



THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA'S 2019 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS HANDBOOK

SECOND UPDATED EDITION

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*The process for the change of the constitutional name of the Republic of Macedonia was initiated with the Prespa Agreements, signed on 17th June 2018. The Agreement entered into force on 12th February 2019. Since the compiling of the Presidential Elections Handbook commenced before this Agreement entered into force, in the first edition of the text the name Republic of Macedonia is used, while in the sections written after the elections were concluded, the new constitutional name the Republic of North Macedonia is applied.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE SIXTH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTIONS



2019

INTRODUCTION TO THE SIXTH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

The sixth presidential elections in the Republic of Macedonia will take place on 21st April 2019. Three candidates are running for the position of President of the Republic of Macedonia: the independent candidate Blerim Reka, supported by the parties BESA and Alliance for Albanians; Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, supported by the opposition, i.e. the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) and its partners from the Coalition for a Better Macedonia; and Stevo Pendarovski, supported by the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) and 29 other political parties.

The elections were called on 8th February 2019, when the President of the Assembly, Talat Xhaferi, signed the decision to call presidential elections, in accordance with the constitutional and legal obligations. According to this decision, the elections are scheduled for 21st April, with the prospective second round to be held two weeks later, on 5th May.¹ Voting abroad, which will take place in the Diplomatic Consular Missions (DCM), is scheduled one day prior to Election Day, on 20th April, in accordance with the respective time zones. Ill and disabled persons can vote at their homes on 20th April, as well as persons who are serving sentence, who are detained in correctional institutions, or under house arrest, and internally dislocated persons. In case of a second round, these categories of voters will vote one day before Election Day.

Collection of signatures for the applicants for presidential candidates was initiated on 23rd February and concluded on 9th March. Eight applicants initiated this procedure, while only three of them successfully collected the necessary number of signatures. Four applicants (Dimče Petrovski, Filip Petrovski, Josif Mirčevski, and Gospodin Poposki) did not succeed², and one quit the race (Amdi Bajram, Member of the Assembly and president of the Union of Roma from Macedonia). The applicant Filip Petrovski was initially supported by VMRO-DPMNE, but lost to Professor Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova at the party convention. During the collection of signatures, he made accusations against the State Election Commission (SEC) regarding alleged manipulations to the procedure, claiming that invalid lists had been given to the citizens to sign, so that the valid lists had

¹ Decision to call an election for the position of President of the Republic of Macedonia No. 09-1071/1, 8th February 2019, Accessed at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WHSuEttgccx_oUv_HurGIBDsiWak-tzyq/view (last visited on 11th March 2019).

² The presidential candidate should be supported by at least 10000 voters (by collection of signatures) or by 30 Members of the Assembly.

remained empty. The SEC denied these accusations.³ Only Blerim Reka, Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, and Stevo Pendarovski successfully finished the collection of signatures.

Blerim Reka announced his candidacy for president via social media on 28th February 2019. On 5th March 2019, his headquarters announced that he had collected the necessary number of signatures, or 11000, in less than 15 hours. He thanked the Alliance for Albanians and BESA for this, the political parties that helped him to obtain the necessary signatures.⁴ Blerim Reka's candidacy is as a result of the unsuccessful negotiation between the parties in opposition, the Alliance for Albanians and BESA, and the government parties, DUI and SDSM, to support a joint consensual presidential candidate.

Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, a professor at the Faculty of Law in Skopje, announced her candidacy after she had been publicly nominated to run for presidency by 27 professors. Later, Siljanovska-Davkova announced that she would apply for candidacy at the VMRO-DPMNE's convention on 16th February in Struga. She competed with 8 applicants, among which were the Members of the Assembly Vlatko Gjørčev and Filip Petrovski, who was promoted as a candidate nominated by the Central Committee of the party United Macedonia. Siljanovska-Davkova won a total of 408 out of 519 votes, which made her the official presidential candidate of VMRO-DPMNE. On 22nd February, she started the collection of signatures, and the very next day, she announced that she had succeeded in collecting a total of 16000 signatures.⁵

Stevo Pendarovski, who had been SDSM's presidential candidate at the previous presidential elections in 2014, was the last candidate to join the presidential race. His candidacy was announced on 1st March 2019, when SDSM, DUI, and 29 other political parties announced that they had reached an agreement on a joint candidate for the forthcoming elections. Previously, Stevo Pendarovski had been competing within SDSM against three current government ministers: Nikola Dimitrov, Oliver Spasovski, and Radmila Šekerinska. Pendarovski's candidacy was made official at the congress of SDSM, in Skopje on 3rd March, where he won the unanimous support of all the 712 delegates. Although he received full support

³ Candidate Petrovski Claims SEC Manipulates - SEC Denies. TV24, 30.01.2019. Accessed at: <https://24.mk/details/kandidatot-petrovski-obvinuva-za-manipulacii-vo-dik-a-ottamu-go-demantiraat> (last visited on 12.03.2019)

⁴ Blerim Reka - Official Candidate for President of State, Plusinfo, 05.03.2019. Accessed at: <https://plusinfo.mk/и-блерим-река-официјален-кандидат-за-п/> (last visited on 11.03.2019)

⁵ Siljanovska Collected Necessary Signatures in Several Hours. MKD.mk, 11th March 2019, Accessed at: <https://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/politika/siljanovska-za-nekolku-chasa-gi-sobra-potrebnite-10-iljaj-di-potpisi> (last visited on 11th March 2019)

from his political party, Pendarovski, like Blerim Reka and Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, collected signatures for his candidacy. By the envisioned deadline for collecting signatures, he had managed to collect 31267 signatures.⁶

The support of Stevo Pendarovski as a joint candidate of SDSM and DUI was the most uncertain. There were several statements prior to this decision, followed by internal negotiations between SDSM and DUI. DUI adhered to the position it had held during the presidential elections in 2014, promoting a so-called “consensual president”, a president acceptable for all ethnic communities in Macedonia, who would “represent all the citizens of Macedonia”. After the initial failure to reach an agreement with SDSM, DUI announced on 30th January that they would promote their own candidate for the forthcoming presidential elections. However, this option is possible only if an agreement with another party can be reached.⁷

It is a characteristic of these presidential elections that all three presidential candidates confirmed their candidacies by collecting the required number of signatures. The presidential elections are taking place during a time of political turbulence. The change of the constitutional name of the country, the continuation of the process of integration into the EU and NATO, and the unsolved questions that derive from the previous political crisis (the political and judicial processes following the incidents at the Assembly on 27th April 2017, the status of the Special Prosecutor’s Office (SPO), and the court trials that are consequence of its work, as well as the reforms necessary to obtain a date for starting EU accession negotiations, in June this year), have been pressing issues in the public political discourse. In the current context of party polarization, the presidential candidates emphasised that they are supra-party candidates and that they will be independent in their actions, even though they are formally supported by political parties.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

On 8th March, the State Election Commission (SEC)⁸ introduced the Timetable for Conducting Electoral Activities for the Implementation of the Elections for the

⁶ Table of collected signatures in support of the candidates, 7th March 2019. State Election Commission. Accessed at: <http://www.sec.mk/tabela-za-sobrani-potpisi-za-poddrshka-na-listi-na-kandidat-za-den-07-mart-2019/> (last visited on 11th March 2019).

⁷ DUI to Promote its Own Candidate for Presidential Elections. TV24, 13.03.2019. Accessed at: <http://www.sec.mk/tabela-za-sobrani-potpisi-za-poddrshka-na-listi-na-kandidat-za-den-07-mart-2019/> (last visited on 13.03.2019).

⁸ For more information regarding the electoral bodies see Chapter 3 – The Macedonian Electoral System: Presidential Elections, section on electoral bodies.

Presidential Elections.⁹ The SEC continuously supplemented the Municipal Electoral Commissions (MEC) with members in case the former members' mandate ended, or resignations were filed, until 21st February. According to the Timetable, the Municipal Electoral Commission (MEC) should establish the electoral boards (EB) by 24th February 2019, and the same deadline concerns the establishment of EBs in the DCMs.

The Voters' List is available for public review at the regional units of the SEC, on the website <http://izbirackispisok.gov.mk/>, and at the Diplomatic Consular Missions (for voting abroad), between 23rd February and 14th March 2019. The citizens, who are not registered in the Voters' List, although they are eligible to vote, can require to be registered. Citizens of Macedonia who live abroad and are eligible to vote can register to vote in the period from the call of elections until 14th March 2019.

According to the deadlines determined by law, and according to the Timetable of the SEC for the implementation of the 2019 Presidential Elections, the election campaigns may be held from 1st until 19th April 2019.

According to the Timetable, the financial reports (showing the revenues and costs on the bank accounts) of the organisers of the election campaign must be submitted to the SEC, the State Audit Office (SAO) and the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC)¹⁰ within the following deadlines:

- The costs and revenues for the first 10 days of the campaign by 11th April;
- The costs and revenues for the campaign in the first round, if there is no second round of voting, by 20th April, and if there is a second round, for the costs and revenues for the second part of the election campaign by 4th May;
- The overall financial reports are filed within no more than 30 days after the closure of the bank accounts¹¹, and submitted to the SEC, the SAO, the SCPC., and the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia.

In a similar manner, the radio broadcasters and the print and electronic media (Internet portals) are obliged to submit their reports on the advertising slots used by the participants in the election campaign to the Ministry of Finance (MF), the SEC, the SAO, and the SCPC, no later than 4th May, if there is no second round, and by 18th May if there is a second round of voting.¹²

⁹ Timetable for Conducting Electoral Activities for the Implementation of the Elections of the President of the Republic of Macedonia. Available at: <http://www.sec.mk/rokovnik-izbori-2019/e>

¹⁰ The SEC, the SAO, the SCPC, as well as the political parties that submitted the reports, are obliged to publish them on their websites.

¹¹ The bank accounts are closed within three months after the announcement of the final results.

¹² Ibid.

The period stipulated in Article 8a of the Electoral Code, which prohibits public promotion of initiated construction work, or opening facilities and initiating infrastructural projects financed from the state Budget, public funds, or by public enterprises with state capital, commenced on 12th March. According to the Timetable, requests for monitoring of the elections by national and international observers can be submitted in the period between 8th February and 10th April 2019.

Together the presidential elections, snap elections for the position of mayor will take place in the municipalities of Ohrid, Debar, and Novo Selo on 21st April 2019.

RECENT AMENDMENTS TO THE ELECTORAL LEGISLATION

In the recent period, the regulations in the Electoral Code of the Republic of Macedonia were amended several times. The amendments were related to the state election bodies, the financing of political campaigns, participants in political campaigns, and regulations in the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services.

STATE ELECTION COMMITTEE

In May 2018, the Parliament adopted the amendments to the Electoral Code with 80 votes in favour. The government party and the opposition both supported the amendments, which were related to several articles of the Electoral Code, concerning the State Election Committee (SEC). Based on the supplemented Article 26, the SEC now comprises a total of seven members. Furthermore, the composition of the SEC is defined: one president, one vice president, and five committee members. The mandate of the committee members commences on the day they are elected, and concludes with the election of the next composition of the State Election Committee, with no more than 2 years of service.

The members of the SEC should meet the conditions stipulated in the amendments to Article 27 of the Electoral Code. According to the recent amendments, persons elected to these positions should be citizens of the Republic of Macedonia (RM) with permanent residence in the country, have completed high education, have at least eight years of working experience, and should not be affiliated to any party. The Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia publishes the call for the election of a president, a vice president and members of the SEC in the "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", as well as in the daily press. The call is open for eight days, starting on the day of publication in the Official Gazette.

The procedure for election of the members is prepared and implemented by the Committee on Elections and Appointment Issues of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. This Committee prepares a draft list with the nominated candidates and forwards it to the Assembly. The opposition recommends a president and two members from among the candidates on the draft list, while the government parties recommend a vice president and another three members. All members are elected with a two-thirds majority of overall number of Members of the Assmblly.

Some amendments to Article 28 of the Electoral Code are related to the preconditions for terminating the mandate of SEC members.

According to them, their mandates can be terminated:

- by force of law;
- on personal request;
- due to the lack of expertise or inconsiderate professional conduct;
- due to reaching the retirement age as stipulated by law;
- in case of death; and
- in case of effective sentence to 6 months of imprisonment or more.

With the vote of two-thirds of its members, the SEC can provide recommendations to the Committee on Elections and Appointment Issues of the Assembly, and request for members to be dismissed due to inconsiderate professional conduct.

Some amendments to Article 29 are related to the deadline for recommending new members of the SEC. In accordance with this Article, the President of the Assembly notifies the political parties to give their recommendations for a president and two members (for the opposition), and a vice-president and another three members of the SEC (for the government parties) within three days. If the opposition and the government parties do not exercise their right to recommend candidates, they will be recommended by the Committee on Elections and Appointment Issues of the Assembly.¹³

FINANCING OF POLITICAL PARTIES

In July 2018, the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia adopted the last amendments to the Law on Financing Political Parties. The amendments affect the property and the financing of the political parties (movable and immovable property). Namely, the maximum amount of resources to be allocated for financing of the political parties was fixed at 0.15% of the Republic of Macedonia's Budget. As for private sources of financing, the amount of individual donations may not surpass the sum of 60 average salaries (donation from legal entities), or 30 net average salaries (donation from physical entities). 30% of the resources from the Republic of Macedonia's Budget intended for financing of political parties are allocated equally to all political parties that have won at least 1% of the total number of votes in the previous parliamentary or local elections, while 70% of the resources are allocated to the political parties according to the number of their representatives elected to the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia at the last

¹³ Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, The Law Amending and Supaplementing the Electoral Code 99/2018.

parliamentary elections, and according to the number of elected councilors at the last local elections.

Regarding the control over financing political parties, Article 26 of the Law was supplemented with several paragraphs that emphasize that political parties can only have one bank account. Only in a case of financing by resources obtained from a bank loan, they are allowed to have one additional bank account for those resources. Moreover, political parties may transfer their resources between their accounts, while the Party Research and Analytic Centers (PRAC) must have separate bank accounts. Resources from the Republic of Macedonia's Budget that reach the amount of 280000 EUR in MKD yearly are envisioned for financing the PRAC that are established in accordance with the law, as a part of the internal organization of the party¹⁴.

In addition, according to the recent amendments to the Law on Financing Political Parties, the parties are obliged to provide a financial report on their material and financial spendings, which includes all account activities. The amendments stipulate that the resources allocated for the financing of the political parties should be paid in accordance with the budgetary possibilities, but no later than 1st March each year¹⁵.

Together with the Law on Financing of Political Parties, the Electoral Code of the Republic of Macedonia was amended. On the issue of funding political campaigns, a new paragraph was added to Article 71 (paragraph 7). This supplemented paragraph allows political parties to deposit resources from their basic bank account to another account opened exclusively for financing the election campaign. Moreover, the political party is entitled to transfer resources from the account intended for financing of the campaign to the party's basic bank account.¹⁶

¹⁴ The Party Research and Analytics Centres are established in accordance with the Law on Party Research and Political Centres from 2013. They must employ at least two persons. This law stipulates that these resources for such centres can be allocated to the four political parties with the largest number of representatives in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, which have established such centres (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, Law on Party Research Centres, 23/2013 with amendments and supplements, 15/2015).

¹⁵ Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, the Law amending and supplementing the Law on Financing of Political Parties, 140/2018.

¹⁶ Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, Law amending and supplementing the Electoral Code 140/2018.

PUBLIC MEDIA

The amendments to the Electoral Code from 2018 stipulate that, from the day elections are called until the start of the election campaign, the radio broadcasters, the press, and the electronic media (web portals) should not broadcast or publish any kind of paid political advertising, except for announcements related to collecting signatures in support of candidacies by a group of voters. The latter should be broadcast or published in specifically allocated advertising slots, within the allowed advertising time, limited to one hour in real time. The more significant amendments to the Electoral Code (Article 75-f), are related to regulating political advertising via electronic media, as well as the continuation of the advertising time. The amendments to this article stipulate that during the first and second round of an election campaign, radio broadcasters that cover the elections can broadcast nine minutes per hour of real time, intended only for paid political advertising. Out of these 9 minutes, a total of four minutes may be allocated to the political parties in power, four minutes to the political parties of the opposition, and one minute to the political parties that are not represented in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia.

Some supplements refer to the manner of fulfilling the financial obligations towards the radio broadcasters, the press and the electronic media, in relation to the paid political advertising of the parties that participate in the election campaign. The Ministry of Finance covers the expenditures for the announcements made within the paid political advertising to the radio broadcasters, the press, and the electronic media, upon submitted invoice. As an appendix to the submitted invoice, a media plan and a report on the services provided should be attached, which should be confirmed by the respective radio broadcasters, press, or electronic medium, as well as the participants in the election campaign.

Some amendments to Article 76-c of the Electoral Code specify the monitoring of political advertising during election campaign by the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (AAVMS) and the SEC. The AAVMS is obliged to monitor the election media presentation and the programme service of the radio broadcasters, while the SEC monitors the electronic media (web portals) and the press.¹⁷ The AAVMS and the SEC are obliged to prepare weekly reports on the respective media they monitor, and to publish them on their web sites. In cases of there are violations of the regulations for advertising, the AAVMS and the SEC

¹⁷ Although the amendments to the Electoral Code do not clearly stipulate that the SEC should monitor the press along with the electronic media (web portals), they have already implemented activities in practice that encompass the monitoring of the press.

should press charges against the radio broadcaster/electronic medium within 48 hours after the violation is detected. In relations to this kind of misdemeanor procedures, the competent court is obliged to make a decision within 48 hours with determined deadlines for filing a complaint. According to the law, the methodology for monitoring the media contents should be determined by the AAVMS.¹⁸

¹⁸ Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, the Law amending and supplementing the Law on Financing of Political Parties, 140/2018.

HISTORY OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN MACEDONIA (1991-2014)

PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTIONS



2019

HISTORY OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN MACEDONIA (1991-2014)¹⁹



**Kiro Gligorov,
the First President of the
Republic of Macedonia
(1991 - 1999)**

The first president of the independent Republic of Macedonia was Kiro Gligorov. He was elected by secret vote in the Macedonian Assembly on 27 January 1991 with 114 votes out of the total of 119 MPs present²⁰. All subsequent presidential elections took place as general and direct elections where all citizens were able to participate with their right to vote if registered on the voters' list.

The first direct presidential elections in Macedonia were held on 16 October 1994. Only two candidates²¹ took part in the elections, which were held in a single electoral round with a repeated voting at some polling stations due to determined irregularities²². The then president, Kiro Gligorov, ²³won 52.55% (715,087 votes) of the votes of the total number of citizens registered in the voters' list, and his opponent, the presidential candidate Ljubisha Georgievski 14.49% (197,109 votes). The turnout on the elections was 1,053,761 voters in total, or 77.44% of the citizens registered in the voters' list²⁴. One of the specifics of these elections was the fact that the State Election Commission invalidated a great number of ballot papers – 130,820 votes were invalidated (12.41% of the ballot papers).

Due to this turn of events, the party Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE), which had nominated Ljubisha Georgievski as their presidential candidate,

¹⁹ All photos have been downloaded from the President of the Republic of Macedonia's website: <http://www.president.gov.mk/> (accessed on: 11 February 2014).

²⁰ Shorthand notes from the Fifth Session of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia's Assembly, held on 27 January 1991. Skopje, 27 January 1991. Available at: <http://sobranie.mk/WBStorage/Files/05sed27jan-91god.pdf> (Accessed on: 11 February 2014).

²¹ The State Election Commission rejected the candidates Habit Shaban and Gjorgjija Atanasoski because they did not fulfill the condition stipulated in Article 6, paragraph 1 of the former Law on Presidential Election of the Republic of Macedonia, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No.20/94. The Law stipulated support for candidacy of at least 10 000 voters or 30 MPs in the least.

²² The repeated voting took place on 30 October the same year in 7 electoral units, at a total of 11 polling stations.

²³ At the elections, Kiro Gligorov was proposed as a candidate of SDSM.

²⁴ The State Election Commission, Report on the Presidential Elections in the Republic of Macedonia from 1994. Number 30-282. 8 November 1994.

submitted a complaint to the State Election Commission (SEC), demanding the elections to be cancelled. The complaint was overruled, which made Kiro Gligorov the first President of the Republic of Macedonia appointed at general and direct elections. Kiro Gligorov was the Head of State until 19 November 1999²⁵.



**Boris Trajkovski,
the Second President
of the Republic of
Macedonia
(1999 - 2004)**

The second general and direct presidential elections took place in 1999.

Six candidates took part in the elections: Boris Trajkovski (VMRO-DPMNE), Vasil Tupurkovski (Democratic Alternative, DA), Muarem Nexhipi (Party for Democratic Prosperity of the Albanians, PDPA), Muhamed Halili (Party for Democratic Prosperity, PDP), Stojan Andov (Liberal Democratic Party, LDP) and Tito Petkovski from (Social Democratic Union of Macedonia, SDSM)²⁶.

The first round was held on 31 October, and the second round on 14 November 1999. Due to irregularities in the election process in the second round the voting was repeated on 5 December 1999 at 230 polling stations in total. Boris Trajkovski was elected President of the Republic of Macedonia. After the voting in the first round, Tito Petkovski had 32.71% of the votes (343,606 votes), Boris Trajkovski 20.85% (219,098 votes), Vasil Tuporkovski 15.54% (163,206 votes), Muarem Nexhipi 14.85% (155,978 votes), Stojan Andov 10.66% (111,983 votes), and Muharem Halili 4.35% (45,731 votes). A total of 11,013 ballot papers were invalidated (0.68%). The turnout in the first round was 1,039,602, or 64.44% of the voters registered in the voters' list²⁷.

²⁵ President Kiro Gligorov recessed from his position in the period between 3 October 1995 and 10 January 1996, because of his recuperation after an attempt at assassination. The interim state presidency was assumed by the former President of the Assembly – Stojan Andov.

²⁶ The State Election Commission's website on the presidential elections in 1999: http://www.sec.mk/arhiva/1999_pretsedatelski/ (Accessed on: 11 February 2014).

²⁷ According to the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. The Republic of Macedonia, Presidential Elections, 31 October and 14 November 1999, Final Report. Warsaw, 31 January 2000. Available at: <http://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/fyrom/15910> (last accessed on 11 February 2014). The results have been taken from the OSCE-ODIHR's report, which rely on official data published by the SEC. The website of SEC does not contain data on the results of the presidential elections in 1999.

Only two candidates took part in the second round of the elections: Tito Petkovski and Boris Trajkovski.

After the second round and the repeated voting in some polling stations, Boris Trajkovski won 53.4% of the votes (582,808), and Tito Petkovski 46.18% (513,614). A total of 16,821 ballot papers were invalidated (1.01%). The turnout in the second round was 1,096,422 voters in total, or 68.08% of the registered voters²⁸.

Boris Trajkovski was President of the Republic of Macedonia from 15 December 1999 until 26 February 2004.²⁹



**Branko Crvenkovski,
the Third President of the
Republic of Macedonia
(2004 - 2009)**

The presidential elections of 2004 were the third presidential elections since the Republic of Macedonia's independence. In the first round of the elections on 14 April 2004, the citizens could choose among four proposed candidates: Branko Crvenkovski (SDSM), Gzim Ostreni (Democratic Union for Integration, DUI), Zudi Xhelili (Democratic Party of the Albanians, DPA), and Sashko Kedev (VMRO-DPMNE).

The turnout on the day of voting was 935,372, or 55.2% of the voters registered in the voters' list. According to statistics, Branko Crvenkovski won 42.47% (385,347), Sashko Kedev 34.07% (309,132), Gzim Ostreni 14.79% (134,208), and Zudi Xhelili 8.67% of the valid votes (78,714).

In the second round held on 28 April 2004, Branko Crvenkovski won the majority of votes, and thus became the third President of the Republic of Macedonia. He won the trust of 550,317 i.e. 60.5% of the total number of votes, while Sashko Kedev was supported by 329,179 voters, or 36.2%³⁰.

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ President Boris Trajkovski died in a plane crash on 26 February 2004. In accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, between 26 February and 12 May 2004, the position was temporarily held by Ljupcho Jordanovski, the former President of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia's Assembly.

³⁰ According to the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. The Republic of Macedonia, Presidential Elections, 14 and 18 April 2004, Final Report. Warsaw, 13 July 2004. Available at: <http://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/fyrom/35248> (last accessed on 11 February 2014). The results have been taken from the OSCE-ODIHR's report, which rely on official data published by the SEC. The website of the SEC does not contain data on the implementation and the results of the presidential elections in 2004.

In the second round the turnout was 909,289 voters or 53.6% of the citizens registered in the voters' list.

Branko Crvenkovski was the President of the Republic of Macedonia from 12 May 2004 until 12 May 2009.



**Gjorge Ivanov,
the Fourth President
of the Republic of
Macedonia
(2009 - 2019)**

The current President of the Republic of Macedonia, Gjorge Ivanov, was first elected at the presidency on the penultimate presidential elections held in 2009. At these elections, seven candidates who fulfilled the conditions were running for office. For the first time, a female candidate took part in the electoral race, Mirushe Hoxha, supported by the DPA.

After the first electoral round on 22 March 2009, the first two best ranked candidates were Gjorge Ivanov supported by VMRO-DPMNE, who won 35.04% of the valid ballots (345,850 votes), and Ljubomir Danailov – Frchkoski, supported by SDSM, with 20.54% (202,691 votes). Imer Selmani (New Democracy, ND) won 14.95% (147,547 votes), followed by Ljube Boshkoski (United for Macedonia, OM) with 14.88% (146,878), Agron Buxhaku (DUI) with 7.46% (73,629), Nano Ruzin (LDP) with 4.06% (40,042), and Mirushe Hoxha (DPA) with 3.06% (30,225)³¹.

The turnout in the first round was 1,019,258 voters, or 56.88% of the overall number of citizens registered in the voters List (1,792,028 citizens). The second electoral round took place on 5 April 2009. Gjorge Ivanov won 63.14%, i.e. 453,616 of the total number of valid ballots, while the presidential candidate Ljubomir Danailov Frchkoski won 36.86%, or 264,828 votes³². In the second electoral round the turnout was 764,039 voters, or 42.63% of the registered citizens.

³¹ The State Election Commission. Presidential Elections 2009. Announcement of the results from the first round of voting. Available at: http://www.sec.mk/arhiva/2009_pretsedatelskillokalni/2009/fajlovi/rezultati/konecni/PretsedatelDrzava.pdf (last accessed on 11 February 2014).

³² The State Election Commission. Presidential Elections 2009. Announcement of the results from the voting in the second round. Available at: http://www.sec.mk/arhiva/2009_pretsedatelskillokalni/2009/fajlovi/rezultati2/konecni/pret/Pretsedatel_konecni.pdf (last accessed on 11 February 2014).

The presidential elections in 2014 were the fifth direct presidential elections in the Republic of Macedonia since its independence. Citizens had the choice between four nominated candidates: Gjorge Ivanov (VMRO-DPMNE), Stevo Pendarovski (SDSM), Iljaz Halimi (DPA) and Zoran Popovski (GROM).

In the first electoral round on 13 April 2014, the turnout was 869,617 voters or 48.86% of the 1,799,572 citizens registered in the voters' list. Gjorge Ivanov won 51.69% of the total number of valid ballots (449,442), and Stevo Pendarovski 37.52% (326,164). These two candidates entered the second electoral round, which was held on 27 April 2014.

Iljaz Halimi, with 4.48% (38,966) and Zoran Popovski with 3.61% (31,368) of the votes concluded their presidential race in the first electoral round.

The second electoral round ended with the victory of Gjorge Ivanov, who won 55.28% of the total number of valid ballots (i.e. 534,910 votes), while Stevo Pendarovski gained 41.14% (389,077). The second round of the presidential elections was held together with snap elections, which contributed to an increased turnout in the second electoral round, reaching the number of 967,676 voters, i.e. 54.38% of the total number of registered voters.³³

³³ The Republic of Macedonia's 2014 Presidential Elections Handbook, second supplemental edition, KAS and IDSCS, 2014. Accessed at: <http://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/priracnici/priracnikpretsedatel-ski2014mkupd.pdf> (last visited on 25 January 2019).

THE MACEDONIAN ELECTORAL SYSTEM: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTIONS



2019

THE MACEDONIAN ELECTORAL SYSTEM: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

ELECTORAL SYSTEM FOR THE PRESIDENT

The President of the Republic of Macedonia is elected for a mandate of 5 years by general, direct, free, and secret ballot. The election of the President of the Republic of Macedonia is determined by the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia and the Electoral Code.

Therefore, in order to change certain regulations related to the election of the state president, the Parliament has to amend the Constitution, with the support of a two-thirds majority.

The presidential elections will be carried out in 7 Electoral Districts (ED). The territory of the Republic of Macedonia's territory is divided into 6 EDs. The 7th ED comprises the polling stations outside the state territory, including all Macedonian citizens with the right to vote, who reside abroad.

In the first round the candidate with the majority of votes of the total number of citizens registered in the voters' list is elected. If only one candidate is running, and he/she does not reach the required majority of votes in the first election round, the procedure will be repeated. If there are more candidates, and none of them gains the required majority of votes, a second round is carried out after 14 days. The two candidates who reached the largest number of votes in the first round take part in this round. In the second round, the candidate who wins the majority of cast votes is elected, i.e. if more than 40% of the registered voters have voted. If none of the candidates gains the required majority of votes even in the second round, the entire election procedure is repeated.

The presidential election should be concluded in the last 60 days of the previous president's mandate. If the mandate is terminated earlier due to various reasons, then the new president should be elected in a period of 40 days after the termination of the mandate. The presidential mandate can be terminated based on the Constitution or in case of death, resignation, or permanent impediment. Only the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Macedonia can officially determine whether the conditions for termination of the presidential mandate have been met.

The Constitution does not allow for a vacuum in the presidential mandate; so that, if the President is not able to perform his/her function, the Constitution stipulates that he/she be substituted by the President of the Assembly, who will pursue his work in the Assembly during this period.

ELECTORAL BODIES

The State Election Commission (SEC), together with the Municipal Election Commissions (MEC), the Election Boards (EB) for voting in the country and the Diplomatic and Consular Missions (DCM) of the Republic of Macedonia are responsible for implementing the presidential elections.

The **State Election Commission** comprises seven members elected by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia with a two-thirds majority. The mandate of the members starts on the day they are elected by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia and ends with the election of the new composition of the Commission. It cannot exceed two years. The members of the SEC are elected within 60 days after the constitutive session of the Assembly. The President, the Vice President, and the members of the State Election Commission are appointed by the Committee on Elections and Appointment Issues of the Republic of Macedonia, after a public call is announced and upon recommendations from the government and opposition parties, depending on the candidates' position.³⁴ The SEC's expert committee chaired by the Secretary General, is in charge of all professional administrative, organisational, and technical activities.

One of the responsibilities of the SEC is to publish the Voters' List, which has to be made available to the citizens for review, within a period of 15 days after the day when elections are called. The public reviewing of the Voters' List is open for 20 days.

Within each municipality, a **Municipal Election Committee** (MEC) is established. The MECs are responsible for implementing the elections in their municipality and for monitoring the work of the election boards. They are composed of five members, one of whom is the president, and each of the members has a deputy. The members and the deputies of the Municipal Election Committees are elected from the employees of the state, public, and municipal administration, as well as the administration of the City of Skopje, after the Ministry of Information Society

³⁴ Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, Law on Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code 208/18.

and Administration has forwarded the data to the SEC. The SEC randomly selects the members and the deputies with a mandate of five years, if they fulfill the criterion of holding a university degree. The presidents of the Municipal Election Committee, and the Election Committee of the City of Skopje appoint a secretary and a deputy, from among the candidates who are law graduates, for a period of five years.³⁵

For each polling station, an **Election Board** (EB) is established, comprising five members, one of which is the president, and deputies for each member. The president of the Election Board and his deputy, two members and their deputies are randomly selected from among the employees of the state, public and municipal administration, for a period of four years. One member of the EB and his/her deputy are nominated upon recommendation from the political parties in opposition who gained the highest number of votes in the previous parliamentary elections. The other members and their deputies are nominated upon the recommendation from the governing political parties that gained the majority of votes in the previous parliamentary elections. The random selection of the members of the Election Boards from among the employees of the administration is conducted by the MEC and the City of Skopje's Election Commission for their areas of responsibility, upon request from the SEC.

In the municipalities with a minority population of at least 20 per cent, the principle of equal and just representation is applied to the composition of the MEC and the Electoral Boards. The law also stipulates for each gender to be represented by at least 30 per cent of the members of the electoral organs. The members of the MEC and the Electoral Boards cannot be selected or appointed by government officials, the Assembly or by employees of the state administration of the Ombudsman, the Ministries of Justice, Defence, 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).³⁶

The number of polling stations for the presidential elections in the country is 3480, i.e. it has not increased since the previous elections. There are 32 polling stations abroad in the DCMs, but the elections will be organized only in the DCMs with a minimum of ten registered voters.

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ KAS, IDSCS, The Republic of Macedonia's 2017 Local Elections Handbook, second updated edition. Available at: http://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/priracnici/ENG_MANUAL.pdf

THE RIGHT AND THE PROCEDURE OF NOMINATING PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

Persons who want to run for presidency in the Republic of Macedonia must fulfill the following conditions:

- they must be citizens of the Republic of Macedonia;
- they must be over 40 years old on the day of the elections;
- they must have been residents of the Republic of Macedonia for a minimum of 10 years within the last 15 years;
- they cannot be elected more than twice in a row.

The presidential candidate should be recommended by at least 30 Members of the Assembly or 10,000 voters. The candidate lists can be filed by political parties, party coalitions registered with the State Election Commission, groups of voters and Members of the Assembly. The collection of signatures by groups of voters is open for 15 days, and it commences on the 15th day after the elections are called. One voter can give his/her signature to one presidential candidate only. The signatures are collected in the municipalities and the regional units of the State Election Commission with a form, witnessed by a public servant. The voters filing the list should be eligible to vote and permanent residents of the Republic of Macedonia.

Candidacies for President of the Republic of Macedonia should be filed to the State Election Commission by the official representative of the candidate. The SEC will then determine whether the candidacy meets the deadline and whether it is in accordance with the electoral provisions. If any irregularities are observed, the SEC will summon the official representative of the candidate to eradicate them within a period of 48 hours. If the list meets all provisions and any irregularities are eradicated within the given period of time, the SEC will accept it. If the irregularities cannot be eradicated within 48 hours, the SEC will reject the candidacy within a period of 24 hours. In case of rejection, the representative of the candidate can file a complaint against the SEC's decision at the Administrative Court. The complaint should be submitted within 24 hours, and the Administrative Court is obliged to decide on it within another 24 hours. The candidate files a written statement on candidacy, which is irrevocable.

The SEC is obliged to publish the list of the Republic of Macedonia's presidential candidates in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, at least 25 days prior to the elections.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The election campaign encompasses the public presentation of the candidates confirmed by the competent electoral organs and their programmes during the pre-election period: public gatherings and other public events carried out by the campaign organiser, public display of posters, video presentations at public places, election media and internet presentation and distribution of printed materials. The participants in the campaign are obliged to remove the posters no later than 30 days after the elections are concluded.³⁷

The organisers of the election campaign are responsible for its implementation as well as its legitimacy, including the campaign activities carried out by anyone authorized by them. The presidential election campaign starts 20 days prior to the day of election and ends one day before the elections. The election campaign for the 2019 presidential elections starts at midnight on 1st April 2019. The campaign for the first round ends on 19th April 2019 at midnight. The election campaign for the second round ends on 3rd May 2019 at midnight.³⁸ The days before the first and the second voting round are days of pre-electoral silence, i.e. no campaign activities may take place on those days.

The organisers of the election campaign have to open a separate bank account for the purposes of the campaign, which may be financed only by financial means from this account. The bank accounts can be opened 48 hours after the elections are called, but no later than 48 hours after the candidacy is confirmed. The accounts are closed within three months after the presidential elections are concluded.

The donors can be natural or legal persons from the Republic of Macedonia. Natural persons may donate an amount up to 3,000 EUR, and the legal persons up to 30,000 EUR in Macedonian denars. The donation may be comprised of money, goods, and services, but their total value may not surpass the determined amounts.

The election campaign can be financed from the political party's membership fee. The election campaign cannot be financed with means deriving from public corporations and public institutions, associations of citizens, religious communities, religious groups and foundations, foreign governments, international institutions, organs and organizations of foreign states and other foreign persons, proprietries with mixed capital where the foreign capital is dominant, or from unidentified sources.

³⁷ Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, the Law on Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code 208/18.

³⁸ The deadlines for conducting election activities for the implementation of the presidential elections in the Republic of Macedonia are available at: <http://www.sec.mk/rokovnik-izbori-2019/>

The election campaign cannot be financed from the Republic of Macedonia's Budget, the municipal budgets and the budget of the City of Skopje, except for the compensations for election expenditures which are in possession of the election campaign organisers, and if the political parties obtain resources from the Republic of Macedonia's Budget based on their results at the previous elections.

Each participant in the election campaign can spend up to 110 MKD per registered voter in the constituency, i.e. the municipality for which a list of candidates is submitted, i.e. the list of candidates in the first and the second round of voting.³⁹ The political parties have to submit their financial reports on the election campaign to the SEC, the State Audit Office (SAO), and to the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) one day before the first round, and one day before the second round, if it takes place and the candidate participants in it.⁴⁰

If candidates' rights are violated during the public appearances and announcements, they have the right to press charges for protection of their rights. In this case, the competent general court convenes urgently, and the decision is announced in the public media.

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC MEDIA

During the election campaign the public radio broadcasting service and the commercial radiobroadcasters are obliged to present their information on the elections in a just, balanced, and unbiased manner.

The Election Code clearly states which contents are considered suitable for the media presentation of elections, and which contents should not be broadcast before the start of the election campaign, as well as the way of conduct of the broadcasters from the day when the elections are called until the day determined for the start of the election campaign. The Electoral Code obliges the radiobroadcasters to guarantee balanced media coverage of the elections and to apply the principle of equality in all forms of media presentation for the presidential candidates in the first and second round. The paid political advertising is exempt from the principle of proportional representation, i.e. equality.

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, the Law Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code 208/18.

Radio broadcasters, the press, and electronic media (web portals) are not allowed to broadcast, i.e. to publish paid political advertisements from the day the elections are called until the start of the election campaign, except for announcements and statements related to the collection of signatures for the support of the candidates by a group of voters. Announcements related to the latter may be broadcast or published in specifically allocated advertisement slots of 9 minutes within one hour of real time, as stipulated in the Electoral Code, as well as how they should be distributed.⁴¹

Editors, journalists, programme hosts and presenters who take part in the programmes of the radio broadcasters are not allowed to participate in the pre-election activities of political parties, coalitions, groups of voters or their representatives. If such a person decides to participate in any campaign activities, their engagement in the radio programmes should be suspended until the elections are concluded.⁴²

Within 5 days after the elections are called, radiobroadcasters and print media are obliged to determine their price lists for paid political advertising of election participants. These price lists should be publicly announced at least twice before the start of the election campaign, and they should not be altered during the election campaign. If media provide discounts for paid political advertising, they are considered as donations in monetary value, they may not exceed 30,000 EUR⁴³ in Macedonian denars.

Paid political advertisement should be appropriately and visibly labeled as “paid political advertisement”, it should be explicitly indicated who commissioned the advertisement, and the latter should be clearly separated from the other content of the medium. Paid political advertisement should not be broadcast as part of the news, special informative programmes, educational programmes, programmes for children, or reports on religious, sports, cultural, entertainment or other types of events. Minors are not allowed to participate in paid political advertisement.

The public radio broadcasting service Macedonian Radio Television (MRTV) should not broadcast paid political advertisement. In cooperation with the SEC, MRTV is obliged to inform the citizens on the voting procedure without any financial

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² KAS, IDSCS, The Republic of Macedonia's 2016 Parliamentary elections handbook, second updated edition. Available at: http://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/priracnici/Belegexemplar_2016_The_Republic_of_Macedonias_2016_Parliamentary_Elections_Handbook_ENG_version.pdf

⁴³ Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, the Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law on Financing of the Political Parties, 140/2018.

compensation, and it should also broadcast other information related to the election process. MRTV is required to provide equal access to its informative programme. 30% of the programme should relate to events in the country and around the world, 30% to activities of the governing parties, 30% to activities of the opposition parties, and 10% to activities of non-parliamentary political parties. During the election campaign, MRTV is obligated to broadcast political presentation of the election participants in a balanced manner, free of charge. This balance has to be proportional to the number of confirmed candidacies submitted by Members of the Assembly. The Assembly Channel should provide free political presentation up to three hours daily for the opposition and governing parties in accordance with the results of the last parliamentary elections and one hour for candidacies that were submitted by groups, who are not represented in the Assembly. The free political presentation has to be adequately and visibly designated as “free of charge political presentation” during the entire duration of the broadcast. Unlike MRTV, radio broadcasting companies are not allowed to broadcast free political presentation, from the day the elections are called until their conclusion.⁴⁴

The Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (AAMS)⁴⁵ is responsible for monitoring the media presentation of the political parties and the candidates in radio broadcasts and electronic media (internet portals) from the day elections are called until the end of the voting on Election Day. If the Agency observes any irregularities, it may press charges against the broadcaster violating the regulations.⁴⁶ The organs of the AAMS are the Council and the director. The Council is comprised of seven members, appointed by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. The candidates for Council members are selected by public call, announced by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, no later than six months before the mandate of the Council member expires. The candidates file a statement of candidacy confirming that they fulfil the legal provisions and criteria.⁴⁷ Additionally, they have to submit supporting letters, either from two civic

⁴⁴ KAS, IDSCS, The Republic of Macedonia's 2016 Parliamentary elections handbook, second updated edition. Available at: http://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/priracnici/Belegexemplar_2016_The_Republic_of_Macedonias_2016_Parliamentary_Elections_Handbook_ENG_version.pdf

⁴⁵ Formerly, the competent organ was the Radiobroadcasting Council, which was renamed into Agency for Audio and Audio-visual Media Services based on the Law on Audio and Audio-visual Media Services. Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia 184/2013.

⁴⁶ KAS, IDSCS, The Republic of Macedonia's 2016 Parliamentary elections handbook, second updated edition. Available at: http://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/priracnici/Belegexemplar_2016_The_Republic_of_Macedonias_2016_Parliamentary_Elections_Handbook_ENG_version.pdf

⁴⁷ The members of the Council should have completed secondary education, and have at least eight years of work experience in their area of expertise, and be publically recognised in the area of communication, journalism, informatics, culture, economy or law. Persons who have been members of the administrative organs of the political parties in the last 10 years are not eligible for membership in the council.

organisations that have been active for more than five years and achieved results in the field of media and human rights, from at least one association of journalists, from a relevant organisation, association or a chamber in the area of information and communication technologies and services, or from two higher education institutions that offer programmes in the field of communicology, journalism, culture, economy or law. The candidacies are reviewed by the Committee on Election and Appointment Issues of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, in order to confirm that there is no conflict of interests. Within one month after the public announcement is concluded, the Committee is obliged to organise a public debate, and invite the organisations that have supported the candidacies, as well as other relevant participants. The candidates are elected by the Committee with a two-thirds majority, maintaining equal gender and ethnic representation while drafting the list of suggested candidates. The mandate of the members is five years.⁴⁸

When announcing results from public opinion polls the media are obliged to provide information on who commissioned and financed the poll, the institution that conducted the survey, the applied methodology, the scope and structure of the respondents, as well as when the survey was conducted. Such information should not be published during the last five days prior to the Election Day of the first and second round of voting.

After the end of the election process, i.e. 15 days after the campaign is concluded, the radiobroadcasters and print media are obliged to file a report on the advertising space used by each of the election campaign organisers and the amounts paid or requested to this end. This report has to be submitted to the Ministry of Finance, the SEC, the State Audit Office, and the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, which are obliged to publish it on their Internet websites.

For any irregularities in relation to the media presentation and political advertisement, radiobroadcasters and print media will be fined with 1,500 to 5,000 EUR depending on the offence. The AAMS will initiate a settlement procedure. Should this not be successful, infringement proceedings are initiated at the competent general court.

⁴⁸ Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, the Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, 247/18.

LIMITATIONS FOR CURRENT STATE OFFICIALS

The function of the President of the Republic of Macedonia cannot be merged with the function of the Member of the Assembly, council member or mayor.

From the day the decision to call elections is made until the end of the elections, the following activities are prohibited:⁴⁹

- To start construction work or to organise public events regarding the construction of facilities sponsored by the Budget, public funds, or resources obtained from public companies and other legal entities operating with state capital. This concerns the construction of new infrastructural facilities, such as roads, water pipelines, power lines, sewage systems, sports facilities and other edifices, and facilities intended for social activities, schools, kindergartens and similar facilities, unless Budget funds have previously been allocated for their construction, i.e. they are part of the implementation of a programme introduced with a law during the current year. The prohibition on organising public events does not apply to giving public statements by state officials or candidates for public office on public gatherings, interviews with the media, debates in the media, or as a response to a journalist's question.⁵⁰
- To pay incomes, pensions, social aid, or other types of payments and material compensations from the Budget funds or from public funds, aside from the regular monthly payments, This concerns all yearly transfers and payments, and single transfers from Budget or public funds. It is also prohibited to alienate state capital, and to sign collective contracts;

The Ministry of Finance is obliged to announce all Budget payments, except for regular incomes, pensions, and communal fees, on their website in a special database for budgetary expenditures. Moreover, the Ministry of Finance has to file a pre-election financial report two weeks after the elections are called. The law stipulates that the report should offer a review of all planned and realized Budget revenues and expenditures, from the start of the fiscal year until the day of filing the report, which is published on the Ministry's website.⁵¹

⁴⁹ By a Constitutional Court decision from 2017 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No.57/17) paragraph 1 section 1, and paragraph 2 section 2 of the Electoral Code, which refer to the management of Budget funds and the distribution of subsidies, were invalidated. The complete decision is available at: <http://ustavensud.mk/?p=11684>.

⁵⁰ Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, the Law on Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code 208/18.

⁵¹ Ibid.

If a presidential candidate is member of the Army of the Republic of Macedonia, the uniformed section of the Police, the authorized personnel at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, or the Intelligence Agency, their professional engagement will be suspended from the day their candidacy is confirmed.

THE MANDATE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

The mandate of the President of the Republic of Macedonia begins with signing and delivering the Solemn Oath of Office at the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, which should take place 10 days after the final results are announced, but no earlier than the termination date of the previous president's mandate. The Solemn Oath is as follows:

"I affirm that I will faithfully and responsibly execute the office of the President of the Republic of Macedonia, I will respect the Constitution and the laws and I will protect the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence of the Republic of Macedonia."

By assuming office, the president receives a mandate:

- to represent the state;
- to be Supreme Commander of the Army of the Republic of Macedonia;
- to determine the mandate for constituting the Government of the Republic of Macedonia;
- to appoint and revoke with decree the ambassadors and representatives of the Republic of Macedonia abroad;
- to receive the letters of credence and revocation of the foreign diplomatic representatives;
- to nominate two judges of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Macedonia;
- to nominate two members of the Judicial Council of the Republic of Macedonia;
- to appoint three members of the Security Council of the Republic of Macedonia;
- to appoint and dismiss other state officials and public servants as determined by the Constitution and the laws;
- to award honors and titles in accordance with the law;
- to grant a pardon in accordance with the law, and
- to conduct other functions as determined by the Constitution.

The State President informs the Assembly on issues of competence at least once a year, usually in December. The Assembly can request the President to provide his/her opinion on issues of competence.

The position of the State President is detached from any other public, political or professional function. He/she enjoys immunity in conducting his/her function, but is held responsible in case of infringing the Constitution or the laws during his/her term of office. The procedure for determining his/her responsibility is initiated by the Assembly with a two-thirds majority, but the Assembly does not have the right to decide upon the President's responsibility. The Administrative Court brings about the decision on the President's responsibility with a two-thirds majority, and can decide to revoke the President's immunity with a two-thirds majority.

MONITORING THE ELECTIONS⁵²

Election observers with an accreditation issued by the SEC have the right to monitor the elections. The accreditation for observers can be issued to national citizen organisations, which have been registered for at least one year, and have incorporated the principle of human rights protection in their statute. International organisations and foreign representatives can also monitor the elections. The official representatives of the presidential candidates have the right to appoint their representative to monitor the work of the electoral bodies.

⁵² KAS, IDSCS, The Republic of Macedonia's 2016 Parliamentary elections handbook, second updated edition. Available at: http://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/priracnici/Belegexemplar_2016_The_Republic_of_Macedonias_2016_Parliamentary_Elections_Handbook_MKD_version.pdf

PARTICIPANTS AT THE 2019 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

**PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTIONS**



2019

PARTICIPANTS AT THE 2019 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS⁵³

Blerim Reka



Blerim Reka is a full-time professor at the Faculty of Law at the Southeast European University (SEEU) in Tetovo. He runs for presidency at the 2019 presidential elections as an independent candidate, however, with the support of the political parties “Alliance for the Albanians” and “Besa”.

Reka graduated in Law at the University of Prishtina and obtained his Master’s degree in 1994 from the University of Prishtina, with the thesis “The Disloyal Competition and the Monopoly as Violations of the Free Flow of Goods and Services in the Common Market”. He obtained his PhD from the Universities of Prishtina and Graz, with the thesis “The Legal System in Post-war Kosovo during the Administration of the UN’s Interim Mission in Kosovo 1999-2001: Powers and

Limitations”. He has authored many publications related to law, EU institutions and EU integration. Within the SEEU, he has held the position of a Vice Rector for Research (2005-2006), as well as a Dean of the Faculty for Public Administration.⁵⁴

From 2006 to 2010, Blerim Reka was appointed to the post of Ambassador as Head of the Republic of Macedonia’s Mission to the European Union in Brussels. Later, Reka was a Councilor on EU Integration to the President of the Republic of Kosovo (2011-2013). He has been a member of the Expert Committee on External Affairs of the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (2011-2013), a member of the Legal Council of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia (2003-2006), as well as a member of the Expert Team on National Strategy for EU Integration of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia (2004). He was involved in the constitutional amendments deriving from the Ohrid Framework Agreement.⁵⁵

Blerim Reka was born on 22nd May 1960 in Skopje. He is married and has three children.

⁵³ Candidates are listed in alphabetical order based on their fist names.

⁵⁴ Blerim Reka, Southeast European University. Accessed at: <https://www.seeu.edu.mk/en/~b.reka> (last visited on 06.03.2019).

⁵⁵ Professor Dr. Blerim Reka. Geopolitical Intelligence Services. Accessed at: <https://www.gisreportson-line.com/blerim-reka,12,expert.html> (last visited on 06.03.2019).

Gordana Siljanovska Davkova



Gordana Siljanovska Davkova is a professor at Faculty of Law at the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” in Skopje. She completed her primary and secondary education in Skopje, and graduated in Law at the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” in Skopje in 1978. She obtained her Master’s degree from the same faculty. In 1994, she completed her PhD studies *cum laude* at the Law Faculty in Ljubljana, the Republic of Slovenia, with the thesis “*Local Self-government – between Norms and Reality*”. She runs for presidency at the 2019 presidential elections as a candidate supported by VMRO-DPMNE.

In 1989 she was appointed to the post of Assistant Professor in Legal System at the Law Faculty in Skopje. In 1994, she was appointed Associate Professor in Constitutional Law and Political System. She started working as a full-time professor at the Faculty of Law in 2004.

Between 1992 and 1994, Siljanovska Davkova was appointed to the post of Minister without Portfolio. Since 1994, she has been a member of the expert team on gender issues at the UNDP. In 1998, she was appointed to the post of expert on election issues at the UN. Between 2008 and 2016, she represented the Republic of Macedonia at the Venice Commission. She has been active in several civic organizations throughout the years, some of which she founded herself. She has received many awards, among which a recognition for her contribution to the rule of law, granted by the OSCE Mission in Macedonia, as well as a medal for her contribution to gender equality, awarded by the Women’s Union of Macedonia.

Siljanovska Davkova is an author or co-author of more than 200 publications on legal matters, the political system, and constitutional law.

She was born on 11th May 1955 in Ohrid. She is married and has two children.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Curriculum Vitae; website of the Faculty of Law “Iustinianus Primus”, Skopje; Accessed at: <http://pf.ukim.edu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/C.V.-GORDANA-SILJANOVSKA-DAVKOVA-2c-2016.pdf> (last visited on 21.02.2019)

Stevo Pendarovski



Stevo Pendarovski is a university professor at the Faculty of Political Studies at the American College in Skopje. He graduated in 1987 from the Faculty of Law at the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” in Skopje, and completed his Master and PhD studies at the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research in Skopje at the same university. Pendarovski runs for presidency for the second time at the 2019 elections. He lost the 2014 presidential elections to Gjorgje Ivanov in the second round. At the 2019 presidential elections he runs for presidency as a common candidate of SDSM, DUI and 29 other political parties.

Pendarovski wrote his Master’s thesis on “New Geopolitics of the Republic of Macedonia: the Contradictions Between the Communist and Transitional Matrices”, and his PhD thesis on “The EU’s Foreign and Security Policy and the Small Countries: the National Discourse Framework”.⁵⁷ He currently holds the post of Associate Professor on International Security, Foreign Policy and Globalisation.

Between 2001 and 2004, Stevo Pendarovski was appointed a national security councilor at President Boris Trajkovski’s Office. Between 2005 and 2009 he was appointed to the post of foreign policy councilor at President Branko Crvenkovski’s Office. He was a president of the State Election Commission in the period between 2004 and 2005. Previously, between 1998 and 2001, he had held the position of a Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as well as a Chief of the Analytics and Research Department at the same ministry. At the 2016 parliamentary elections, Stevo Pendarovski was elected a member of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. Since November 2019, he has been appointed to the post of a coordinator of the Republic of Macedonia’s preparations for NATO membership.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ The 2014 Presidential Elections Handbook. Accessed at: <http://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/priracnici/priracnikpretsedatelski2014mkupd.pdf> (last visited on 04.03.2019).

⁵⁸ Official website of the Republic of Macedonia’s government. Accessed at: <https://vlada.mk/NacionalniKoordinatori/StevoPendarovski> (last visited on 04.03.2019).

Pendarovski has authored several books and scientific studies published in Macedonia and abroad. He has taken part in many scientific conferences, public debates, and discussions.

Stevo Pendarovski was born on 3rd April 1963 in Skopje. He is married and has one child.

**THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH
MACEDONIA'S 2019
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS –
RESULTS, CAMPAIGN,
ASSESSMENTS**

**PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTIONS**



2019

INTRODUCTION

The first and the second round of the sixth presidential elections in the Republic of North Macedonia took place on 21st April and 5th May 2019. The winner in both rounds was Stevo Pendarovski, who was supported by the parties in power, the Social-Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), as well as 29 other political parties. Runners in the first round of the elections were Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, the candidate supported by the party in opposition, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation – Democratic Party for the Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) and their coalition “For a Better Macedonia”, and Blerim Reka, the candidate supported by the Alliance for Albanians and BESA. Stevo Pendarovski and Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova entered the second round. The total number of registered voters for the sixth presidential elections was 1,808,131. The turnout in the first round was 753,520 voters (41.67%), and 843,508 voters (46.65%) in the second.

The presidential elections were called on 8th February 2019, and the election campaign was initiated on 1st April 2019. A characteristic of these elections was that all candidates claimed to be nonpartisan, although they were supported by the political parties. The three candidates confirmed their nominations by collecting citizens’ signatures. Moreover, another characteristic of these elections was the low turnout in the first and second round, with the risk of not reaching the required consensus of 40% in the second round. In the second round, notwithstanding the boycott announcements, neither the parliamentary parties nor the participants called for boycott, which helped reach the electoral census. In the first round, there was a significantly lower turnout in the areas where the majority of the population is Albanian. In the second round, the turnout in these areas was higher, which affected the increase in the electoral census.

The presidential elections were monitored by 3,156 national and 463 international observers in the first round⁵⁹, and 3,321 national and 809 international observers in the second round of the elections.⁶⁰ The number of observers for these elections was significantly smaller than during the previous presidential elections, particularly the number of national observers (9,917 in the first round, and 10,013

⁵⁹ List of accredited observers for the Republic of North Macedonia’s Presidential Elections, as well as the snap elections for Mayors in the municipalities of Ohrid, Novo Selo, and Debar 2019, 19.04.2019. Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HS0vy95EdU5_LLM84TaTelxrwIqoVamS/view (last visited: 16.05.2019).

⁶⁰ List of accredited observers for the Republic of North Macedonia’s Presidential Elections and the snap elections for Mayors in the municipalities of Ohrid, Novo Selo and Debar 2019, 03.05.2019. Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PKHJcxCKvdmI2_wON4uzigZ3uJsRxSb1/view (last visited: 16.05.2019).

in the second round). The general assessment of the observers is that the elections enabled respect of the fundamental freedoms, and were efficiently conducted in a fair and democratic atmosphere. There were remarks related to the lack of clarity of the legal framework, particularly regarding the campaign during the second round, as well as the rhetoric of the presidential candidates at the end of the second round election campaign. This handbook provides a detailed review of the election campaign, the financing of the presidential candidates' campaign, the media coverage, the election results, the respect of voters' rights, the assessment by the observers and the political parties, as well as a summary of the overall election cycle.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND THE FINANCING OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

The campaign for the presidential elections started on 1st April and was mostly focused on a positive promotion of the candidates. However, there were occasional antagonistic statements between the candidates supported by SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE, particularly at the end of the campaign for the second round of voting. The candidates used several means of informing the citizens and communication with them, such as TV advertisements, Internet advertising, and direct meetings. Another feature of these presidential elections was that the candidates preferred small-scale meetings with the citizens to huge public gatherings. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Election Day was carried out in a peaceful atmosphere, without any serious breaches of the public order. In the first round, four cases of taking photos of the ballot papers and one case of damaging a ballot box were registered.⁶¹ In the second round, three cases of taking photos of the ballot papers were registered, one case in Negotino of a person writing a number on the voting booth with a pen, and one case of organised group voting, where measures were taken to clarify the case.⁶²

Another feature of these presidential elections was that, regardless of the declared independence of all three presidential candidates, they were all supported by political parties to a great extent during the election campaign. During most of the campaign, the candidates reflected their party's positions.

Stevo Pendarovski's campaign was themed "Forward Together". The campaign included public presentations on TV shows, TV advertisements, Internet advertising, as well as regular meetings with citizens, where Stevo Pendarovski discussed current affairs with them. Two key messages lay at the foundation of Pendarovski's campaign: first, strong support for the country's integration into EU and NATO, as a precondition for progress by the implementation of the Prespa Agreement. Second, he insisted on him being the only candidate who could unite all ethnic communities in the country, which could only hope for success with a candidate who unites. In addition, in his campaign, Pendarovski often reflected on the work of President Ivanov, representing him as a negative example of a president, and an extended arm of the former government under the leadership of VMRO-DPMNE. In relation to his competitors, Stevo Pendarovski mostly focused on Gordana Sil-

⁶¹ "Spasovski: Peaceful and democratic elections suitable for a NATO member state", Ministry of Internal Affairs, 21.04.2019. Available at: <https://mvr.gov.mk/vest/8999> (last visited: 30.05.2019)

⁶² "Spasovski: The elections were peaceful with an insignificant number of irregularities.", Makfaks, 05.05.2019. Available at: <https://makfax.com.mk/izbori-2019/видео-спасовски-изборите-поминаа-мир/> (last visited: 30.05.2019)

janovska-Davkova, with a rather neutral tone in relation to Blerim Reka. On several occasions during his addresses, as well as during TV debates, Pendarovski accused Siljanovska-Davkova of being a candidate who represents the policy of VMRO-DPMNE, and of dividing the citizens on several grounds, and he also point out that with her attitude against the Prespa Agreement, she could not be the leader of the country on its path towards EU and NATO integration.

Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova's campaign was themed: "Justice for Macedonia", and included TV presentations, TV advertisements, Internet advertising, as well as regular meetings with the citizens, where current issues were discussed. Siljanovska-Davkova based her campaign on the position that the Prespa Agreement and the name change are against the law and harmful for the country. She stated that the Agreement had imposed "injustice on Macedonia" and that, if elected president, her duty would be to apply all available legal instruments to avert the implementation process. In addition to her position against the Prespa Agreement, Siljanovska accused the government and SDSM of demonizing all citizens who had a different opinion from theirs, and who were against the responsibilities deriving from the Prespa Agreement in relation to the country's name change under the premise of EU and NATO accession. However, on several occasions, she stated that if she were elected president, she would respect the Agreement, but not use the new name of the country privately. In her presentation, Siljanovska-Davkova continuously accused the government of not doing enough to promote the rule of law and to fight corruption, and that the country could not make progress as long as SDSM and DUI are in power. In relation to the other presidential candidates, Siljanovska-Davkova criticized Stevo Pendarovski's engagement at the Ministry of Internal Affairs on several occasions, as well as his engagement as a national security councilor to President Branko Crvenkovski. In relation to Blerim Reka, she was more reserved with a predominantly positive tone in relation to his candidacy, avoiding direct confrontation. In the campaign for the second round, Siljanovska-Davkova made several attempts at approximating her position to ethnic Albanian voters, focusing on the voters who support the Albanian opposition.

Blerim Reka's campaign was themed: "Reka for the Republic". Just as the other candidates, Reka presented his position by means of TV presentations, TV advertisements, Internet advertising, and meetings with the citizens, however predominantly in areas with an Albanian majority. Blerim Reka's campaign was mainly run in Albanian, via media in Albanian language. Throughout his campaigning, Reka supported the Prespa Agreement as a precondition for the country's EU and NATO integration. His campaign was based on the idea of Euro-Atlanticism, multiethnicism, and the return of the republic, since, according to Reka, the country is now merely a state, instead of being

a republic where the rule of law is respected, where the judiciary is not politicized and the administration is not based on nepotism. Notwithstanding their opposed views in relation to the Prespa Agreement, Blerim Reka avoided confrontations with Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova during the campaign, and focused mainly on Stevo Pendarovski, whom he criticized due to his support from DUI, which had been part of Gruevski's government for 11 years.

While the three presidential candidates proceeded with their activities, DUI, the Democratic Party of the Albanians, and Alternative carried out a campaign in order to secure support for Stevo Pendarovski. The campaign activities of DUI were based on the concept of a 'consensual president'. In the campaign of these three parties, the absence of Stevo Pendarovski himself was notable. While their activities during the first round were of a much smaller range, there was an increase during the second round.

In the period following the elections, the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" conducted an analysis of the campaigns carried out on the Facebook and Twitter profiles of the presidential candidates. The analysis showed that most of the messages that the candidates posted were related to the promotion of campaign events and speeches. With this kind of approach, the candidates spent much less time promoting their political positions to the public or offering specific solutions according to their programmes. The limited use of social media to promote the goals of their candidacies resulted in a relatively small number of followers, and a small growth of their number during the two election cycles. The number of followers was disproportional to the total number of voters for the candidates, which was particularly true for Reka and Siljanovska. As for content, Pendarovski's main focus was on the topics related to the EU and NATO, while Siljanovska focused on solving internal problems, and Reka's focus was on the need for Albanian representatives at the highest governing positions in the state, as well as on topics related to the EU and NATO. However, a conclusion can be made that the followers on social media reacted mostly to the messages of the candidates that were not directly related to their political campaign, but to current events such as sports achievements, religious holidays, and their personal affinities.

FINANCING OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES⁶³

The candidates were obliged to submit three financial reports on the expenses during their election campaign, if they participated only in the first voting round, and four financial reports, if they also participated in the second round. The candidates were obliged to submit their first report on the first 10 days of the campaign on the 11th day of the campaign, i.e. 11th April. They had to submit their report on the second half of the campaign one day after its end, i.e. on 20th April. Blerim Reka and Stevo Pendarovski submitted their financial reports on the first part of the campaign on 11th April, while Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova submitted hers on 12th April. Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova did not submit a financial report on the second part of the campaign in the first round. Pendarovski and Siljanovska-Davkova, who participated in the second round, were also obliged to submit a third financial report on the election campaign for the second voting round, on 4th May, which was one day before the start of the second round. Both candidates submitted these reports in due time. They were obliged to submit the final overall financial report within 30 days after their bank accounts were closed to the State Election Commission, the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, the State Audit Office, as well as to the Republic of North Macedonia's Assembly. Regarding the financing, participant in the election campaign are allowed to spend a maximum of 110 Macedonian denars per voter registered in the voters' list, i.e. 198,894,410 MKD. If the organizers of the election campaign collect more resources than they spend, then they are obliged to donate the surplus to charity.

According to the submitted financial reports, Stevo Pendarovski's campaign was the most expensive. He had spent 47,890,399 MKD (778,704 EUR⁶⁴) by the end of the second round. By 3rd May, he had spent significantly more money than the amount he had collected, which was 7,903,382 MKD (482,726 EUR).

By the end of the second round, according to the available reports, his opponent Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova had spent 21,671,920 MKD (352,389 EUR), while during the same period she had collected 21,032,918 MKD (341,998 EUR), i.e. she spent 639,000 MKD (10,391 EUR) more than she had collected.

The candidate who did not enter the second round, Blerim Reka, spent much fewer resources. He spent a total of 19,466,622 MKD (316,205 EUR), while he had col-

⁶³ The financial reports of the presidential candidates are available on the website of the State Election Commission (<https://www.sec.mk/pretsedatelski-izbori-21-04-2019/>) and the State Audit Office (<http://www.dzr.mk/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabindex=0&tabid=1073>).

⁶⁴ The calculation of the EURO value was done in accordance with the average currency exchange rate, which is 61.5 MKD.

lected 18,150,500 MKD (295,130 EUR), which means that he spent 1,316,122 MKD (21,075 EUR) more than he had managed to collect during the election campaign.

Financial reports of the Republic of North Macedonia's presidential candidates ⁶⁵						
	Blerim Reka		Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova		Stevo Pendarovski	
	Income	Expenditures	Income	Expenditures	Income	Expenditures
First report 28 th March – 10 th April (deadline 11 th April)	1 104 500	1 546 095	12 529 309	2 234 574	31 044 498	29 816 586
Second report 11 th – 19 th April (deadline 20 th April)	17 046 000	17 920 527	/	/	14 110 010	15 791 842
Total for the first round	18 150 500	19 466 622	12 529 309	2 234 574	45 154 508	44 978 698
Third report 22 nd April – 3 rd May (deadline 4 th May)	/	/	8 503 609	19 437 346	7 903 382	2 911 701
Total (denar)	18 150 500	19 466 622	21 032 918	21 671 920	53 057 890	47 890 399
Total (euro)	295 130	316 205	341 998	352 389	862 729	778 704
Difference (denar)	-1 316 122		-639 000		5 167 551	
Difference (euro)	-21 075		-10 391		84 025	

⁶⁵ The review of the financial reports is based on the financial reports that the organisers of the campaigns submitted to the competent state organs by 30th May 2019.

MEDIA

In the country's media landscape with its 250 media houses, including 130 radio broadcasters and around 1000 internet portals, television still holds the lead position as the main source of information. Besides the Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services, whose legal duty is to monitor the media reporting during the election process, the latter was also monitored by the OSCE/ODIHR international monitoring mission for the elections.⁶⁶ The OSCE/ODIHR report points out the unbiased reporting by the public radio broadcasting service, which allowed the voters to be aptly informed prior to exercising their right to vote. The reports of the OSCE international monitoring mission for the elections also state an improvement concerning the freedom of media, apart from one registered case of threats and intimidation vis-à-vis the TV 21 crew.⁶⁷ The positive note in the findings of the monitoring mission remained unaltered in the second periodical report.⁶⁸

The monitoring of media reporting during the election process took place from the day the elections were called until the beginning of the election silence before the second round. The monitoring was carried out by the Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services (AAVMS), the body legally competent to monitor this process. The monitoring was implemented in accordance with the "Methodology for monitoring media presentation by radio and television programme services during the election process", adopted on 7th February 2019, and in accordance with the latest amendments to the law on type and time for paid political advertising.⁶⁹ The reports of the AAVMS for media monitoring cover all forms of electoral media presentation: daily informative programmes, special informative programmes, particularly interviews, debates and TV/radio duels, current affairs programmes (including those ones with a documentary approach), and thematically specialized informative programmes about the elections.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ OSCE/ODIHR Report on preliminary findings and conclusions: preliminary conclusions, presidential elections, 21st April, and OSCE/ODIHR Report on preliminary findings and conclusions: preliminary conclusions, presidential elections, second round, 5th May. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/north-macedonia/417845?download=true> and <https://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/north-macedonia/418868?download=true> (last visited: 02.06.2019)

⁶⁷ "AAVMS condemns the attack on the TV 21 crew in Aracinovo", MKD.mk, 18.04.2019. Available at: <https://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/politika/avmu-go-osuduva-napadot-vrz-ekipata-na-tv-21-vo-aracinovo> (last visited: 25.05.2019)

⁶⁸ OSCE/ODIHR, 2019

⁶⁹ AAVMS website. Available at: <http://avmu.mk/избори-2019-2/> (last visited: 31.05.2019)

⁷⁰ Report on media reporting for the period from 10th to 19th April 2019, Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services. AAVMS, May 2019. Available at: <http://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Втор-Извештај-во-КАМПАЊА-10-19-април-2019.pdf> (last visited: 31.05.2019)

The reports show a notable tendency among the media houses towards balanced and fair reporting on the election activities and the campaigns of the three, i.e. the two in the second round, presidential candidates. The election campaign was assessed as not too intense, calm, and offering diverse contents.

MONITORING OF THE PUBLIC RADIO BROADCASTING SERVICE

Table 1: Representation of candidates in informative programmes (1st – 9th April and 10th – 19th April)
Source: Reports on media monitoring by the Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services

	MRT 1				MRT 2				Macedonian Radio 1				Macedonian Radio 2			
	I ⁷¹		II ⁷²		I		II		I		II		I		II	
	Duration	%	Duration	%	Duration	%	Duration	%	Duration	%	Duration	%	Duration	%	Duration	%
Stevo Pendarovski	00:36:42	26,34%	00:29:56	15,82%	00:21:39	12,39%	00:21:21	10,77%	00:29:10	22,84%	00:32:15	17,53%	00:07:40	12,15%	00:14:48	11,76%
Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova	00:25:36	18,38%	00:38:23	20,29%	00:23:56	13,70%	00:22:31	11,36%	00:20:06	15,74%	00:30:33	16,60%	00:09:03	14,34%	00:14:27	11,48%
Blerim Reka	00:12:43	9,13%	00:29:55	15,81%	00:16:35	9,49%	00:23:22	11,79%	00:08:44	6,84%	00:14:32	7,90%	00:06:14	9,88%	00:11:34	9,19%

According to the AAVMS reports between 1st and 9th April, MRT1 allocated around half of the analyzed time to reporting on the elections (2 hours, 19 minutes and 19 seconds). Out of this total, 25 minutes and 36 seconds were provided for Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, and adding the support and the campaigning supplement by the opposition party, VMRO-DPME of 22 minutes and 16 seconds, MRT1 allocated a total of 47 minutes and 52 seconds. Stevo Pendarovski was provided with 36 minutes and 42 seconds by MRT1, and together with the election presentations by SDSM, covering 12 minutes and 37 seconds, as well as the coalition partner DUI, covering 1 minute and 29 seconds, MRT1 allocated a total of 50 minutes and 48 seconds to Pendarovski.

⁷¹ Report on media reporting of the period from 1st to 9th April 2019. Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services, AAVMS, May 2019. Available at: <http://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Izvestaj-1-9.04.2019.pdf> (last visited: 02.06.2019)

⁷² Report on media reporting of the period from 10th to 19th April 2019, Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services, AAVMS, May 2019. Available at: <http://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Втор-Извештај-во-КАМПАЊА-10-19-април-2019.pdf> (last visited: 31.05.2019)

Blerim Reka was shown for 12 minutes and 43 seconds by MRT1, and adding the campaign supplement by the Alliance for Albanians of 8 minutes and 54 seconds, and by BESA with the same amount of time, MRT1 allocated a total of 30 minutes and 31 seconds to Reka.

During the first nine days (from 1st to 9th April) of the election campaign, out of eighteen analyzed news editions, a total amount of 41 minutes and 10 seconds were allocated to Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova and VMRO-DPMNE; a total of 42 minutes and 10 seconds were allocated to Stevo Pendarovski, SDSM, DUI, and DPA; and a total of 43 minutes and 20 seconds were allocated to Blerim Reka, the Alliance for Albanians and BESA.

From 10th to 19th April, the first programme service of the Macedonian Radio Television (MRT) allocated 29 minutes and 56 seconds to Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, 38 minutes and 23 seconds to Stevo Pendarovski, and 29 minutes and 55 seconds to Blerim Reka. During the same period, the second programme service of the MRT allocated 22 minutes and 31 seconds to Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, 21 minutes and 21 seconds to Stevo Pendarovski, and 23 minutes and 22 seconds to Blerim Reka.

On the first programme service of the Macedonian Radio, in the period between 1st and 9th April, a total time of 2 hours 7 minutes and 41 seconds was allocated to reporting on election campaigns, which is almost one hour less than the time allocated to other topics, which covered 3 hours 2 minutes and 14 seconds. Between 10th and 19th April, a total of 3 hours and 4 minutes was allocated to reporting on election campaigns, which is almost 40 minutes more than the time allocated to other topics.

Between 1st and 9th April, the second programme service of the Macedonian Radio, reported on activities related to the election campaigns of the presidential candidates with minimum intensity (1 hour 3 minutes and 6 seconds). However, there was a notable tendency to allocate approximately equal time to all the three presidential candidates. Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova was reported on for 9 minutes, Stevo Pendarovski for 7 minutes and 40 seconds, and Blerim Reka for 6 minutes and 14 seconds. Between 10th and 19th April, the second programme service reported 14 minutes and 27 seconds on Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, 14 minutes and 48 seconds on Stevo Pendarovski, and 11 minutes and 34 seconds on Blerim Reka.

The overall time allocated to informing in the analyzed TV News on the second programme service during the period between 1st and 19th April points at minor differences in reporting. During this period, 42 minutes and 28 seconds were allocated to individual

presentations of Siljanovska-Davkova, and a total of 37 minutes and 17 seconds to individual presentations of Pendarovski.⁷³

Table 2: Representation of candidates in informative programmes (22nd April – 3rd May)⁷⁴
Source: Reports on media monitoring by the Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services

	MRT 1		MRT 2		Macedonian Radio 1		Macedonian Radio 2	
	Duration	%	Duration	%	Duration	%	Duration	%
Stevo Pendarovski	00:40:57	18,90 %	00:17:21	9,96 %	00:28:37	16,32 %	00:10:20	15,35 %
Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova	00:59:38	27,52 %	00:27:20	15,68 %	00:27:49	15,86 %	00:14:48	21,99 %
Blerim Reka	00:00:48	0,37 %	00:03:20	1,91 %	00:02:59	1,70 %	00:02:16	3,37 %

According to the monitoring report on the second round, MRT1 allocated almost equal time to both candidates. A total time of 1 hour, 6 minutes and 18 seconds was allocated to Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova and VMRO-DPMNE, and 1 hour, 6 minutes and 47 seconds to Stevo Pendarovski, SDSM and DUI. During the same period, MRT 2 showed Siljanovska-Davkova for a total of 27 minutes and 20 seconds, and Stevo Pendarovski for 17 minutes and 21 seconds. On Macedonian Radio 1, a total of 27 minutes and 49 seconds were allocated to Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, and 28 minutes and 37 seconds to Stevo Pendarovski, while on Macedonian Radio 2, 14 minutes and 48 seconds were allocated to Siljanovska-Davkova, and 10 minutes and 20 seconds to Pendarovski.

The total time allocated to informing in the analyzed TV News on MRT1 during the entire election campaign shows an equitable approach. From 1st April until 3rd May 2019, a total time of 1 hour, 55 minutes and 10 seconds was allocated to Siljanovska-Davkova, and 1 hour, 56 minutes and 2 seconds to Pendarovski for individual electoral presentation.⁷⁵

⁷³ Reports for the period between 1st and 9th April, and 10th and 19th April. AAVMS, 2019.

⁷⁴ Table 2 displays the monitoring results of the public radio broadcasting service during the campaign of the second round of elections (Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova and Stevo Pendarovski).

⁷⁵ Report on media reporting from 22nd April until 3rd May, 2019, AAVMS, May 2019. Available at: <http://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Извештај-во-КАМПАЊА-втор-КРУГ-22-април-3-мај-2019-finalen.pdf> (last visited: 31.05.2019)

According to the reports, most programmes of the public service did not report on the local elections regularly in the daily news. The reporting was minimal and occasional during both election cycles, with a focus on the local elections in Ohrid.

MONITORING OF THE COMMERCIAL MEDIA

Table 3: Representation of candidates in informative programmes (1st to 9th April, and 10th to 19th April)
Source: Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services

	Alsat M		TV Alfa		TV Kanal 5		TV Sitel		TV Telma		1 TV		TV 21M		Klan Macedonia	
	I ⁷⁶	II ⁷⁷	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
Stevo Pendarovski	00:21:21	00:21:16	00:17:56	00:33:07	00:16:54	00:19:49	00:46:47	00:57:35	00:22:48	00:26:38	00:05:41	00:16:17	00:22:42	00:18:21	00:19:32	00:23:03
Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova	00:19:08	00:22:09	00:17:52	00:42:52	00:14:18	00:26:05	00:40:05	00:52:19	00:18:23	00:23:13	00:06:30	00:18:15	00:19:45	00:20:16	00:14:43	00:22:57
Blerim Reka	00:09:15	00:21:31	00:06:09	00:23:25	00:09:01	00:17:04	00:11:36	00:15:50	00:13:33	00:12:43	00:03:27	00:13:49	00:22:04	00:23:07	00:15:25	00:21:07

⁷⁶ Presidential and local snap elections 2019, Report on media reporting for the period between 1st and 9th April 2019. AAVMS, April 2019. Available at: <http://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Izvestaj-1-9.04.2019.pdf> (last visited: 02.06.2019)

⁷⁷ Presidential and local snap elections 2019, Report on media reporting for the period between 10th and 19th April 2019. AAVMS, April 2019. Available at: <http://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Втор-Извештај-во-КАМПАЊА-10-19-април-2019.pdf> (last visited: 31.05.2019)

Table 3 (continued): Representation of the candidates in informative programmes (1st to 9th April and 10th to 19th April)
Source: Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services

	TV Sonce		TV Shenja		TV 24 Vesti		TVM		TV VIS		TV Kobra Radovis		Total	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II		
Stevo Pendarovski	00:13:13	00:22:37	00:18:17	00:27:30	00:25:33	00:30:36	/	/	/	/	/	/	00:05:56	8:47:33
Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova	00:11:05	00:22:37	00:17:49	00:18:34	00:25:23	00:30:22	/	/	/	/	/	/	00:05:28	8:24:40
Blerim Reka	00:04:52	00:22:37	00:14:37	00:14:57	00:18:13	00:25:25	/	/	/	/	/	/	00:02:34	5:39:47

From the report of AAVMS on the overall representation of the candidates in the informative programmes during the first round (from 1st to 19th April), we can conclude that the private TV stations were balanced in their reporting about the candidates Stevo Pendarovski (8 hours, 47 minutes and 33 seconds) and Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova (8 hours, 24 minutes and 40 seconds), while the candidate Blerim Reka was present for three hours less (5 hours, 47 minutes and 33 seconds).

Table 4: Representation of the candidates in the informative programmes (22nd April – 3rd May)
Source: Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services⁷⁸

	TV Alsat	TV Afla	TV Kanal 5	TV Sitel	TV Telma	1 TV	TV 21 M	TV Klan Makedonija	TV Sonce	TV Shenja	TTV 24 Vesti	TVM	Total
Stevo Pendarovski	00:19:00	00:25:14	00:18:54	00:26:31	00:19:54	00:29:21	00:13:00	00:35:36	00:29:08	00:21:51	00:28:46	00:01:51	4:29:06
Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova	00:17:11	00:33:24	00:20:32	00:35:56	00:23:50	00:27:09	00:23:12	00:32:12	00:26:58	00:18:46	00:27:34	/	4:46:44
Blerim Reka	00:01:43	00:01:26	00:00:48	00:01:16	00:00:12	00:03:38	00:02:06	00:04:10	/		00:05:21	/	0:20:40

⁷⁸ Presidential and local snap elections 2019, Report on media reporting in the period between 22nd April and 3rd May 2019. AAVMS, May 2019. Available at: <http://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Извештај-во-КАМПАЊА-втор-КРУГ-22-април-3-мај-2019-finalen.pdf> (last visited: 02.06.2019).

From the report of AAVMS on the representation of the candidates in informative programmes during the second round (from 22nd April to 3rd May), we can conclude that the private TV stations were balanced in their reporting about the candidates Stevo Pendarovski (4 hours, 29 minutes and 6 seconds) and Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova (4 hours, 46 minutes and 44 seconds). Although the candidate Blerim Reka did not participate in the second round, the media still continued to report on him, but with a significantly decreased time (20 minutes and 40 seconds).

A bigger difference can be noticed with respect to TV Sitel and TV 21-M, where the difference in the allocated time among the candidate was around 10 minutes on behalf of Siljanovska-Davkova. The rest of the monitored TV stations maintained the tendency for balanced reporting, with a difference of no more than 2 or 3 minutes.

This period of the election campaign and media reporting was marked with numerous interviews and debates among the presidential candidates and experts with respect to most TV stations, within the TV news, but also within the main news.

PROCEDURES IN CASE OF MEDIA REPORTING VIOLATIONS

The AAVMS monitoring covers the time allocated to the presidential candidates' direct addresses in the informative programmes of the public broadcasting service, and it registers violations of the electoral code by the radio broadcasters. Violations were registered at four broadcasters: TV Uskana Tetovo for allocating more time to Blerim Reka on several occasions, 1 TV for broadcasting a paid political programme during a debate show, TV M Ohrid for allocating four minutes more to Stevo Pendarovski's paid political programme as well as the candidate for Mayor of Ohrid from SDSM on 2nd and 3rd May, and TV Kobra Radovish for broadcasting statements from state officials during the election silence.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Review of initiated misdemeanor procedures (concluding with 27.05.2019). AAVMS, May, 2019. Available at: <http://avmu.mk/избори-2019-2/> (last visited: 02.06.2019)

RESULTS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Stevo Pendarovski, the candidate supported by SDSM, DUI and the other coalition partners, received the majority of votes in both election cycles and won the 2019 Presidential Elections. In the first round, Pendarovski gained 322,581 votes, or 42.81%, while the candidate supported by VMRO-DPMNE and its coalition, Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, gained 318,341 votes, or 42.25%. None of the candidates received the majority of votes of the registered voters: Pendarovski won 17.84%, and Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova 17.6% of the total number of voters registered in the Voters' List, so that a second round had to be held.

The candidate supported by BESA and the Alliance for Albanians, Blerim Reka, did not enter the second round. Blerim Reka won 79,888 votes, i.e. 10.6% of the total votes. There was a significant number of invalid ballot papers, i.e. 32,696 (4.34%). The turnout for the first round of the presidential elections was 753,556 voters, equaling 41.68% of the total number of 1,808,131 citizens with the right to vote.

First round ⁸⁰	Blerim Reka	Gordana Siljanovska - Davkova	Stevo Pendarovski	Invalid ballot papers	Total
Registered voters					1 808 131
Voter turnout	79 888	318 341	322 581	32 696	753 556
% of voter turnout	10,6 %	42,25 %	42,82 %	4,34 %	100 %
% of registered voters	4,41 %	17,6 %	17,84 %	1,8 %	41,68 %

⁸⁰ State Election Commission. CONCLUSION for the announcement of the corrected official results from the first round of voting for the Republic's Presidential Elections based on the data from the registers of the municipal election committees. Available at: http://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/Претседателски%20избори%202019/4_Резултати%20од%20избори/Корегирани%20официјални%20резултати%20од%20првиот%20круг.pdf (last visited:16.05.2019)

Pendarovski gained 435,656 votes in the second round of the elections, which equals 51.65% of the votes, while Gordana Siljanovska–Davkova received 377,446 or 44.75% of the total votes. In the second round, 30,407 voters invalidated their ballot papers (3.6%). The total turnout in the second round was 843,508 voters, which equals 46.65% of the total number of 1,808,131 registered voters.

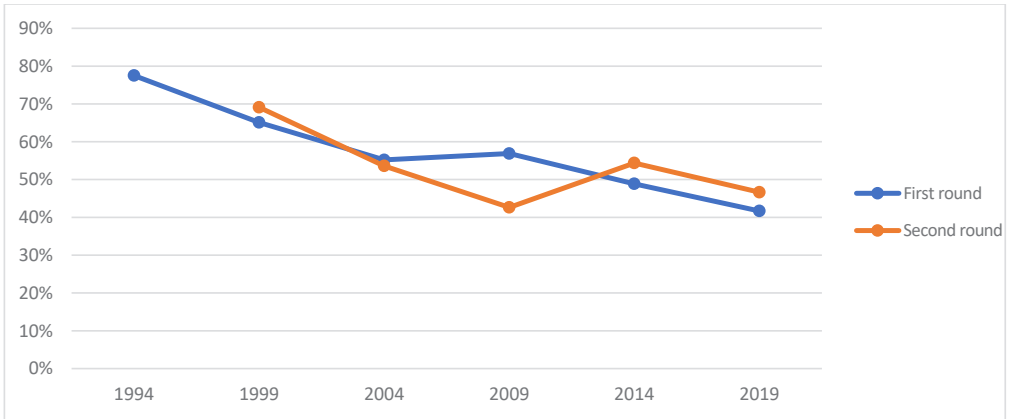
Second round ⁸¹	Gordana Siljanovska – Davkova	Stevo Pendarovski	Invalid ballot papers	Total
Registered voters				1 808 131
Voter turnout	377 446	435 656	30 407	843 508
% of voter turnout	44,75 %	51,65 %	3,6 %	100 %
% of registered voters	20,87 %	24,09 %	1,68 %	46,65 %

These presidential elections confirmed the trend of the declining interest among the citizens to participate in the election process. In comparison, during the first presidential elections, which took place in 1994, the voter turnout was 77.44%, while at the 2014 and 2019 elections, it was about 30% smaller i.e. 48.86% in 2014, and 46.65% in 2019. This declining trend, as well as the difficulties in securing the required election threshold of 40% in the second round and the political insecurity after such an outcome, retriggered the debate on whether the president should be elected by direct elections or rather by the Assembly. While DUI stated that the latter would be an acceptable option⁸², for them, SDSM, and, in particular, VMRO-DPMNE were against the change of the election model.⁸³

⁸¹ State Election Commission. CONCLUSION for the announcement of the final results from the second round of voting for the Republic's 2019 Presidential Elections. Available at: http://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/Претседателски%20избори%202019/4_Резултати%20од%20избори/Заклучок%20за%20објава%20на%20конечни%20резултати%20-%20втор%20круг.pdf (last visited: 16.05.2019)

⁸² "Ahmeti: DUI Accepts President to Be Voted by the Assembly". Meta.mk. Available at: <https://meta.mk/ahmeti-za-dui-e-prifatljivo-pretседatelot-da-se-izbira-vo-sobranieto/> (last visited: 16.05.2019)

⁸³ „SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE Reject Changes in the Presidential Election Model“. Telma. Available at: <https://telma.com.mk/za-sdsm-i-vmro-dpmne-e-neprifatljivo-menumane-na-nachinot-na-izbor-na-pretседatel/> (last visited: 16.05.2019)



Voter turnout for the presidential elections in the Republic of North Macedonia between 1994 and 2014.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Website of the State Election Commission: www.sec.mk

PROTECTION OF VOTING RIGHTS

The Electoral Code guarantees the protection of voting rights. According to the Electoral Code, submitters of candidate lists as well as voters are entitled to filing objections to the State Election Commission, should they consider their rights to have been violated. The submitters' complaints can relate to the voting procedure and the summarizing and determining of the results, whereas the voters can file complaints if their voting right has been violated during the voting procedure. The procedure for the protection of voting rights is an urgent procedure, which is why the objections and complaints should not be forwarded via letter post.

The complaints of the submitters of lists have to be filed to the SEC within a period of 48 hours after the voting ends, i.e. after the announcement of the initial results, and the SEC is obliged to announce their decision within 48 hours after receiving the complaint. The SEC informs the submitter about the decision via email, and the decision is considered 'delivered' five hours after the email is sent. If the submitter receives a negative decision from the SEC, he/she is entitled to file a complaint to the Administrative Court within 24 hours after receiving the decision. The Administrative Court is obliged to make a decision within 48 hours after receiving the complaint. The Administrative Court can either sustain or alter the SEC's decision, whereas their decision is final, without the possibility to file a complaint or legal remedy.

In case of violation of the voter's right, the voter can file a complaint to the SEC within 24 hours, and the SEC is obliged to make a decision four hours after receiving the complaint. The SEC's decision can be objected to by filing a complaint to the Administrative Court within 24 hours after receiving the decision. If the deadlines are met during the voting process, and the decision is positive for the voter, he/she will be enabled to exercise his/her right to vote.⁸⁵

After the first round of the elections on 21st April 2019, there were 14 objections filed to the State Election Commission by one submitter: Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, five of which were sustained. Out of these, four (concerning polling stations in Kavadarci, Kumanovo, Ohrid and Centar) had been filed due to mismatch between the number of people who voted and the number of ballot papers in the ballot box.⁸⁶ In the municipality of Aerodrom, the sustained objection referred to

⁸⁵ KAS, IDSCS, the Republic of Macedonia's 2016 Parliamentary Elections Handbook, second supplemented edition. Available at: http://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/priracnici/Belegexemplar_2016_The_Republic_of_Macedonias_2016_Parliamentary_Elections_Handbook_MKD_version.pdf (last visited: 20.05.2019)

⁸⁶ In three of these cases, the difference between the number of people who voted and the number of ballot papers in the box was one ballot paper, except at the polling station 1338 from Ohrid, where the difference was 40 ballot papers.

the case of a person who was enabled to vote without having been found on the voters' list. In all five cases the voting results were annulled. However, there was no rerun, due to the fact that the total number of registered voters at these polling stations would not have affected the final results. Regarding the sustained objections, chargers were pressed to determine the responsibility for a severe breach of the regulations of the Electoral Code.⁸⁷

After the second round of the elections on 5th May 2019, there were 12 objections filed by two submitters: VMRO-DPMNE filed one objection and Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova filed 11 objections. Four of the objections filed by Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova were sustained by the SEC. The first sustained objection was related to the polling station in Kumanovo due to mismatch between the number of people who voted and the number of ballot papers in the ballot box. The second objection was related to the polling station in Shuto Orizari, where one voter could not fulfill her right to vote, due to the fact that there was already a signature next to her name in the voters list, so that it had to be suspected that another person had voted. At the polling station in Saraj, one objection was sustained due to a violation of the election secrecy. The fourth sustained objection was related to an offence at the polling station in Radovish, due to a mismatch between the number of signatures and the checked voters in the voters' list. In all the four cases, the voting results were annulled, however, there was no rerun due to the fact that the total number of registered voters at these polling stations would not have affected the final results. Regarding the sustained objections, chargers were pressed to determine the responsibility for the severe breach concerning the regulations of the Electoral Code.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Website of the State Election Commission. Overview of complaints. Available at: <https://www.sec.mk/pretsedatelski-izbori-21-04-2019/> (last visited: 20.05.2019)

⁸⁸ Overview of complaints II round. Available at: <https://www.sec.mk/reshenija-po-prigovori-ii-krug/> (last visited: 20.05.2019)

OBSERVERS' EVALUATION OF THE ELECTIONS

The presidential elections were monitored by a total of 3,619 observers in the first and 4,130 observers in the second round. In the first round, there were 3,156 national and 463 international observers⁸⁹, and 3,321 national and 809 international observers in the second round.⁹⁰ The largest numbers of observers were from the citizens's association MOST, with 1994 observers in the first, and 2032 observers in the second round of voting. Next was the Association for Affirmation of Human Values and Youth Integration MAK-SONCE Skopje with 583 accredited observers in the first, and 768 observers in the second round of voting. The third largest number of accredited observers came from the Association of Citizens for the Promotion of Tourism, Sustainable Development, and Human Rights AKSIOS 2017 Skopje with 329 observers in both rounds of voting. Other organisations that monitored the elections were the Civil Centre for Freedom Skopje with 160 observers in the first, and 62 observers in the second round, as well as Inkluziva from Gostivar with 44, the National Roma Centre from Kumanovo with 20, the Association of Persons with Special Needs "Together We Can" with 10 observers, as well as the Macedonian Centre for Culture and Development and the Institute for Economic Strategies and International Relations Ohrid with 8 observers in both rounds of voting.⁹¹

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) provided 195 observers in the first, and 249 observers in the second round of voting, which made it the largest international monitoring mission. The World Macedonian Congress had 59 accredited observers for both rounds of voting. The Embassies of the USA, Canada, the Russian Federation, France, Italy, Albania, Hungary, Sweden, Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Netherlands, Kosovo, as well as the EU Delegation in North Macedonia, also monitored the elections with a smaller number of observers. In addition, the State Election Commissions of Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina had their own observers at the elections, as well as the Republic of North Macedonia's office of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the Kosovo Democratic Institute (KDI), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of

⁸⁹ Table of accredited observers for the Republic of North Macedonia's 2019 Presidential Elections and the snap elections for Mayors of the municipalities of Ohrid, Novo Selo, and Debar. 19.4.2019. Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HS0vy95EdU5_LLM84TaTelxrwIqoVamS/view (last visited: 16.5.2019).

⁹⁰ Table of accredited observers for the Republic of North Macedonia's 2019 Presidential Elections and the snap elections for Mayors of the municipalities of Ohrid, Novo Selo, and Debar, 3.5.2019. Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PKHJcxCKvdmI2_wON4uzigZ3ujsRxSb1/view (last visited: 16.5.2019).

⁹¹ Ibid

Europe, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy NGO Silba from Denmark, the Swedish International Liberal Center (SILC), and Fidelitas, a Hungarian youth political organization. In addition to the observers, there were 289 accredited interpreters, 187 of which were accredited by the OSCE/ODIHR. The US Embassy accredited 63 interpreters.⁹²

The first round of the elections was covered by 48 international journalists, from the video news agency Ruptly, the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation ORF, the Bulgarian National Television BNT, the Bulgarian TV NOVA, Al Jazeera in English, Kyodo News, RTV Vojvodina, the Bulgarian National Radio, Voice of America, N1 Belgrade Television, Associated Press, the European Pressphoto Agency EPA, the German State Television ARD, Television T7 Prishtina, Al Jazeera Balkans, Reuters, the German Radio Bayerischen Rundfunk, and Turkish State Television TRT. In the second round, the number of journalists increased to 60, with additional journalists from TRT World, MRTV correspondent from Belgrade, and ERT 3 Greek National Television being accredited.

In the preliminary reports on the first and the second round, the OSCE/ODIHR⁹³ mission assessed the elections as well implemented in respect of the fundamental rights and freedoms of the voters, as well as the information about the candidates available prior to the elections. Election Day was assessed as having been carried out without any obstacles, respecting the key procedures, and in a transparent manner. Most of the remarks were related to the lack of clarity in the legal framework, i.e. certain disadvantages in the Electoral Code. The legal framework was evaluated as suitable to conduct democratic elections, but it was highlighted that it does not regulate all aspects of conducting elections, particularly in relation to the campaign financing in the second round of elections. It was also pointed out that the legal framework does not provide full and effective legal protection mostly due to the limitations of the right to file objections and complaints during the election process, which does not allow for legal remedy in cases of any prospective irregularities.

The civil association MOST's evaluation states that the citizens could cast their vote freely, and that the voting was conducted in a fair and democratic atmosphere. MOST registered several isolated irregularities, which however, in their

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ OSCE/ODIHR Statement on preliminary findings and conclusions – preliminary conclusions, presidential elections, first round, 21st April, and OSCE/ODIHR Statement on preliminary findings and conclusions – preliminary conclusions, presidential elections, second round, 5th May. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/north-macedonia/417845?download=true> and <https://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/north-macedonia/418868?download=true> (last visited: 20.5.2019).

opinion, did not affect the quality of the election process.⁹⁴

OSCE/ODIHR assessed that Election Day, for both rounds, was well administered and carried out. The opening of the polling stations was positively evaluated at almost all monitoring locations, and the members of the Election Boards were generally informed about the procedures and their work was transparent. At some polling stations, the opening was slightly delayed, and one polling station was not open at all in the first round.⁹⁵ The voting process was positively assessed in 99% of the monitoring, it had been carried out without any obstacles, with respect for the procedures in almost all cases, including checking the voters, signing the voters' list, and marking the voters' fingers. In both election rounds, cases of family voting were registered (in 3% of the monitoring), and the OSCE/ODIHR mission obtained credible findings on buying votes in Shtip and Strumica.⁹⁶

The OSCE/ODIHR mission assessed the campaign as peaceful, and thus allowing the participants to run their campaign without any obstacles, respecting the fundamental right to public gathering and expression. The mission had some remarks regarding the lack of clarity in the Electoral Code, concerning the distribution of the commercial bulletin boards, but the evaluation stated that, in practice, there had been no disputable issues regarding their display. As for the use of language, the candidates were assessed to have avoided harsh words, however, there were some cases of provocative use in some speeches delivered by the party representatives. The report notes that, although nominally independent, the candidates Stevo Pendarovski and Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova depended on the organizational assistance from the parties that supported them. When it comes to addressing the other ethnic communities, the report notes that Pendarovski's campaign addressed all ethnic communities, while Blerim Reka's campaign, even though it was in Albanian and Macedonian, focused on the ethnic Albanians only.⁹⁷

MOST evaluated that the campaign was run in a generally relaxed atmosphere, and that for the first time no incidents were registered that could affect the latter. It was noted that the number of direct meetings with the citizens was increased, and only a few cases of negative campaigning were registered, as well as the pres-

⁹⁴ See, Preliminary statement 22.4.2019 and Preliminary statement 6.5.2019. Civic association MOST. Available at: <http://most.org.mk/?fw-portfolio=%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%B8-2019#1556970460695-cdc4f1e4-9ef6> и <http://most.org.mk/?fw-portfolio=%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%B8-2019> (last visited: 21.5.2019).

⁹⁵ The OSCE/ODIHR monitoring mission monitored 93 polling stations in the first round of the elections, and 64 polling stations in the second round. The information about the unopened polling station is provided by the SEC.

⁹⁶ OSCE/ODIHR, 2019

⁹⁷ Ibid

ence of minors at the public gatherings. MOST assessed that the voters were enabled to make an informed choice, since, in their opinion, for the first time there was a much larger number of debates among the candidates.⁹⁸

The OSCE/ODIHR monitoring mission evaluated the work of the State Election Commission as unbiased, being trusted by most of the stakeholders. In the report, it is pointed out that the SEC was late with some preparations such as providing guidance, printing materials, and establishing committees at lower levels, while there were challenges concerning the transparency and efficiency, mostly due to the lack of information and communication systems. The mission states that, in some cases, the transparency and trust in the Commission were diminished because it did not announce its sessions timely, the discussions were closed, and the public sessions were limited to the formal voting only. The publishing of educational videos for the voters in Macedonian and Albanian languages, supplied with a sign language interpretation and subtitles in Roma, Serbian, Turkish and Vlach languages was positively assessed.⁹⁹

In its Report, MOST points out that the SEC worked in a transparent way during its public sessions, and that no voting based on party affiliation was registered in the decision-making process of the SEC. However, the reports highlight that the SEC annulled the voting in four cases without opening the whole electoral material, as stipulated in the Electoral Code.¹⁰⁰

As for the media, the OSCE/ODIHR monitoring mission confirmed that they, in general, presented diverse information about the candidates and the political parties supporting them, and that the public broadcasting service was unbiased in its reporting during the campaign. The media regulator fulfilled its legal duties according to the mission's evaluation. The legal framework in relation to the media was evaluated as detailed, however, there were some remarks regarding various provision that refer only to political parties, and not to presidential candidates. Most of the TV channels monitored by the OSCE/ODIHR mission covered all the three candidates appropriately, with predominantly neutral reporting. With regard to the reporting of the online media and the press, it was highlighted that various levels of the campaign were covered, with "unbalanced tone and reporting at certain times". After the first round of the elections, a reduced media activity¹⁰¹ due to the reduced range of activities of the candidates was registered. The ma-

⁹⁸ MOST, 2019

⁹⁹ OSCE/ODIHR, 2019

¹⁰⁰ MOST, 2019

¹⁰¹ For more details about the manner and the proportion of reporting during the campaign, see section: MEDIA.

majority of the monitored TV channels provided just coverage of the candidates and the parties supporting them.¹⁰²

The European Union assessed the elections as peaceful and transparent, commenting that additional reform of the electoral legislation is required. The United States of America supported the preliminary findings of the OSCE/ODIHR and assessed the elections as competitive, and stated that the respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms contributed towards a democratic process.¹⁰³

¹⁰² OSCE/ODIHR, 2019

¹⁰³ "USA Embassy statement on North Macedonia's presidential elections". USA Embassy in North Macedonia, 6 May 2019. Available on: <https://mk.usembassy.gov/u-s-embassy-statement-on-north-macedonias-presidential-elections/> (last visited: 21.5.2019).

OBSERVATION OF THE ELECTIONS BY THE POLITICAL PARTIES

The political parties in government and in the opposition, as well as the presidential candidates themselves, provided various assessments of the presidential elections in the first round. The party in power, SDSM, assessed the elections as democratic, and thus showing the capacity of the country, and stated that elections of this kind are important for the integration into EU and NATO. VMRO-DPMNE, on the other hand, accused the government of imposing pressure and applying illegal means to gather information on several occasions.

In the first round, SDSM described the elections as peaceful and carried out in a fair and democratic atmosphere, and stated that the first round of the presidential elections had been 'crystal clear'. SDSM congratulated the citizens for freely exercising their right to vote, and for showing democratic maturity and responsibility towards the society and the state in a dignified manner. SDSM assessed that the institutions, with all the capacities, enabled a positive development of the election process.¹⁰⁴ Party representatives announced that the victory of Stevo Pendarovski in the first round heralded an even greater support by the citizens in the second round, and invited all ethnic communities to support their candidate.¹⁰⁵

Quite contrary to this assessment, VMRO-DPMNE accused the government of pressures on the citizens, as well as irregularities. One of the serious accusations was related to the application, which SDSM used to gather meta-data on the citizens. However, VMRO-DPMNE declared that the pressure had not affected the citizens, since they sent a message to the parties in power, and stated that the opposition had defeated the government by more than 70,000 votes.¹⁰⁶ VMRO-DPMNE representatives announced that Siljanovska had won in 47 municipalities and that they were the winners of these elections, which they interpreted as the voice of the citizens against the government's crime, corruption and nepotism. The party called the citizens to provide greater support in the second round to the candidate supported by VMRO-DPMNE, Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, in order to confirm

¹⁰⁴ Media statement, Aleksandar Kiracovski, General Secretary of SDSM, and a head of the electoral headquarters. SDSM. 21.04.2019. Available at: <http://sdsd.org.mk/News.aspx?idNews=17231&Ing=1&cat=0> (last visited: 30.05.2019)

¹⁰⁵ Public announcement. SDSM, 22.04.2019. Available at: <http://sdsd.org.mk/News.aspx?idNews=17234&Ing=1&cat=0> (last visited: 30.05.2019)

¹⁰⁶ "Janusev: The people saw what was happening and the people punished the government", VMRO-DPMNE, 22.04.2019. Available at: <https://www.vmro-dpmne.org.mk/2019/04/22/janushev-narodot-gleda-shto-se-sluchuva-i-narodot-ja-kazni-vlasta/> (last visited: 30.05.2019)

that it is the citizens who decide.¹⁰⁷ Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova herself, supported by VMRO-DPMNE, called for a greater turnout in the second round, in order to confirm that the citizens are those to decide.¹⁰⁸

The campaign headquarters of Blerim Reka assessed Election Day as peaceful and democratic.¹⁰⁹ Reka stated that the elections had been fair, free and democratic, and that the result surpassed his expectations. According to him, the low turnout was due to the fact that the voters' list had not been updated, taking into account the 250,000 expatriates.¹¹⁰ On Election Day, the leader of the Alliance for Albanians, Zijadin Sela, stated that fair and democratic elections are important for the country, but made certain accusations regarding the intimidation and blackmail that had taken place in the days prior to the elections, as well as regarding the 'bad propaganda' by the media close to the government.¹¹¹ Right after the elections, the Alliance for Albanians and BESA, which had supported Blerim Reka, gave a joint press conference, where Zijadin Sela declared that they were satisfied with the result, since Reka had won a convincing victory in all municipalities and areas with an Albanian majority. He pointed out that the low turnout in the municipalities with an Albanian majority had to be understood as a boycott against the government, and not a boycott against the opposition. Bilal Kasami from BESA stated that the first round of the elections had shown that the Albanians wanted changes. Finally, they announced that they would not bargain with the votes they had won in the first round.¹¹²

In the second round, just as in the first one, SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE had different assessments of Election Day and the election process as a whole. In the second round, VMRO-DPMNE's accusations were notably more severe. Party representatives pointed at a series of irregularities that "indicate electoral engineering by the

¹⁰⁷ Public announcement, "The ruling coalition of SDSM and DUI defeated, the citizens said NO to the crime, corruption, and nepotism" VMRO-DPMNE, 23.04.2019. Available at: <https://www.vmro-dpmne.org.mk/2019/04/23/porazena-e-koalitsijata-na-vlast-predvodena-od-sdsm-i-dui-graganite-im-kazhaa-ne-na-kriminalot-koruptsijata-i-nepotizmot/> (last visited: 30.05.2019)

¹⁰⁸ "Pendarovski and Siljanovska both expect victory in the second round", Sloboden Pecat, 23.04.2019. Available at: <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/pendarovski-i-siljanovska-ochekuvaat-pobeda-vo-vtoriot-krug/> (last visited: 30.05.2019)

¹⁰⁹ "Pendarovski and Siljanovska run for the second round of the presidential elections with narrow difference". Available at: <https://prizma.mk/pendarovski-i-siljanovska-so-tesna-razlika-odat-vo-vtor-krug-na-pretsedatelski-izbori/> (last visited: 30.05.2019)

¹¹⁰ "Reka: The election result surpassed our expectations.". Available at: <https://meta.mk/reka-rezultatot-na-izborite-gi-nadmina-nashite-ochekuva-a/> (last visited: 30.05.2019)

¹¹¹ "Sela: These days we witnessed blackmail and intimidation", Politics 24, 21.04.2019. Available at: <https://www.politika24.mk/sela-denovive-bevme-svedotsi-na-utseni-i-pritisotsi/> (last visited: 30.05.2019)

¹¹² "Sela and Kasami satisfied with Reka's votes: The Albanians also want changes just like the Maceonians", Liberatas, 22.04.2019. Available at: <https://www.libertas.mk/sela-i-kasami-zadovolni-od-glasovite-na-reka-i-albantsite-sakaat-promeni-kako-vo-makedonskiot-kampus/> (last visited: 30.05.2019)

government”, such as organised voting, family voting, pressure, intimidation and blackmail, but also indications for bribing voters.¹¹³ For SDSM, the elections were successful, fair and democratic, the necessary turnout was achieved, and the citizens exercised their right to vote en masse, in a peaceful and dignified manner. The Republic of North Macedonia conducted crystal clear democratic elections on a peaceful and democratic Election Day.¹¹⁴

After the second round of the elections, SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE gave press conference together with the candidates they had supported. At SDSM's press conference, Prime Minister and President of SDSM, Zoran Zaev, pointed out that the elections had been successful and democratic, and that the two electoral rounds were crystal clear, which demonstrated the democratic capacity of North Macedonia. He congratulated Stevo Pendarovski on his victory and expressed his gratitude to all ethnic communities, political parties and entities that had participated in the elections.¹¹⁵ Stevo Pendarovski expressed his gratitude to all citizens, who, at crystal clear, fair and democratic elections, had decided to give him their support, and thus confirmed the country's future. He pointed out that the outcome implied a guaranteed access to EU and NATO, which is where the country belongs, adding that, as a President, he would serve all the citizens.¹¹⁶

At the press conference of VMRO-DPMNE, the party president, Hristijan Mickoski, stated that VMRO-DPMNE had achieved excellent results, and that the victory in the majority of municipalities, in case of parliamentary elections, would have meant winning many more seats in the Assembly. He pointed out that, besides the fact that the party was operating in conditions of insults, pressure, frozen property, reduced finances and threats, it had managed to win almost 380,000 votes with Professor Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova. He also raised accusation concerning a series of irregularities, threats, blackmail, pressure and indications for bribing voters on Election Day. Mickoski expressed his gratitude to Siljanovska-Davkova and

¹¹³ “Janusev: The government is dethroned – the people demand justice, freedom, standards, principles and values”, VMRO-DPMNE, 05.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.vmro-dpmne.org.mk/2019/05/05/janushev-vlasta-e-detronizirana-narodot-bara-pravda-sloboda-standard-printsi-i-vrednosti/> (last visited: 30.05.2019)

¹¹⁴ “We had fair elections, the initial tendencies show the advantage of Pendarovski, SDSM expects victory”, media statement, SDSM, 05.05.2019. Available at: <http://sds.org.mk/News.aspx?idNews=17367&lng=1&cat=0> (last visited: 30.05.2019)

¹¹⁵ “Zaev: The majority of the citizens expressed their determination at fair and democratic elections, we elected a European president, and we move forward responsibly!”, media statement, SDSM, 05.05.2019. Available at: <http://sds.org.mk/News.aspx?idNews=17372&lng=1&cat=0> (last visited: 30.05.2019)

¹¹⁶ “Thank you citizens, I join the leadership of Forward Together, I will be an honorable president of all of you, and make you proud”, media statement, SDSM, 05.05.2019. Available at: <http://sds.org.mk/News.aspx?idNews=17371&lng=1&cat=0> (last visited: 30.05.2019)

said that the party was counting on her expertise and credibility.¹¹⁷ The candidate supported by VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition, Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, accepted her defeat at the elections, but did not congratulate her opponent on his victory. She said that she did not feel defeated and that, at these elections, it was party rule that won instead of democracy.¹¹⁸

Representatives from DUI, which had supported Stevo Pendarovski, embraced the development of the election process, and assessed that “North Macedonia showed democratic maturity to organise and carry out European elections, and the biggest winners are the citizens and the state”. DUI representatives stated that as a party they are extremely satisfied with DUI’s decisive contribution in both rounds of the elections, which enabled the necessary turnout. They made some accusations against the Albanian parties in opposition for conducting activities of silent, yet active boycott.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ “Mickoski: The map is red, this is the colour of victory, of the people, of VMRO, of Macedonia!”, VMRO-DPMNE, 06.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.vmro-dpmne.org.mk/2019/05/06/mitskoski-kartata-e-tsrvna-toa-se-boite-na-pobedata-na-narodot-na-vmro-na-makedonija/> (last visited: 30.05.2019)

¹¹⁸ “Siljanovska-Davkova: The figures show defeat, but I do not feel defeated”, 1 TV, 30.05.2019. Available at: <https://1tv.mk/makedonija/siljanovska-davkova-brojките-говора/> (last visited: 30.05.2019)

¹¹⁹ “DUI: We conducted European elections, the biggest winners are the citizens and the state”, Makfaks, 05.05.2019. Available at: <https://makfax.com.mk/izbori-2019/дуи-спроведовме-европски-избори-најр/> (last visited: 30.05.2019)

CONCLUSIONS

The 2019 presidential elections in the Republic of North Macedonia were generally carried out in a fair and democratic atmosphere, enabling citizens to exercise their right to vote. The campaign was assessed as peaceful and respecting the fundamental right to expression. The campaign mainly demonstrated a positive promotion of the candidates, with occasional antagonism in the statements of the candidates from SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE, particularly towards the end of the campaign for the second round of voting.

The issue related to the Prespa Agreement and the recent change of the country's name was the main topic during the campaign. The winner of the elections, Stevo Pendarovski, who was supported by SDSM, DUI and 30 smaller political parties, focused his campaign on the Euro-Atlantic future of the country and the need for a president who unites. Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, who was supported by VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition, concentrated on the rule of law and the negative effects of the Prespa Agreement as central topics, pointing at a series of problems that the country has been facing since SDSM is in power. Blerim Reka, on the other hand, ran his campaign mostly in the areas with a predominantly Albanian population, although he addressed all the citizens of the country during his TV presentations, promoting the concept of a Euro-Atlantic and multiethnic republic.

Stevo Pendarovski's campaign was the most expensive: he had spent 47,890,399 MKD (778,704 EUR) by the end of the second round. According to the reports, Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova spent 21,671,920 MKD (352,389 EUR) during her campaign. Blerim Reka, who did not enter the second round, spent 19,466,622 MKD (316,205 EUR).

The turnout in the first round of these elections was rather low. The low turnout is considered to be due to several factors, such as the lack of motivation for voting among the citizens, particularly in the areas with an Albanian majority, as well as the fact that the voters' list had not been updated. The turnout in the first round was 41.68% of the registered voters. In the second round of voting the turnout increased to 46.65% which is less than the turnout in the second round of the 2014 presidential elections, which took place at the same time as the parliamentary elections.

In the first round, the candidate Stevo Pendarovski won the majority of votes, i.e. 42.52% of the ballot papers, followed by Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, with 42.25%. Blerim Reka won 10.6% of the votes, while 4.24% of the ballot papers were invalid. In the second round, the difference between the candidates was

significantly larger. Stevo Pendarovski gained the majority of votes, or 51.65% in total, while Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova received 44.75% of the votes. Only 3.6% of the ballot papers were invalid.

Stevo Pendarovski was elected in the second round after winning 51.65% of the votes, which amounts to 24.09% of the overall number of voters registered in the voters' list.

In the first round, 14 objections were filed to the State Election Commission (SEC), five of which were sustained. In the second round, 12 objections were filed, four of which were sustained. All objections were filed by VMRO-DPMNE and Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova. In all the cases, the voting was annulled, however, there was no rerun due to the fact that the overall number of registered voters at these polling stations would not affect the final result.

During the first round, 3,156 national and 463 international observers monitored the presidential elections, while during the second round the number of the national observers increased to 3,321, and the number of international observers to 809.

According to the general assessment of the monitoring missions, particularly by OSCE/ODIHR and MOST, the elections were carried out in a fair and democratic atmosphere and were efficiently implemented, with respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of the voters to get informed about the candidates prior to making their choice. Election Day was assessed as having been carried out without any obstacles, transparently and taking into account the key procedures. Some isolated cases of irregularities were registered, while the commentaries mainly addressed the Electoral Code with respect to the financing of the campaign in the second round of the elections.

The SEC's work was assessed as unbiased and frank, gaining the trust of most of the stakeholders. There were certain remarks addressed to the SEC regarding its delay in concluding certain technical preparations, but also regarding the fact that some of the sessions were closed. In MOST's report it is highlighted that the SEC had annulled the voting in four cases without examining the entire material.

The European Union evaluated the elections as peaceful and transparent with remarks regarding the need for additional reforms in the electoral legislation, while the US Embassy supported the preliminary findings of the OSCE/ODIHR and assessed the elections as competitive, stating that the respect of the fundamental rights had led to a democratic process.

The party in power, SDSM, assessed the elections as extraordinarily peaceful, fair and democratic. The party in opposition, VMRO-DPMNE, accused the government with respect to a series of irregularities and pressure on the citizens. The candidate Blerim Reka, supported by BESA and the Alliance for Albanians, stated that the elections had been fair, free and democratic. DUI embraced the election process with the assessment that the country had demonstrated its capacity of conducting European elections.

The international monitoring mission of OSCE/ODIHR evaluated the media reporting as professional and unbiased, and emphasised the notable tendency of the media to pertain to the principles of just, equitable and correct informing. The campaign was generally assessed as not too intense, and run in a fair and democratic atmosphere, except for one isolated incident. During the election campaign, most media respected not only the Electoral Code and the Law on Audio and Audio-visual Media Services, but also the journalistic standards and the principles of fair and unbiased reporting, providing the citizens with suitable information prior to the voting.

The fifth President, Stevo Pendarovski, was inaugurated on 12th May 2019. Unlike the inauguration of President Ivanov in 2014, which was not attended by the then party in opposition, SDSM, it was attended by representatives from the opposition. Besides MPs, high state officials, and the diplomatic corps, the inauguration was attended by the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, the President of Albania, Ilir Meta, Bulgaria's President Rumen Radev, and Kosovo's President Hashim Taci. In addition, the minister of foreign affairs of Greece, Georgios Katrougalos, and Montenegro, Srdjan Darmanović also attended the inauguration.

During the days that followed the elections, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, the EU Enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn, Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, British Prime Minister Theresa May, as well as British Secretary of State Jeremy Hunt, congratulated the new President on his election. Greetings also came from the USA, as well as from the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker.

At the same time as the presidential elections, on 21st April 2019, snap elections for mayors of the municipalities of Ohrid, Debar and Novo Selo took place. In the municipality of Debar, the mayor was elected in the first round, where DUI's candidate Hekuran Duka, gained 50.09% of the votes. In the municipalities of Ohrid and Novo Selo, the mayors were elected in the second voting round. In both municipalities, the candidates supported by SDSM won: Konstantin Georgievski with

54.35% of the votes in Ohrid, and Nikola Andonov with 49.27% of the votes in Novo Selo.

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

**PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTIONS**



2019

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, five manuals have been compiled: for the local elections in 2013, the presidential elections in 2014, and the parliamentary elections in 2014 and in 2016, as well as for the local elections in 2017. 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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The cover photo is taken from <http://pretsedatel.mk/>

The candidate photos are taken from their respective campaign pages.

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