round, when the number of candidates was insufficient to cover the allocated percentage of the programme with contents.¹⁸¹

Concerning the public service MRTV and the Parliamentary Channel, the Agency confirmed that all obligations from the election campaign were met when it comes to securing free political media presentation of the participants in the elections. According to the monitoring data, the possibility of free media presentation was used only for the mayoral candidates from the coalitions led by VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM.

¹⁸¹ "Rules for media coverage of election processes (for equal political media presentation)", MRT, 29.12.2015. Accessed at: <http://mrt.com.mk/node/28766> (last visited on 15.11.2017).

AAVMS also conducted a monitoring of the public radiobroadcasting service MRT in the period from 5 to 13¹⁸² and from 18 to 27 October 2017.¹⁸³ They monitored the following services: First Programme Service MRT1, Second Programme Service MRT2, Macedonian Radio – First Programme Service MR1, and Macedonian Radio – Third Programme Service – Programme in Albanian language MR3.

Table 1: Representation of political entities in the informative genres (5-13 October 2017, first round) Source: AAVMS								
	MRT1		MRT2 Albanian language		Macedonian Radio 1		MRA Albanian language	
Activities within the campaigns of the political parties in power.								
	Duration	Percent	Duration	Percent	Duration	Percent	Duration	Percent
Coalition SDSM and others	01:39:52	59,37 %	00:55:05	32,63 %	01:39:35	80,65 %	00:24:41	31,84 %
DUI	00:46:54	27,88 %	01:15:37	44,79 %	00:15:14	12,34 %	00:29:16	37,76 %
Alliance of the Albanians	00:19:18	11,47 %	00:36:53	21,85 %	00:08:40	7,02 %	00:16:40	21,50 %
Coalition Alliance for the Albanians	00:02:08	1,27 %	00:01:15	0,74 %	/	/	00:06:54	8,9 %
Total	02:48:12	100 %	02:48:50	100 %	02:03:29	100 %	01:17:31	100 %
Activities within the campaigns of the political parties in opposition.								
Coalition VMRO-DPMNE and others	01:45:21	64,18 %	00:54:42	32,69 %	01:36:53	80,14 %	00:25:09	38,49 %
GROM – Citizens Option for Macedonia	00:05:45	3,5 %	00:01:21	0,81 %	00:04:09	3,43 %	/	/
Besa	00:35:43	21,76 %	01:03:45	38,09 %	00:10:23	8,59 %	00:20:14	30,97 %
DPA – Democratic Party of the Albanians	00:17:20	10,56 %	00:47:33	28,41 %	00:09:29	7,84 %	00:19:57	30,54 %
Total:	02:44:09	100 %	02:47:21	100 %	02:00:54	100 %	01:05:20	100 %

For the period between 5 and 13 October, compared to the 2016 Parliamentary Elections, it can be clearly stated that the public services

¹⁸² "Written report on implemented monitoring". AAVMS, 19.10.2017. Accessed at: http://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Izvestai-od-nadzori-nad-izbornome-diumsko-izvestuvanje_19.10.2017.pdf (Last visited on: 16.11.2017).

¹⁸³ "Written report on implemented monitoring". AAVMS, 03.11.2017. Accessed at: <http://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Poedinechnite-izvestai-za-radiodifuzerite-za-periodot-od-18-do-27-oktomvri-2017-godina.pdf> (Last visited on 15.11.2017).

have reduced the differences in media coverage of activities within the campaigns of the political parties in opposition, yet they still vary both among various services in the MRT and concerning the different political parties. In relation to the differences between the parties in power and in opposition, the First Programme Service MRT1 allocated 2 hours, 48 minutes and 12 seconds for the parties in power, and 2 hours, 44 minutes and 9 seconds for the parties in opposition. The Second Programme Service MRT2 - programme in Albanian language, allocated 2 hours, 48 minutes and 50 seconds for the activities of the parties in power and 2 hours, 47 minutes and 21 seconds for the parties in opposition. In the case of Macedonian Radio – First Programme Service, there is a 3-minute difference between the coverage of the activities of the parties in power in relation to the parties in opposition. Thus, the time allocated for the activities within the campaigns of the political parties in power was 2 hours. 3 minutes and 29 seconds, while the parties in opposition got 2 hours and 54 seconds. For Macedonian Radio – Third Programme Service – programme in Albanian language, the difference was 12 minutes and 21 seconds, which is the biggest in relation to the other services. Thus, the parties in power were given media coverage for 1 hour, 17 minutes and 31 seconds, while the parties in opposition got 1 hour, 5 minutes and 20 seconds.

When it comes to the two largest political parties, MRT1 provided almost 6 minutes more coverage of activities within the campaign of the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE in relation to the activities of the coalition led by SDSM. At MRT2, there was almost no difference at all: the coalition led by SDSM was allocated mere 23 seconds more media coverage time in relation to the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE. Macedonian Radio gave more media coverage to activities within the campaign of the coalition led by SDSM (1 hour, 39 minutes and 35 seconds) in relation to the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE (1 hour, 35 minutes and 53 seconds). For Macedonian Radio – Third Programme Service – programme in Albanian language, the difference was 28 seconds to the advantage of the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, which

was allocated 25 minutes and 9 seconds in relation to the coalition led by SDSM with 24 minutes and 41 seconds.

Table 2: Representation of political entities in the informative genres (18-27 October 2017, second round) Source: AAVMS								
	MRT1		MRT2 Albanian language		Macedonian Radio 1		MRA Albanian language	
Activities within the campaigns of the political parties in power.								
	Duration	Percent	Duration	Percent	Duration	Percent	Duration	Percent
Coalition SDSM and others	00:28:28	55,84 %	00:17:07	31,58 %	00:29:16	83,07 %	00:03:05	16,43 %
DUI	00:14:19	28,08 %	00:27:35	50,89 %	00:14:19	16,93 %	00:10:31	56,04 %
Alliance of the Albanians	00:08:12	16,08 %	00:09:30	17,53 %	/	/	00:05:10	27,53 %
Total	00:50:59	100 %	00:54:12	100 %	00:35:14	100 %	00:18:46	100 %
Activities within the campaigns of the political parties in opposition.								
Coalition VMRO-DPMNE and others	00:30:14	60,41 %	00:17:24	33,26 %	00:28:33	97,11 %	00:01:08	13,44 %
Besa	00:13:26	26,84 %	00:26:35	50,81 %	00:00:51	2,89 %	00:04:29	53,16 %
DPA – Democratic Party of the Albanians	00:06:23	12,75 %	00:08:20	15,93 %	/	/	00:02:49	33,40 %
Total	00:50:03	100 %	00:52:19	100 %	00:29:24	100 %	00:08:26	100 %

According to the monitoring of the public service in the period from 18th to 27th October 2017, MRT1 allocated 50 minutes 59 seconds to the parties in power, and 50 minutes and 3 seconds to the parties in opposition. MRT2, programme in Albanian language, allocated 54 minutes and 12 seconds to the activities of the parties in power and 52 minutes and 19 seconds to the parties in opposition. Bigger discrepancies can be seen with the Macedonian Radio – the First Programme Service, and the Macedonian Radio – the Third Programme Service – programme in Albanian language. In the case of Macedonian Radio – the First Programme Service, there was a 6-minute discrepancy between the media coverage of the activities of the parties in power in relation to the activities of the parties in opposition. Thus, the political parties in power received 35 minutes and 14 seconds, while the parties in opposition

received only 29 minutes and 24 seconds. With Macedonian Radio – the Third Programme Service – programme in Albanian language, the discrepancy is even bigger, i.e. the parties in power got 18 minutes and 46 seconds media coverage, while the parties in opposition got only 8 minutes and 26 seconds.

Concerning the two largest political parties, MRT1 allowed media coverage of the activities within the campaign of the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE for 1 minute and 26 seconds more than of the activities of the coalition led by SDSM. With MRT2, programme in Albanian language, this discrepancy was only 24 seconds. The opposite is the case for Macedonian Radio – the First Programme Service and the Macedonian Radio – the Third Programme Service – programme in Albanian language, where the discrepancy was 1 minute and 43 seconds, i.e. 1 minute and 57 seconds to the advantage of the coalition led by SDSM.

When it comes to paid political advertising of the political entities,¹⁸⁴ the Agency's monitoring shows that in both rounds of the election campaign the largest amount of paid political advertising was registered for the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE (around 177 hours), then the coalition led by SDSM (around 70 hours), followed by DUI (around 17 hours) and Besa (around 12 hours). Among the national TV stations, the largest amount of advertising was broadcasted on TV Nova and TV Sitel. Nevertheless, it is notable that while most of the TV stations had paid political advertising in various ranges from different parties, TV Nova focused on one dominant source of advertising. Namely, out of 38 hours of paid political advertising during the two election rounds, almost 37 hours were ads by the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, and only one hour by the party GROM.

¹⁸⁴ Overview of the paid political advertising in the period from 25th September until 13th October, AAVMS. Accessed at: <http://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Pregled-za-plateno-politicko-reklamiraranje-za-vreme-na-prv-krug-od-lokalni-izbori.pdf> (last visited on 14.11.2017).
Overview of the paid political advertising in the period from 18th October until 27th October, AAVMS. Accessed at: <http://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Pregled-ot-na-platenoto-politicko-reklamirane.pdf> (Last visited on 14.11.2017).

**Table 3: Representation of the political entities in the informative genres
(25th September – 27th October 2017)**
Source: AAAVMS

	24 Vesti		Alsat - M		Alfa		Kanal 5		Sitel		Telma	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
VMRO-DPMNE and others	03:55:51	01:04:43	02:24:38	/	17:32:01	02:45:54	04:57:56	01:03:46	15:32:20	02:45:46	02:12:24	01:06:41
SDSM and others	10:31:18	02:41:14	05:59:29	01:34:14	/	/	08:34:07	01:27:56	07:31:27	01:46:41	05:04:55	00:45:42
DUI	/	/	07:16:39	02:49:35	00:06:44	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
DPA	/	/	/	/	00:03:22	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
GROM	00:39:00	/	/	/	00:02:26	/	00:17:57	/	00:34:43	/	/	/
People's Movement for Macedonia	00:06:15	/	/	/	00:02:00	/	/	/	00:06:34	/	/	/
BESA	/	/	01:12:23	00:48:48	00:00:34	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Alliance of the Albanians	/	/	00:46:20	/	00:04:12	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
PDP	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Democratic Party of the Albanians	/	/	/	/	00:00:34	/	/	/	/	/	/	/

RESULTS OF THE 2017 LOCAL ELECTIONS

In the first round of the local elections held on the 15th October 2017, the total voter turnout was 1,079,876 out of 1,814,664 registered voters, which makes a percentage of 59.51%¹⁸⁵ in the first round. In the second round, the turnout declined to 51.92%.¹⁸⁶ Compared to the previous local elections in March 2013, the turnout was significantly lower (66.81% in the first and 64.9% in the second round). The turnout in these elections was also lower than the turnout in the snap parliamentary elections that were held on 11th December 2016, reaching 66.79%. In the first round of the elections for mayors for the municipalities and the City of Skopje, 57,023 ballot papers (4.3%) in total were declared invalid. Out of the ballot papers for the election of councilors in the municipalities and the City of Skopje, 68,048 (5%) in total were declared invalid.

There were 224 mayoral candidates competing in 80 municipalities and the City of Skopje. Separately or in coalitions, 17 political entities promoted their own mayoral candidates, 3 of which were coalitions and 14 political parties: the Coalition "For a better Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE, the Coalition led by SDSM, the Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians (Uniteti, NDP)", VMRO-DPMNE¹⁸⁷, the Democratic Union for Integration, the Citizens Option for Macedonia – GROM, the Movement BESA, the Movement for the National Unity of the Turks, the Democratic Party of the Albanians, the Democratic Party of the Turks from Macedonia, the Left, the People's Movement for Macedonia, the Party for Democratic Prosperity, the political party Alliance of the Albanians, the Roma Union of Macedonia, the Social Democratic party of Macedonia, the Permanent Macedonian Radical Unification (TMRO). For the position of members of

¹⁸⁵ See Local Elections Turnout, State Election Commission. Turnout in the first round: <https://rezultati2017.sec.mk/Local/Results?cs=mk-MK&r=r&rd=r1> (last visited on 14.11.2017).

¹⁸⁶ Local Elections Turnout, second round. State Election Commission. Accessed at: <https://rezultati.sec.mk/Local/Results?cs=mk-MK&r=r&rd=r1> (Last visited on 14.11.2017).

¹⁸⁷ VMRO-DPMNE promoted its candidates separately in the municipality of Tearce.

the municipal councils and the City of Skopje's council, there were 373 candidate lists for councilors from 19 political entities.¹⁸⁸

The largest number of mayoral candidates was promoted by SDSM and its coalition (70 in total), while the other political entities that promoted their own candidates were VMRO-DPMNE (in coalition), DUI, GROM, the Movement BESA, the Movement for National Unity of the Turks (DNET), the Democratic Party of the Albanians (DPA), the Democratic Party of the Turks from Macedonia (DPTM), the Coalition "Alliance for the Albanians", the Left, the People's Movement for Macedonia (NDM), the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP), the political party Alliance of the Albanians, the Roma Union of Macedonia (SRM), the Social Democratic Party of Macedonia (SDPM), and the Permanent Macedonian Radical Unification (TMRO). In addition to the candidates from the listed political parties, 22 mayoral candidates participated in the elections with the support of groups of voters. Out of a total of 373 candidate lists for members of the municipal councils, 45 were filed by groups of voters.

In the first round of the elections, mayors were elected in 45 municipalities and the City of Skopje. In the second round, the voting for mayoral positions took place in 35 municipalities, while another revote, i.e. a third round, was held only in the municipality of Čair at one polling station, which took place on the 12th November.

In both rounds, the largest number of mayoral positions was won by SDSM, who were victorious in 57 municipalities and in the City of Skopje. VMRO-DPMNE won 5 mayoral positions, DUI 9, the political party Alliance of the Albanians won 3, and BESA, DPA, and DPT won one mayoral position each, while three mayoral positions were won by

¹⁸⁸ Besides the listed 17 political entities, two additional political entities i.e. two coalitions of Besa, Alliance of the Albanians, led by DUI (in Bitola, Ohrid and Gazi Baba), and by Femih Bejlurov in Gazi Baba.

independent candidates. With the revote of 12th November, DUI won another mayoral position, reaching a total of 10 mayoral positions.¹⁸⁹

SDSM won 422,522 votes (39.1%) for members of the municipal councils. VMRO-DPMNE gained 335,769 votes (31%), DUI won 89,724 votes (8.3%), the political party Alliance of the Albanians 49,125 (4.5%), BESA 46,493 (4.3%), DPA 16,865 (1.56%), DPT 10,239 (0.9%) and NDM 4,506 won (0.4%) votes. As a result, SDSM won 552 councilor positions in total, VMRO-DPMNE 432, DUI 127, BESA 63, the political party Alliance of the Albanians 63, DPA 23, DPT 17, NDM and SRM 7 councilors each. The Coalition of DUI, Alliance of the Albanians, and BESA won 4 councilors position in total in the three municipalities of Bitola, Gazi Baba and Ohrid. GROM, DNET and the Left won three councilor positions each. The Coalition Alliance of the Albanians and the Coalition for a Better Future led by Femih Bejlurov won two councilor positions each, and PDP finished with only one councilor position.¹⁹⁰

In the City of Skopje, SDSM won 122,711 votes (43.7%), VMRO-DPMNE 96,922 votes (34.5%), DUI gained 17,000 (6.1%), the Movement BESA 13,882 (4.9%), Alliance of the Albanians 6,972 (2.4%), the Left 5,922 (2.1%). Hence, out of 45 councilor positions in the City of Skopje's Council, SDSM won 21, VMRO-DPMNE 17, DUI 3, the Movement BESA 2, the Alliance of the Albanians 1 and the Left 1 councilor.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ "Announcement on the summary results from the voting in municipalities", State Election Commission, 30.10.2017. Accessed at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8ZpCwro9h-zckLTGhMcEjX1k/view> (Last visited on: 08.11.2017).

¹⁹⁰ Results, Municipal Councils, State Election Commission. Accessed at: <https://rezultati2017.sec.mk/Local/Results?cs=mk-MK&r=r&rd=r2&eu=All&m=All&ps=All> (last visited on 14.11.2017).

¹⁹¹ Results, City of Skopje's Council, State Election Commission. Accessed at: <https://rezultati2017.sec.mk/Local/Results?cs=mk-MK&r=r&rd=r4&eu=All&m=All&ps=All> (last visited on 14.11.2017).

Table showing the number of mayoral positions and councilors won:

Political entity	Number of Mayors	Number of councilors
Coalition led by SDSM	57	552
Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE	5	432
DUI	10	127
Political party Alliance of the Albanians	3	63
BESA	1	63
DPA	1	23
DPT	1	17
NDM	0	7
SRM	0	7
Coalition DUI, A/A, and BESA	0	4
GROM	0	3
DNET	0	3
The Left	0	3
Coalition Alliance of the Albanians	0	1
Coalition for better future	0	1
PDP	0	1
Independent	3	37

PROTECTION OF THE VOTING RIGHTS

The Election Laws guarantee the protection of the voting right. According to the Election Laws, anyone submitting a candidate list and any voter has the right to file an objection or complaint to the State Election Commission if they believe their rights have been violated. The objections by the submitters of candidate lists can relate to the voting procedure, the summing up and determining the results, while the voters can file objections if, during the procedure, their voting rights have been violated. The procedure for protection of the voting right is under urgent proceedings, which is why the objection or complaint cannot be sent via mail.

The objections or complaints filed by the submitters of candidate lists to the SEC have to be delivered within 48 hours after the end of the voting, i.e. after the announcement of the initial results, and the SEC is obliged to make a decision within 48 hours after receiving the complaint. The SEC informs the complainant about the decision made via email, and the decision is considered delivered five hours after the electronic correspondence has been forwarded. The complainant who has received a negative response from the SEC has the right to file a lawsuit to the Administrative Court within 24 hours after receiving the decision and the Court has to make a decision within 48 hours after receiving the complaint. The Administrative Court can endorse or alter the decision made by the SEC, and its decisions are legally binding, i.e. cannot be appealed against nor any legal remedy applied.

In cases of violation of the voters' rights, the voters can file a complaint to the SEC within 24 hours, and the SEC is obliged to make a decision within 4 hours after receiving the complaint. The SEC's decision can be appealed against; therefore, within 24 hours after receiving the decision, a lawsuit can be filed to the Administrative Court. If the deadlines are running and are met during the voting process, and the

decision is positive for the voter, they will be enabled to exercise their right to vote.¹⁹²

After the first round of the local elections on 15th October 2017, there were 47 complaints filed to the State Election Commission related to the voting procedure by four submitters: the Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE with 43 objections¹⁹³, 2 objections by the Permanent Macedonian Radical Unification – TMRO, and one objection each was filed by the Alliance of the Albanians (A/A) and the Left.¹⁹⁴ All objections filed were rejected by the State Election Commission. There were 28 complaints in total filed to the Administrative Court, appealing against the decisions made by the SEC. Out of these, 24 complaints were filed by VMRO-DPMNE, 2 complaints by TMRO, and one complaint by A/A and the Left each. All filed complaints were rejected by the Administrative Court.

After the second round of the local elections on 29th October 2017, 102 objections were filed to the State Election Commission by three submitters: the Movement BESA with 89 objections, A/A with 12 objections, and the People’s Movement for Macedonia with one objection. The State Election Commission rejected all objections, so 11 complaints were filed to the Administrative Court by A/A, four complaints were filed by the Movement BESA, and one by the National Movement for Macedonia. Out of these, the Administrative Court rejected 15 complaints, and accepted one lawsuit filed by the Movement BESA. As a result of endorsing this complaint, the voting in the second round was repeated at the polling station 2901 in the municipality of Čair, since the number of registered

¹⁹² KAS, IDSCS, The Republic of Macedonia’s Parliamentary Elections Handbook 2016, second supplemented edition. Available at: http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_47271-1522-2-30.pdf?161206080843

¹⁹³ Prior to the session of the State Election Commission for reviewing of the complaints on 19th October 2017, VMRO-DPMNE withdrew three objections, and during the session it withdrew another objection.

¹⁹⁴ Report on the objections filed in relation to the voting procedure, the summing up and determining the results of the voting by ballot papers with candidates for mayors of the municipalities and the City of Skopje, and by ballot papers with candidates for members of the councils of the municipalities and the City of Skopje, held on the 15th October 2017”. State Election Commission, 18.10.2017. Accessed at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8ZpCwro9h-zMzQ2aIR4Q29FRUE/view> (last visited on 10.11.2017).

voters at that polling station was likely to change the final result in this municipality. The revote took place on 12th November.¹⁹⁵

THE OBSERVERS’ EVALUATION OF THE LOCAL ELECTIONS

6,082 observers in total monitored the elections. Out of these, 5,609 were national and 473 international observers. The largest number of nationally accredited observers were members of the citizens association MOST with 2917 observers, followed by the association of citizens ZHA “Synergy” Štip with 2337 observers, CIVIL – Center for Freedom with 207 observers, the Institute for Economic Strategies and International Relations OHRID – Skopje with 17 observers and 6 observers from the Macedonian Center for Cultural Development.¹⁹⁶ There were 3712 national observers less than on the previous local elections.

As during the previous local elections, most of the international observers were from the OSCE/ODIHR Monitoring Mission with 289 observers, the USA Embassy with 35 observers, the Delegation of the European Union with 23 observers, the International Study Center for Elections with 18 observers, the Council of Europe with 13 and the OSCE Mission in Skopje with 10 observers. A smaller number of observers were from the NATO Liaison Office in Skopje, the State Election Commission of Montenegro, the Central Election Commissions of Bulgaria and Kosovo, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, as well as the Embassies of Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Hungary, France, Holland, Switzerland, and Sweden.

¹⁹⁵ Detailed information on all objections and complaints and their status are available on a special section of the State Election Commission’s website: <https://prigovori.sec.mk/>.

¹⁹⁶ Table of accredited observers – 2017 Local Elections, State Election Commission. Accessed at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8ZpCwro9h-zMVBKUEdVQjZkTnM/view> (last visited on 09.11.2017).

Besides the national and international observers, the elections were monitored by 20 accredited international journalists from the Kosovo News Agency, Al Jazeera Balkans, Associated Press, Voice of America, the Russian Informative Agency TASS and TV Koha Vision.¹⁹⁷

The OSCE/ODIHR's report on preliminary findings and conclusions from the first round states that the elections contributed to strengthening confidence in the democratic process, were carried out in a competitive environment, and that the candidates were able to run campaigns without restrictions and with respect for the fundamental freedoms. The remarks of the Mission concerning the electoral process derive from solid findings related to buying votes, pressure on the voters, and isolated cases of violence. During these elections, the OSCE/ODIHR Monitoring Mission focused on the legal framework and electoral system, the electoral administration, the election campaign, its financing, and the media.¹⁹⁸

For the voting that was held a day before Election Day, on 14th October, there were 5025 registered voters who were hospitalized or disadvantaged, 1882 voters detained in prisons, and 9 persons on home detention. The voting was evaluated as regular in most parts of the country, with certain irregularities, particularly concerning the counting and summing up of the votes. The home voting which took place on 14th October was evaluated as negative by the OSCE/ODIHR in 14 out of the 96 observed cases. The secrecy of voting was violated in 13 cases, and in 7 cases it was noted that the electoral board had not used the voting booth. In several prisons, due to lack of valid IDs, the convicts were not included in the Voters List. For the second round, the early voting took place on the 28th October and was evaluated as

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ See the two reports of the OSCE/ODIHR's Mission – International Elections Monitoring Mission in the Republic of Macedonia, Local Elections, 15th October 2017. Report on the initial findings and conclusions, initial conclusions. Skopje 16th October 2017 and Local Elections, second round, 29th October 2017. Report on the initial findings and conclusions, initial conclusions. Skopje 30th October 2017. Accessed at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/fyrom/339261> (Last visited on 13.11.2017).

positive in all the nine prisons and in 40 out of 44 observed home voting cases. As in the first round, the negative evaluation was related to the compromised secrecy of voting and the absence of a ballot box.¹⁹⁹

The OSCE/ODIHR's report states that during the pre-election period, there was general respect for the fundamental right and freedom of expression. The OSCE/ODIHR highlights that there has been a notable improvement of the general conditions when it comes to running the campaigns. The observations show that for the large parties, there has been a notable inclination towards national issues of stability and integration and local issues such as water supply, sewage, and infrastructure. However, negative messages about political opponents during public gatherings were registered, mostly by VMRO-DPMNE members, but, in smaller amounts, also by SDSM members. For the second round, the campaigns were intensified several days prior to the day of voting. Some of the parties expressed their concern about the Prime Minister's promise of governmental support for the municipalities with mayors from the governmental coalition, which implies that the principle of division between the party and the state is undermined, contrary to the responsibilities deriving from OSCE membership.²⁰⁰

The work of the electoral administration was positively evaluated to have secured the necessary conditions for voters to be able to exercise their rights. However, it was noted that the State Election Commission was lacking true transparency, because although the sessions were public, the crucial decisions were made behind closed doors. In addition, there were certain remarks concerning the fact that not all documents related to the elections were published on the SEC's website in timely manner, as well as that the campaign for education of the voters was running late. The report on the second round of the elections states that the SEC improved its transparency in the period

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

between the two rounds. However, it was noted that the SEC had not anticipated additional training, or education of the voters, as well as financial support for 10 municipalities with blocked accounts. As for the municipal election commissions (MEC), their transparency was assessed as notably varying, based on the fact that the OSCE/ODIHR's Monitoring Mission registered insufficient transparency in 30 MECs. In the second round, their work was evaluated as positive, with a single case of registered political bias.²⁰¹

The Report on the initial findings and conclusions also provides an overview of the media environment during the elections. The general assessment implies that the media are politically divided, and that the media reforms deriving from the amendments to the Election Laws from 2015 and 2016 are still not enforced. The OSCE/ODIHR's Monitoring Mission's results show that although the public radiobroadcaster secured media space for the candidates, only 26 candidates took this opportunity at MTV1, while none of the candidates who speak Albanian language took this opportunity at MTV2. It was noted that the media reporting on MRT neglected the smaller political parties and independent candidates by allocating them only 13% of the media coverage time on MTV1, while SDSM received 37% of the total media coverage time, VMRO-DPMNE 32%, DUI 11% and BESA 7%. With the private media services, the media coverage was notably predominant for events organized by the coalition of SDSM with 47% of the total media coverage time, while VMRO-DPMNE's events were covered with 29%, and DUI's with 17%. In total, the monitored private media services are considered to have demonstrated a neutral tone towards the candidates. In addition, SDSM was registered to have promoted advertising with negative messages during the campaign. According to the monitoring between the first and the second election round, there was equal presence of the political entities on the radiobroadcasting service, with 25% allocated to SDSM, 24% to VMRO-DPMNE, 20%

to DUI, 15% to BESA, and 9% to A/A. Among the private channels, SDSM was represented with 40% of the time allocated for informative coverage, VMRO-DPMNE with 35%, DUI and A/A with 9% each, BESA with 4%, and DPA with 2%. In this round, paid advertisements with negative tone were notably used by VMRO-DPMNE, and occasionally by SDSM.²⁰²

The preliminary evaluation of the Citizens Association MOST was that the first round of the local elections was held in a fair and democratic atmosphere, and that the citizens were enabled to freely give their votes. However, a range of isolated minor irregularities were noted in the election process, such as taking photos of the ballot papers, unauthorized presence of persons in the facilities where the voting took place, technical problems with the electoral material, as well as disrespect for the voting procedure (including family voting) and problems caused by voters. MOST confirmed its evaluation of the second round of elections having been conducted in a fair and democratic atmosphere as well, with similar isolated irregularities. MOST pointed at the fast and efficient functioning of the institutions for both election rounds, as well as the timely reactions of the electoral boards and the police in the isolated cases of violation of the voting rules.²⁰³

The European Union complemented the preliminary findings of the OSCE/ODIHR about the local elections, evaluating them as competitive and as having been held in conditions that fostered respect for the fundamental freedoms, with certain registered irregularities. The EU encouraged the citizens to report all irregularities to the institutions in charge and invited all relevant stakeholders to implement the recommendations given by the OSCE/ODIHR in order to enable additional improvement of the capacities of the relevant institutions

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ "Preliminary statement", Citizens Association MOST, 16th October 2017. Accessed at: http://most.org.mk/?option=com_k2&view=itemlist&task=category&id=165:2017&Itemid=95&lang=mk (last visited on 13.11.2017).

²⁰¹ Ibid.

for the following election cycles.²⁰⁴ The US Embassy in Macedonia, also, confirmed the findings of the OSCE/ODIHR about the elections having been competitive and that the respect of the fundamental freedoms contributed towards the democratic process. According to the Embassy, OSCE/ODIHR's findings are consistent with those of the American Embassy's teams who monitored the elections in the first and second round. The Embassy encouraged the citizens, in case they consider there have been any irregularities, to report them to the institutions in charge. The Embassy invited the State Election Commission and the other relevant governmental bodies to take advantage of the period to come to address the recommendations by the OSCE/ODIHR deriving from the elections in 2016 and 2017 in order to strengthen the election process further.²⁰⁵

THE POLITICAL PARTIES' EVALUATION OF THE ELECTIONS

Shortly after closing the polling stations, the initial results showed that SDSM was significantly in the lead in relation to VMRO-DPMNE. Besides the different assessments by various political parties, it was evident that the parties that were part of the governmental coalition considered the electoral process as fair and democratic, while the opposition parties complained about a range of irregularities. The only exception to this division was the political party Alliance of the Albanians, which, even though being a member of the governmental coalition, complained about certain irregularities and pressure by the government during the voting in several municipalities.

²⁰⁴ "Statement of the Spokesperson for the Republic of Macedonia's Local Elections". The European Service for External Action, 31st October 2017. Accessed at: https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/former-yugoslav-republic-macedonia/34834/statement-spokesperson-municipal-elections-former-yugoslav-republic-macedonia_en (last visited on 14.11.2017).

²⁰⁵ "The US Embassy's report on the local elections from October 2017", the US Embassy in Macedonia, 31st October 2017. Accessed at: <https://mk.usembassy.gov/u-s-embassy-statement-october-2017-municipal-elections/> (last visited on 14.11.2017).

Right after the initial results were published, SDSM announced victory in most of the municipalities and a major turnover in the distribution of mayoral positions. That evening, SDSM organized a party to celebrate the victory at the courtyard of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, where the party's President Zoran Zaev stated: "I congratulate you on your freedom. Our people know what is right, united in a single society for everyone. Only in that way, we will go ahead".²⁰⁶ SDSM evaluated the elections as fair and democratic, and stated that the citizens, for the first time after a long period, were enabled to vote in fair and democratic elections according to their own free will and without any pressure. According to them, the elections showed the true will of the citizens when they vote freely and without intimidation. After the reaction of VMRO-DPMNE, assessing that the elections were held with a great number of irregularities, SDSM called VMRO-DPMNE not to look for excuses for their electoral defeat, but to congratulate the citizens on the peaceful, fair and free elections.²⁰⁷ SDSM gave the same evaluation of the quality of the elections for the second round on 29th October, stating that the citizens, again, voted in fair and democratic elections, choosing change.²⁰⁸

VMRO-DPMNE evaluated the elections as being against all regulations and complained of electoral fraud. At the press conference of VMRO-DPMNE, the party's President Nikola Gruevski stated: "The Election Day passed with many irregularities, usurpation of resources, intimidation, buying votes, organized transportation of citizens to the polling stations, manipulations with the ballot papers, and theft of votes." He announced that the party would provide in-depth analysis of the reasons which, besides the irregularities, prevented the party from obtaining

²⁰⁶ "SDSM celebrates, VMRO-DPMNE in deep disgrace". Deutsche Welle, 15th October 2017. Accessed at: <http://p.dw.com/p/2IsFh> (last visited on 14.11.2017).

²⁰⁷ "SDSM: Results of the elections showed the true face of the municipalities when people vote freely". A1 On, 20th October 2017. Accessed at: <http://a1on.mk/archives/806935> (last visited on 14.11.2017).

²⁰⁸ "SDSM announced victory in 10 municipalities, Taravari celebrates in Gostivar". mkd.mk, 29th October 2017. Accessed at: <https://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/politika/sdsm-proglasi-pobeda-vo-10-opshtini-taravari-slavi-vo-gostivar> (last visited on: 14.11.2017).

better results.²⁰⁹ Several days after the first round of the elections, VMRO-DPMNE announced that they constantly receive information about huge electoral irregularities, abuses, breach of procedures and intimidations, accusing the authorities of not preventing them. They made accusations that in a great number of polling stations, the number of people who voted did not correspond with the number of registered citizens, and that ballot boxes had been filled at several stations. In addition, VMRO-DPMNE pointed at examples like a ballot paper from Karpoš found in the municipality of Ohrid, and a ballot paper from Veles found in the ballot boxes in Strumica, and similar irregularities, which indicate serious electoral violations and “an electoral fraud carried out with the so-called method of the Bulgarian train”.²¹⁰ After the second round of the elections, the Nikola Gruevski announced that VMRO-DPMNE would not acknowledge these elections, and made 7 requests: First, organizing snap parliamentary elections in accordance with the Pržino model that would be implemented by a technical Government. Second, urgent change of the Director of the Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual and Media Services, and the Director of this institution to be selected upon recommendation by the opposition. Third, resignation of the SEC’s President, Aleksandar Čičakovski, and reinstatement of the previous legal solution of electing the SEC’s president from the opposition. Fourth, urgent forensic investigation – with participation of VMRO-DPMNE – of the tapping devices from the Administration for Security and Counter Intelligence – UBK, due to the suspicion that the police is tapping at least 100 members of VMRO-DPMNE. Fifth, urgent conclusion of the trial on the “Potkup” (Bribe) case. Sixth, establishing a special public prosecution that will have the authority to clarify the electoral irregularities during the 2016 and 2017 elections, as well as the abuse of the overall state apparatus for the goals of the 2017

²⁰⁹ “Gruevski – undemocratic elections, the next steps after the elections”, Free Europe, 15th October 2017. Accessed at: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/28796289.html> (last visited on: 14.11.2017).

²¹⁰ VMRO-DPMNE with new accusations on electoral irregularities”. meta.mk, 20th October 2017. Accessed at: <http://meta.mk/vmro-dpmne-so-novi-obvinuvana-za-izborni-neregularnosti/> (last visited on: 14.11.2017).

elections. Seventh, urgent release of the persons who are in custody, and termination of any legal procedures against all citizens involved in the 27th April 2017 events. The acceptance of these 7 requests, according to the President of VMRO-DPMNE, is the precondition for democracy, justice, and freedom in the country.²¹¹

The Democratic Union for Integration evaluated that the first round of the elections was held in a fair and democratic atmosphere and that a democratic process was completed.²¹² As for the second round, the party assessed that the Election Day was held in a fair and democratic atmosphere, according to European standards. The party’s Spokesperson Arbër Ademi stated that “The Republic of Macedonia’s Government has shown democratic capacities for organizing democratic elections”.²¹³

The political party Movement BESA, prior to the end of the voting in the first round, pointed at certain attempts at disrupting the election process, buying of votes, irregularities in several polling stations, as well as attempts at causing incidents, but that this would not affect the election results. BESA also complained about “various criminal attempts” made by a certain political party that they did not clearly mention.²¹⁴ In the second round, after the defeat of BESA’s leader Bilal Kasami in Tetovo, the party announced that it would file complaints to the SEC and made accusations about electoral irregularities involving political parties from the government.²¹⁵ He pointed at the fact that DUI won with the help of SDSM’s votes and asked for snap parliamentary

²¹¹ “VMRO-DPMNE came up with 7 requests: New parliamentary elections carried out by a technical government”. Alfa TV, 29th October 2017. Accessed at: <http://www.alfa.mk/News.aspx?id=125474#.Wg1bJ0qnHIU>.

²¹² “Ademi: DUI on the 29th October expects are more massive victory”. DUI, 19th October 2017. Accessed at: <http://www.bdi.mk/mk/lajmi.php?id=6389>.

²¹³ “DUI: Macedonia organized democratic elections”. Fokus, 29th October 2017. Accessed at: <http://fokus.mk/dui-makedonija-organizirashe-demokratski-izbori/> (last visited on: 14.11.2017).

²¹⁴ “BESA: There were attempts to disrupt the election processes”. Makfaks, 15th October 2017. Accessed at: <http://makfax.com.mk/daily-news/besa-imate-obidi-za-narusuvanje-na-izbo/>. (last visited on: 14.11.2017).

²¹⁵ “SDSM won in the second round as well, VMRO-DPMNE does not validate the results”. Voice of America, 29th October 2017. Accessed at: <https://mk.voanews.com/a/4091262.html> (last visited on 14.11.2017).

elections to take place because it had been clear that BESA was the largest party among the Albanians in Macedonia. During the revote in the polling station 2901 in the municipality of Čair, they accused the ruling party to have sent people to intimidate the citizens and apply pressure on them not to go out to revote. They accused party members of taking the personal IDs of the inhabitants living in the areas covered by the polling station 2901, so that they would be prevented from voting. After the revote was concluded, BESA congratulated Visar Ganiu from DUI on the victory, but pointed out that it had been a stolen victory, involving intimidation and extortion.²¹⁶

The Alliance of the Albanians, on several occasions, made accusations of electoral irregularities, pressure from the government, and criminal elections. The reaction of the Alliance of the Albanians caused a range of reactions by the coalition partners in the Government, placing the party's position in the government into question, and with that their majority in the Assembly. Zijadin Sela did not acknowledge the results of the local elections, stating that "these results are unacceptable for us, having in mind that they walked with police officers and threatened the citizens, intimidating them and buying votes under pressure by the police". Arben Taravari who won the elections for mayoral position in Gostivar, accused the Minister of Internal Affairs Oliver Spasovski of applying pressure, i.e. calling people and agitating them to vote for DUI. Oliver Spasovski rejected the accusations.²¹⁷ In addition, Sela accused party activists, but also members of the police force, of bribing and blackmailing voters.²¹⁸

²¹⁶ "BESA: Pressure on the citizens from the Polling Station 2901 not to go out to vote". Telma, 12 November 2017. Accessed at: <http://telma.com.mk/vesti/besapritisok-vrz-gragjani-od-im-2901-da-ne-izlezat-na-glasanje> (last visited on 14.11.2017).

²¹⁷ "SDSM and DUI won, but also got an opposition in the Government". Deutsche Welle, 30th October 2017. Accessed at: <http://p.dw.com/p/2mir0> (last visited on 14.11.2017).

²¹⁸ "SDSM won in the second round as well, VMRO-DPMNE does not acknowledge the results". Voice of America, 29th October 2017. Accessed at: <https://mk.voanews.com/a/4091262.html> (last visited on 14.11.2017).

CONCLUSIONS

The sixth local elections in the Republic of Macedonia were held on the 15th October (first round) and the 29th October (second round) 2017. The elections were held in a peaceful and competitive atmosphere, without major incidents. The few irregularities did not affect the election results to a great extent. The voter turnout reached 59.51%, in the first and 51.92% in the second round, which is a decrease in relation to the local elections in 2013. The campaign for the first round of the elections started on 25th September and went on until 13th October at midnight, while the campaign for the second round continued right after Election Day on 15th October and went on until the 27th October at midnight. The parties were enabled to freely run their campaigns, with respect for the fundamental freedoms of association, public gathering and expression. Although not extensively, there was certain negative rhetoric noted between the two major political parties. In addition, the OSCE/ODIHR stated that there solid findings about buying votes, intimidating voters, and isolated cases of violence that took place in the pre-election period. Remarkably, the candidates from the largest parties (at least most of them) refrained from offensive speech on ethnic grounds, and some of the parties were concerned to get attention from voters representing other ethnic communities.

It can be concluded from the financial reports on the resources spent in the campaign prior to the first and the second round of the local elections that were submitted to the SEC, the State Audit Office (SAO), and the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) that the largest parties –VMRO-DPMNE, SDSM, DUI, the Movement BESA, DPA, the party Alliance of the Albanians, the Coalition Alliance of the Albanians, GROM, and the Left – spent more resources than they had collected. All the parties together spent 135,026,558 MKD in total (2,195,553 EUR) on the campaign. According to the available reports,²¹⁹

²¹⁹ Reports of the political parties, State Audit Office. Accessed at: <http://www.dzr.mk/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabindex=0&tabid=1073> (Last visited on:14.11.2017).

these parties had collected a total of 106,615,601 MKD (1,733,587 EUR) had collected from donations and membership fees. The biggest expenditures were made by the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, with their campaign covering nearly half of the overall expenditures by all parties together. The coalition led by SDSM collected the biggest amount of resources through donations and membership fees.

Most of the media services followed the journalistic standards in their media coverage of the election campaign, allowing for equal representation of diverse viewpoints on the current political and social topics and issues. The monitoring carried out by the AAVMS states that the TV stations on national level mainly managed to secure equal conditions for access to all forms of electoral media presentation. Notably, a great many of them put a lot of effort into organizing debates and duels between different participants in the election process. Some of the candidates participated in the special informative emissions organized by certain media services while rejecting the invitations of others. During the election campaign prior to both rounds of the voting, certain violations of the rules for unbiased media coverage were registered, as well as violations of the Election Laws by several media services, resulting in charges pressed against them. In relation to the paid political advertising on TV stations, the largest space in the campaign was purchased by the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, followed by the coalition led by SDSM, then DUI, and then BESA.

The results of the local elections in 2017 completely changed the distribution of mayors between VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM. The coalition led by SDSM won a convincing victory in the local elections with 57 mayoral positions, including the City of Skopje. The Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE won 5 mayoral positions, DUI 9, the political party Alliance of the Albanians, which participated in these local elections as a separate party for the first times, won 3 mayoral positions, and BESA, DPA, and DPT won one mayoral position each, while 3 mayoral

positions were attained by independent candidates. After the revote on 12th November, DUI won another mayoral position, resulting in 10 mayoral positions for this party. As for the councilors positions, the coalition led by SDSM won 552, the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE 432, DUI won 127, the Alliance of the Albanians 63, BESA 63, DPA 23, DPT 17, NDM and SRM won 7 each, the Coalition DUI, A/A and BESA 4, GROM, DNET and the Left won 3 each, and the Coalition Alliance of the Albanians and PDP won one councilor position each. 37 councilors in total were elected from various groups of voters.

47 objections to the voting procedure were filed to the State Election Commission in the first round. The coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE filed 43 objections; the Permanent Macedonian Radical Unification-TMRO filed 2 objections; while the Alliance of the Albanians (A/A) and the Left filed one objection each. The State Election Commission rejected all the objections. 28 lawsuits were filed to the Administrative Court against the decisions made by the SEC. Out of these, VMRO-DPMNE filed 24 lawsuits, TMRO filed 2, and AA and the Left filed one lawsuit each. The Administrative Court rejected all the lawsuits. After the second round of the elections on 29th October, a total of 102 objections were filed. The Movement BESA filed 89 objections, A/A filed 12 objections, and the People's Movement for Macedonia filed one objection. The State Election Commission rejected all the objections, which resulted in 11 lawsuits filed to the Administrative Court by A/A. Four lawsuits were filed by the Movement BESA, and one by the People's Movement for Macedonia. The Administrative Court rejected 15 complaints and accepted one lawsuit filed by the Movement BESA. Accepting this lawsuit led to a repetition of the second round voting in the polling station 2901 in the municipality of Čair. There were no objections filed in relation to the revote. The objections filed in the first and the second round did not contribute towards changes in the election results.

The work of the electoral administration was evaluated as generally positive, with the remark that it had managed to secure the conditions for the voters to exercise their rights. However, it was noted that the State Election Commission lacked true transparency, with remarks concerning the fact that not all documents related to the elections were published on the SEC's website in timely manner, and that the campaign for education of the voters was delayed. The report on the second round of the elections reveals that the SEC improved their transparency between the two rounds. In relation to the Municipal Election Commissions (MEC), there were remarks about varying transparency, with the OSCE/ODIHR Monitoring Mission registering insufficient transparency in 30 MECs. Their work in the second round was evaluated as positive.

Although there were various assessments by different political parties, it was evident that the parties in the governmental coalition evaluated the electoral process as fair and democratic, while the parties from the opposition made accusations on a range of irregularities. An exception from this division was the political party Alliance of the Albanians, which as a member of the governmental coalition accused the government of producing irregularities and intimidations during the voting in several municipalities. SDSM evaluated the elections as fair and democratic, allowing the citizens to freely express their will. VMRO-DPMNE accused the government of irregularities and electoral fraud, as well as pressure and abuse of the executive power. BESA also made accusations about certain electoral irregularities which the parties in power were involved in. The party had serious remarks about the revote process in the PS 2901 and accused DUI of "victory theft", claiming that some of the inhabitants living in the area covered by the Polling Station 2901 were deprived of their personal IDs by governmental party structures, which prevented them from exercising their voting right. The Alliance of the Albanians was also very fierce in its accusations on electoral irregularities. Zijadin Sela did not acknowledge the election results,

focusing on the irregularities in the municipality of Struga, making accusations about the intimidation of citizens by the police, and buying votes, while Arben Taravari accused the Minister of Internal Affairs, Oliver Spasovski, of intimidation.

In the period following the first and the second round of the elections, the mayors whose mandates had expired transferred their authority to the newly elected mayors, and the mandates of the new council members in the municipalities and the City of Skopje were verified.

ANNEX 1 – Mayors elected by municipalities

MUNICIPALITY	MAYORAL CANDIDATE	SUBMITTERS OF CANDIDATURES ²²⁰
City of Skopje	Petre Shilegov	SDSM
Aerodrom	Zlatko Marin	SDSM
Butel	Velimir Smilevski	SDSM
Gazi Babë	Borce Georgievski	SDSM
Gjorče Petrov	Aleksandar Naumoski	SDSM
Karpoš	Stefan Bogoev	SDSM
Kisela Voda	Filip Temelkovski	SDSM
Saraj	Blerim Bexheti	DUI
Centar	Sasha Bogdanovic	SDSM
Čair	Visar Ganiu	DUI
Šuto Orizari	Kurto Dudush	SDSM
Aračinovo	Milikije Halimi	SDSM
Berovo	Zvonko Pekevski	SDSM
Bitola	Natasha Petrovska	SDSM
Bogdanci	Blazhe Shipov	SDSM
Bogovinje	Albon Xhemali	Political Party Alliance for the Albanians
Bosilovo	Zoran Zimbakov	SDSM
Brvenica	Enver Pajaziti	Independent candidate
Valandovo	Pero Kostanidov	SDSM
Vasilevo	Marjan Janev	SDSM
Vevčani	Sasho Jankoski	SDSM
Veles	Ace Kocevski	SDSM
Vinica	Ivica Dimitrov	SDSM

Vrapčište	Isen Shabani	Political Party Alliance for the Albanians
Gevgelija	Sasho Pockov	SDSM
Gostivar	Arben Taravari	Political Party Alliance for the Albanians
Gradsko	Robert Beshovski	SDSM
Debar	Ruzhdi Lata	DUI
Debarca	Zoran Nogacheski	SDSM
Delčevo	Goran Trajkovski	SDSM
Demir Kapija	Lazar Petrov	SDSM
Demir Hisar	Marjanche Stojanovski	SDSM
Dolneni	Xhemil Qamili	DUI
Dojran	Ango Angov	SDSM
Želino	Fatmir Izairi	DUI
Zelenikovo	Borche Gievski	SDSM
Zrnovci	Blazhe Stankov	VMRO-DPMNE
Ilinden	Zhika Stojanovski	VMRO-DPMNE
Jegunovce	Darko Blazheski	SDSM
Kavadarci	Mitko Janchev	VMRO-DPMNE
Karbinci	Jordan Nasev	SDSM
Kičevo	Fatmir Dehari	DUI
Konče	Blagoj Iliev	SDSM
Kočani	Nikolcho Ilijev	SDSM
Kratovo	Lupcho Bojadziev	SDSM
Kriva Palanka	Borjancho Micevski	SDSM
Krivogaštani	Rubincho Shefterovski	SDSM
Kruševo	Tome Hristoski	SDSM
Kumanovo	Maksim Dimitrievski	SDSM

²²⁰ VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM participated on these elections as coalitions.

Lipkovo	Erkan Arifi	DUI
Lozovo	Aco Velkovski	SDSM
Mavrovo and Rostuša	Medat Kurtovski	SDSM
Makedonska Kamenica	Sonja Stamenkova	SDSM
Makedonski Brod	Zhivko Siljanoski	SDSM
Mogila	Jasmina Gulevska	SDSM
Negotino	Toni Delkov	SDSM
Novaci	Ljube Kuzmanovski	SDSM
Novo Selo	Boro Stojchev	SDSM
Ohrid	Jovan Stojanoski	SDSM
Petrovec	Borche Mitevski	VMRO-DPMNE
Pehčevo	Dragan Trenchovski	SDSM
Plasnica	Ismail Jahoski	DUI
Prilep	Ilija Jovanoski	SDSM
Probištip	Dragan Atanasov	SDSM
Radoviš	Gerasim Konzulov	SDSM
Rankovce	Ivica Toshevski	Independent candidate
Resen	Zhivko Gosharevski	SDSM
Rosoman	Branko Janev	SDSM
Sveti Nikole	Sasho Velkovski	SDSM
Sopište	Stefche Trpkovski	VMRO-DPMNE
Staro Nagoričane	Zhaklina Jovanovska	SDSM
Struga	Ramiz Merko	DUI
Strumica	Kosta Janevski	SDSM
Studeničani	Azem Sadiki	DPA
Tearce	Isen Asani	BESA
Tetovo	Teuta Arifi	DUI

Centar Župa	Arijan Ibrahim	PDTM
Čaška	Goran Stojanovski	SDSM
Češinovo-Obleševo	Gorancho Krstev	SDSM
Čučer Sandevo	Jovan Pejkovski	Independent candidate
Štip	Billagoj Bochvarski	SDSM

ANNEX 2 – Councilors elected by municipalities

Municipality	Total number of Council members	VMRO-DPMNE (coalition)	SDSM (coalition)	DUI	BESA	DPA	PP Alliance for the Albanians	Other
City of Skopje	45	17	21	3	2		1	1
Aerodrom	27	12	15					
Butel	19	8	8	1	1		1	
Gazi Babë	27	14	12					1
Gjorče Petrov	23	10	13					
Karpoš	23	6	14					3
Kisela Voda	23	11	12					
Saraj	19			10	5		4	
Centar	23	7	16					
Čair	27	4	4	9	8		2	
Šuto Orizari	19		8	2	1		1	7
Aračinovo	15		9	3	1		2	
Berovo	15	6	9					
Bitola	31	11	17					3
Bogdanci	11	4	7					
Bogovinje	19			7	5	2	5	
Bosilovo	15	7	8					
Brvenica	15	4	4	2	2	1	2	
Valandovo	15	6	9					
Vasilevo	15	7	8					
Vevčani	9	4	5					

Veles	23	11	12					
Vinica	15	7	8					
Vrapčište	19		1	7	2		6	3
Gevgelija	19	7	10					2
Gostivar	31	4	4	9	2		7	5
Gradsko	9	3	4					2
Debar	15	2	3		2	5	3	
Debarca	11	4	6					1
Delčevo	15	7	8					
Demir Kapija	9	4	5					
Demir Hisar	11	5	6					
Dolneni	9	4	5					
Dojran	15	2	3	3	1	1	2	1
Želino	19			8	9	1	1	
Zelenikovo	9	4	4	1				
Zrnovci	9	4	4					1
Ilinden	15	10	5					
Jegunovce	15	5	6	3				1
Kavadarci	19	8	9					2
Karbinci	9	3	5					1
Kičevo	23	6	4	9	1		3	
Konče	9	3	5					1
Kočani	19	8	10					1
Kratovo	15	6	9					

Kriva Palanka	19	7	12					
Krivogaštani	11	5	5					1
Kruševo	11	4	6	1				
Kumanovo	33	11	16	3	2		1	
Lipkovo	19			9	4	2	3	1
Lozovo	9	4	3					2
Mavrovo and Rostuša	11	2	6	1				2
Makedonska Kamenica	11	5	6					
Makedonski Brod	11	2	4					6
Mogila	11	3	4					4
Negotino	15	7	8					
Novaci	9	4	4					1
Novo Selo	15	7	8					
Ohrid	23	10	11					2
Petrovec	11	5	3	1			1	1
Pehčevo	11	5	6					
Plasnica	9		2	6				1
Prilep	27	12	15					
Probištip	15	6	7					2
Radoviš	19	7	8					4
Rankovce	9	3	3					3
Resen	15	7	7					1
Rosoman	9	4	3					2
Sveti Nikole	15	7	8					

Sopište	11	6	3			1	1	
Staro Nagoričane	9	2	4					3
Struga	27	4	7	6	2		8	
Strumica	23	9	14					
Studeničani	15		3	3	3	4	1	1
Tearce	19	1	1	7	4	3	3	
Tetovo	31	5	3	9	6	3	4	1
Centar Župa	11	2	3	1				5
Čaška	11	3	4	2				2
Češinovo-Obleševo	11	5	5					1
Čučer Sandevo	11	2	3	1			1	4
Štip	23	11	12					
TOTAL	1347	432	552	127	63	23	63	86



ELECTORAL ARCHIVES OF THE ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA SINCE 1990

ELECTORAL ARCHIVES OF THE ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA SINCE 1990

Since March 2016, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, with its representative office in the Republic of Macedonia, and the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" – Skopje (IDSCS) have been implementing the joint project "Electoral Archives of the Elections in the Republic of Macedonia since 1990", with the goal of enabling comprehensive monitoring of the election processes in the Republic of Macedonia since 1990. This project encompasses all elections since 1990: presidential, parliamentary and local, gathering all the available documents related to the election processes.

The need for implementing a project of this kind derives from the lack of official state archives with all the documents and data related to the election cycles since the independence of the Republic of Macedonia. The Electoral Archives groups the documents in 7 sections:

1. Documents for Calling Elections
2. Voter List
3. Candidate Lists
4. Election Results
5. Election Reports
6. Reports from International and Domestic Monitoring Organizations
7. Electoral Code

The Electoral Archives are updated elections, and all relevant documents are attached in each of the listed sections.

A crucial component of the Election Archive are the manuals for presidential, parliamentary and local elections prepared during the

election period. These manuals are published in cooperation by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Institute for Democracy „Societas Civilis“ - Skopje. So far, four manuals have been compiled: for the local elections in 2013, the presidential elections in 2014, and the parliamentary elections in 2014 and in 2016. All manuals are available on the website of the Election Archive in Macedonian, Albanian and English.

The Electoral Archive is available on the website:

<http://www.izbornaarhiva.mk/>



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