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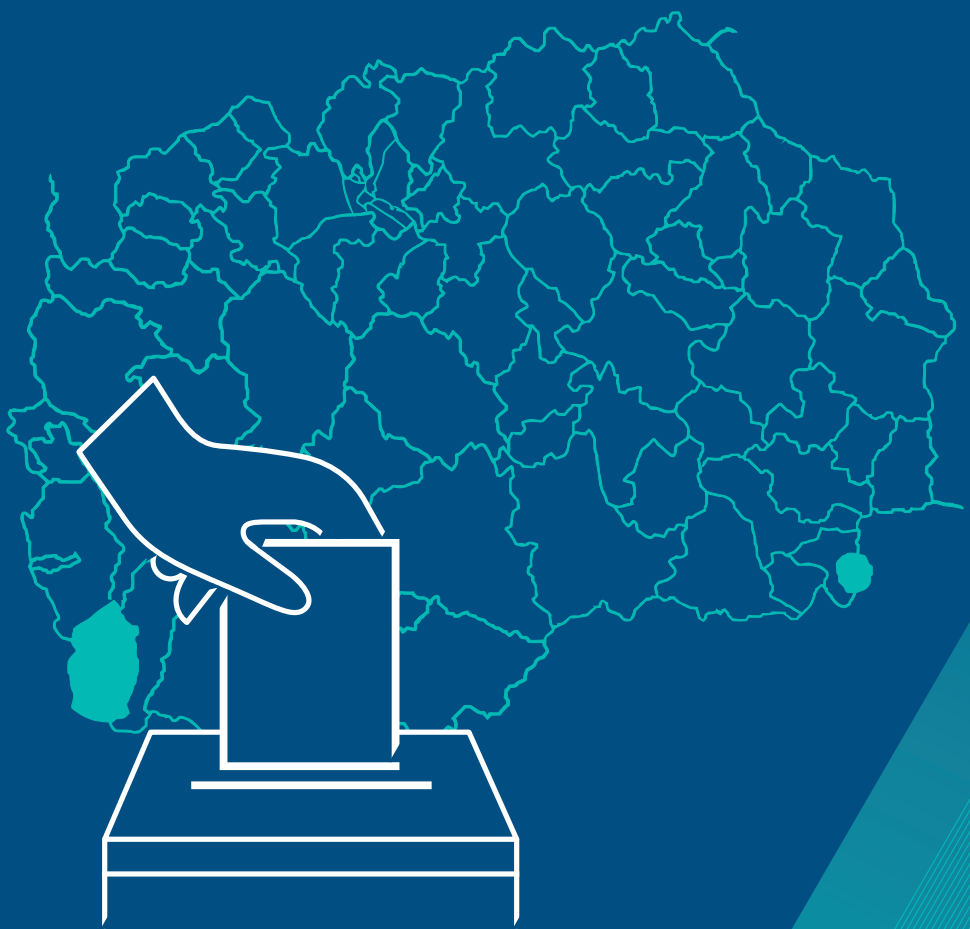
The Republic of North Macedonia's 2021 Local Elections Handbook



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Introduction

Introduction to the 2021 local elections

The seventh consecutive local elections since the independence of the Republic of North Macedonia will be held on 17 October, 2021. The President of the Assembly, within his legal competencies, announced the local elections on 6 August, 2021.[1] Mayors and councilors of 80 municipalities and the City of Skopje will be elected at the elections.

During the last term of the local self-government, from October 2017 to October 2021, most of the mayoral seats, 57, belonged to the coalition led by the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM). The Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) won 10, and the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE won 5 mayoral seats. The Alliance for Albanians (A/A) won three mayoral seats, one mayor was elected from the Democratic Party of Turks in Macedonia (DPPT), the Democratic Party of Albanians and the BESA party each. Three mayoral seats went to independent candidates.

The coalition led by SDSM won the largest number of council seats, i.e., 552. VMRO-DPMNE won 430 council seats, DUI – 127, while BESA and the political party Alliance for Albanians won 63 councilor seats each. The Democratic Party of Albanians won 23 council seats, the Democratic Party of Turks – 17, the Union of Roma from Macedonia and the People's Movement of Macedonia – 7 seats each, the coalition DUI, A/A, and BESA won 4[2] seats, while GROM, the Movement for National Unity of Turks and the Left party won 3 council seats each. The coalition Alliance for Albanians (led by Uniteti), the coalition Better Future and the PDP won one seat each. The independent councillor lists won a total of 37 council seats.[3]

The process of conducting the local elections in 2021 began with determining the date for the elections, which according to the Electoral Code is scheduled to take place in the second week of October, given that the election campaign would partially coincide with the census in September 2021. The dilemma was whether the

1 Decision on announcing the elections for members of the municipal councils and the council of the City of Skopje, and for mayors of the municipalities, as well as for mayor of the City of Skopje. Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1liaM6X9rCYPlQiL94DL8ylhWEF4yUT1w/view (Accessed: 12 September 2021)

2 The coalition DUI, A/A, and BESA had a joint performance in the municipalities of Bitola, Ohrid, and Gazi Baba.

3 Report on the conducted elections for members of the municipal councils and the council of the City of Skopje, as well as for mayors of the municipalities and for mayor of the City of Skopje, 15 October 2017. Available at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/Local%20elections%202017/5_Report%20of%20elections/Report%20election20120Local%20elections%202017.pdf (accessed: 12 September 2021)

partial overlap of the election campaign and the census may disrupt the conduct of the census. However, the political parties decided to hold the elections in accordance with the legally prescribed deadline, i.e., in the second half of October. In parallel, negotiations were initiated to change the Electoral Code in March 2021. The negotiations took place between representatives of the Ministry of Justice and representatives of SDSM, VMRO-DPMNE, DUI and the Alliance for Albanians. After several months of negotiations, several novelties in the Electoral Code were agreed. One of the key changes is voting using special voter fingerprint verification devices (fingerprint terminals). This device will determine whether the voter has previously voted or has mistaken the polling station. The initiative for this solution originally came from VMRO-DPMNE in order to increase confidence in the election process and reduce the possibility of abuse.

Later in the run-up to the elections, there was considerable discussion about the proposal of the parliamentary parties SDSM, VMRO-DPMNE, DUI and the Alliance for Albanians / Alternative to increase the threshold for submitting a candidacy for mayor or councillor list, i.e., to increase the threshold of 2% of the total number of voters in the municipality. In some areas, this would mean a significant increase in the number of signatures to be collected, for example if submitting a list for the City of Skopje so far required 1000 signatures, with the new agreed changes, the submitters would need to collect 9000 signatures. The proponents justified the proposal as an obligation related to the OSCE / ODIHR recommendations. The proposed changes initiated a great debate in the public with reactions from smaller political parties, contenders for independent candidates and the civic sector. The reactions were that such a solution is exclusively in the interest of the larger parties and they could significantly complicate the initiatives of several associations and individuals for independent lists. President Stevo Pendarovski backed the initiatives of independent councillor lists, and said he would veto changes to the Electoral Code if they are passed in the Assembly.[4] According to President Pendarovski, it is illogical 10,000 signatures to be needed for candidacy for President of the country, and a similar number to be needed for councillors in the City of Skopje. Additionally, Pendarovski pointed out that the changes should not be made immediately before the elections. After a series of criticisms, the Prime Minister and President of SDSM, Zoran Zaev, announced that the agreed proposal would be withdrawn.[5]

4 "President Pendarovski will not sign the amendments to the Electoral Code", Voice of America, 30 July, 2021. Available at: https://mk.voanews.com/a/5984959.html (accessed: 12 September, 2021)

5 "MPs on vacation, local elections announced, electoral code on a break", Radio Free Europe, 6 August 2021. Available at: https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/monitors-local-elections-election-law/31396793.html (accessed: 12 September 2021)

A typical feature of these elections is the number of independent candidacies for mayors and municipal councillors. At the initiative of a group of citizens, 27 candidacies for mayors and 65 lists for councillors were submitted. In as many as 18 municipalities there will be at least one independent candidate for mayor. There are three independent candidates for mayors in the municipalities of Makedonska Kamenica and Chucher Sandevo, and two independent candidates in the municipality of Ilinden.

Preparations for the 2021 local elections

Following the decision for announcing the 2021 local elections signed by the President of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, Talat Xhaferi, the State Election Commission (SEC) adopted the Schedule for conducting the election activities for the implementation of the local elections.

In accordance with the Schedule,[6] the SEC is obliged to establish the Municipal Election Commissions (MECs) after the mandate of the previous commission expires. After being established, the MEC forms the Election Boards (EBs) and complements the members and deputy members whose mandate has been terminated on various grounds. MECs file a request to the political parties in opposition that won the most votes in the last elections, and the ruling political parties that won the most votes in the last elections, to submit proposals for EB members and their deputies in order to form the EB, which should be submitted by 1 September at the latest.

According to the Electoral Code, immediately after the announcement of the elections, the SEC files a request to the Ministry of Interior (MOI) to submit data on the citizens. The Ministry of Interior should submit the data that must contain the Unique Identification Number of the Citizen (EMBG) to the SEC within 48 hours at the latest. Then, the State Election Commission, no later than 15 days from the day of announcing the elections, puts the Voters List on public display in its regional departments and offices, as well as on the website izbirackispisok.gov.mk where the voter can enter his/her personal data to check if he/she is on the Voters List, and if so, at which polling station he/she votes and where it is located. In these elections, the inspection of the voter list started on 21 August and ended on 9 September at

6 Schedule for conducting the election activities for the implementation of elections for members of the municipal councils and the council of the City of Skopje, as well as mayors of the municipalities and mayor of the City of Skopje, 2021.
Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/17yILq1t-2jvAkZ-Rz4bvVM9UezgKM09P/view (accessed: 13 September 2021)

midnight. All requests for registration, addition or deletion of data in the Voters List, were to be submitted in the period from 21 August to 9 September. The State Election Commission then submits it to the political parties within five days (i.e., no later than 14 September) after the completion of the public inspection of the Voters List[7]. After this, the parties, within five days from the submission, i.e., until 19 September, file requests to the SEC for registration, addition or deletion of data.

The Ministry of Interior is obliged, within one day from the end of the public inspection of the Voters List, i.e., on 10 September, to submit a list of citizens who have filed a request for issuance of a new ID card or passport on any grounds, and had them collected in the period between the day of announcing the elections until the day of completion of the public inspection, as well as the list of persons who have turned 18 by the day of the elections. The SEC enters the data on these persons in the Voters List ex officio.

The body responsible for the execution of sanctions, no later than 30 days before the day set for the elections, submits data on the persons who are in custody or are serving a prison sentence on the basis of the records kept by this body to the SEC. The data contain a magnetic medium and must contain the unique personal identification number of the citizen. These data are submitted no later than 16 September.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) shall submit data on the persons who have registered to vote in out-of-home care facilities to the State Election Commission no later than 30 days before the day set for the elections, on the basis of their own records and on the basis of the data submitted by the persons in charge in the out-of-home care institutions. no later than 16 September.

The SEC concludes the Voters List in which all changes made from the public inspection have been registered, printed in the form of excerpts, no later than 15 days after the completed public inspection, i.e., no later than 24 September. Then, the SEC signs the concluded Voters List, i.e., the excerpts from the Voters List, which are voted on no later than 15 days before the day of the elections, i.e., no later than 1 October.

The political parties submitted their candidate lists for the local elections by midnight on 11 September, when the deadline for submitting candidacies for mayors and councillor lists to the SEC expired, i.e., 35 days before the elections. By the deadline, 297 candidacies for mayors were submitted, including the candidacies

7 State Election Commission – public inspection of the Voters List. Available at: https://izbirackispisok.gov.mk/ (accessed: 13 September 2021)

of independent candidates. The deadline for collecting signatures for independent candidates was 30 August.

According to the Schedule, the financial reports of the election campaign organizers are submitted to the SEC, the State Audit Office (SAO) and the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) within the following deadlines:

- The participant in the election campaign is obliged to submit a report on the specification of the revenue expenditures, including the expenses of the transaction account for the election campaign from the day of its opening until the end of the first election round, within 20 days from the day of the election silence for the first round, i.e., 4 November until midnight, and the second round of voting on 18 November until midnight, if it is held.
- The participant in the election campaign is obliged to submit a report on the 11th day of the day of the election campaign, i.e., 7 October, by midnight, by filling in a form for the received donations on the transaction account as specified in the Electoral Code for financing the election campaign.
- The participant is obliged to submit a report by filling in a form for the received donations on the transaction account, one day after the end of the election campaign, i.e., on 16 October for the first round, and on 30 October for the second round, as stipulated in the Electoral Code for financing the election campaign.
- One day before the second round of voting, the participant is obliged to submit a Report by filling in a form for the received donations on the transaction account for financing the election campaign.
- The participant in the election campaign is obliged, immediately, and no later than 30 days from the day of the announcement of the final results, to submit a total financial report for the specification of the expenses for the incomes and the expenses during the election campaign.
- The State Audit Office is obliged to conduct an audit within 60 days from the submission of the report.
- Radio broadcasters, print media and electronic media (internet portals) in the Republic of North Macedonia are obliged to submit a report on the advertising space used by each of the participants in the election campaign, as well as the funds that are paid and demanded on that basis. The report is submitted no later than 15 days after the end of the election campaign, i.e., on 30 October at midnight for the first round, and on 13 November at midnight for the second round.

Participants in the elections

In the local elections, 24 political entities appear individually or in a coalition as submitters of candidate lists for mayors. A typical feature of these elections is the large discrepancy between male and female candidates. The most candidacies were submitted by the coalition led by SDSM - 69 of which 5 women. From the larger parties, VMRO - DPMNE with its coalition nominated 63 candidates, of which 3 women. DUI nominated 19 candidates for mayors, of which only one is a woman. The Besa movement nominated 11 candidates, none of whom are women, while the DPA nominated 14 candidates, one of whom is a woman. The Coalition Alliance for Albanians and Alternative is running with 15 candidates, without any female candidates, while the Coalition "Movement determined for change" with 18 candidates, of which 5 are women. The Left party is running with eight candidates, two of whom are women, Integra - Macedonian Conservative Party with 10 candidates one of whom is a woman, Permanent Macedonian Radical Unification (TMRO) with nine candidates, two of whom are women candidates, the political party Democrats, Workers and Independents, with six candidates without any female candidate, and the party Macedonian Third Era / Macedonian Independent Lists is running with seven candidates, one of whom is a woman. The Democratic Party of the Turks of Macedonia is running with 5 male candidates, and the Bosniak Democratic Union with four male candidates. The Party of United Democrats of Macedonia - PODEM has three male candidates, while the Rodina Makedonija (Homeland Macedonia) party has two male and one female candidates. "Your Party" is running with two candidates, and the parties Alternative, ROM - Romeske, the Communist Party of Macedonia - Tito's forces, the Movement for National Unity of the Turks - DNET, the Movement for Democracy, Rights and Freedom and the Civic Option for Macedonia - GROM, are running with one candidate each, all of whom are men. A total of 25 candidacies for mayors were submitted by a group of voters, two of whom are women. Out of a total of 299 candidates for mayors, only 25 are women (i.e., 8.41% of the total number of participants). The situation is different with the candidates for councillors, where out of a total of 10,635 candidates for councillors, 45% are women, largely as a result of the condition that every third candidate on the proposed lists should be of the underrepresented gender.

Recent changes in the election legislation

In the period from the last local elections in 2017 to the elections scheduled for 17 October, 2021, several new laws and amendments to the existing legislation were

adopted. In the past period, several changes were made regarding the provisions of the Electoral Code. The changes are related to the state election bodies, the financing of the political campaign, the participants in the campaign, as well as the legal provisions of the Law on Audio-visual Media Services and the adoption of the Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest.

The Electoral Code in 2021 was amended twice in April and September 2021. The amendments regulated the manner of voting with and without the use of technical equipment and regulated the manner of determining the identity of the voter in the voting procedure with fingerprints.[8] Additionally, the deadlines related to the procedure for protection of the right to vote were changed and the manner of voting in a pandemic was determined. Starting with these elections, the submitters of a list or candidacy can withdraw it within 48 hours from the adopted decision for final lists (Article 67 paragraph 12 of the Electoral Code), which is adopted no later than September 18. When it comes to withdrawing the candidate list, it can only be withdrawn in its entirety.[9]

Voting using technical equipment and the election process during a pandemic

The amendments to the Electoral Code of 2021 supplemented the content of the voter list with fingerprints and a special bar code for identification with fingerprints. Citizens who have been completely deprived of their work capacity by a final court decision or partially deprived of their work capacity by a final court decision, and the court has determined that the person does not have the ability to express legally relevant will in elections, will not be registered in the Voters List. With the latest amendments to the Electoral Code, persons who are in custody or serving a prison sentence have the opportunity to check their data during the public inspection of the Voters List. The SEC, within 3 days after the completion of the public inspection, is obliged to submit the voters list to the political parties that have previously filed an electronic request.

Additionally, the Ministry of Interior, besides the previously determined data in Article 43, should submit a photo and fingerprints of all adult citizens to the SEC. The Ministry of Interior submits the data after announcing elections or a referendum.

8 "Official Gazette": Law on Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code, 74/2021
9 "Official Gazette": Law on Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code, 215/2021

The amendments regulated the manner of determining the identity of the voter. Article 108-a explains the procedure for establishing identity in detail. The Electoral Board verifies the identity of the voters through a valid ID card or a valid passport, i.e., an ID card or passport which has expired in the period from the announcement of the elections to the day of their holding, as well as with a fingerprint.[10] A voter may not vote if he / she does not have an identification document and if the fingerprint does not match the fingerprint in the electronic voters list. If the voter has already voted, the technical equipment informs about it, and that person will not be allowed to vote. If the biometric identification device does not match the fingerprint with the fingerprint available in the electronic voters list, and the electoral board established the voter's personal identity through a valid identification document, and if it is confirmed that no previous vote has been done, the voter is registered in the device by entering the unique identification number (EMBG).[11]

The verification of the voter's identity is performed without technical equipment in cases when the voter is a sick or infirm person, is in a family care facility, or is serving a prison sentence.

A new Article 111-b was added to the Electoral Code, which deals with the electoral process in a time of pandemic. Persons who are in home quarantine or self-isolation can exercise their right to vote one day before the first round, i.e., 16 October, and 30 October if there is a second round. They are expected to inform the Municipal Election Commission, i.e., the Election Commission of the City of Skopje five days before the day set for voting.[12]

The Municipal Election Commissions collect the data from the State Sanitary and Health Inspectorate, which is obliged to submit the data 24 hours after the submitted request.

The SEC sets up special election boards composed of three health professionals who conduct the voting, with political parties being able to appoint a member to the special election board.

The Ministry of Health provides the necessary protective equipment for the members of the election bodies, and if the space provided for voting does not meet the requirements, the SEC may designate another suitable space that meets the conditions for voting in a pandemic.

10 "Official Gazette": Law on Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code, 215/2021
11 State Election Commission, Instructions on how to determine the identity of the voter, 2021. Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1r0vTFrS3lk0BNk9oj-ZVvkkA3CaVBow4/view (accessed: 10 September 2021)
12 "Official Gazette": Law on Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code, 215/2021

Changes in the deadlines for protection of the right to vote

In September 2021, the deadlines regarding the procedure for protection of the right to vote were changed (Articles 149 and 149-a). The deadline for submitting a complaint to the Municipal Election Commission for violation of the personal right to vote in the voting procedure is 12 hours, and for violation of the right to vote in each phase of the election process is 48 hours. Complaints are submitted to the SEC by e-mail, in person or through an authorized representative.

The first instance body has two hours to make a decision after receiving the objection. The amendments change the deadline after which the SEC can file a lawsuit to the Administrative Court, which is 12 hours after receiving the decision. The Administrative Court is obliged to act upon the lawsuit within 2 hours after its receipt. Additionally, the Electoral Code provides for the possibility of a lawsuit against the decision of the SEC. In that case, the lawsuit is submitted to the Administrative Court within 48 hours after receiving the decision.

State Election Commission

With the amendments to the Electoral Code in 2018, changes were made in the article that regulates the work of the State Election Commission, additional changes in this article were made in February 2020, and in April and September 2021.

With the latest amendments to the Electoral Code, the State Election Commission is obliged to adopt detailed instructions on the manner and procedure of verifying the identity of voters and checking whether the voter has previously voted by reading the fingerprint with the technical equipment, as well as instructions on the manner of storage, processing and data deletion. Fingerprint data from the Voters' List should be deleted within 10 days after the announcement of the final election results. In cases when the technical equipment is unusable and cannot be replaced, the SEC, in accordance with Article 108-b of the Electoral Code, may decide that the identification be performed without the use of a biometric identification device.[13]

At the request of a member of the commission, the SEC is obliged to inspect the entire election material at the polling station where the voting has taken place by entering the unique identification number in the biometric identification device, and not by matching between the fingerprint, only if in that way voted:

13 "Official Gazette": Law on Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code, 74/2021

- 5% of the registered voters in the Voters List in Polling Stations with up to 200 voters,
- 3% of the registered voters in the Voters List in Polling Stations from 201 to 500 voters and
- 2% of the registered voters in the Voters List in Polling Stations with over 500 voters.

If the number of voters is higher, the SEC is obliged to compare their fingerprints with the fingerprints of all other voters who voted like them, and with the fingerprints of other voters in the electronic Voters List at the state level.

With the additions to Article 26, the SEC now has a total of seven members in a certain composition: President, Vice President and five members of the Commission. The mandate of the members of the Commission starts from the day of election, and lasts five years until the election of the next composition of the State Election Commission. The conditions to be met by the members of the SEC are prescribed by the amendments to Article 27 of the Electoral Code.

With the changes from 2018 and 2021, any citizen of the Republic of North Macedonia with permanent residence in the country can be elected for these positions, with completed higher education, and at least eight years of work experience, provided they are not members of a political party. The Macedonian Parliament, 30 days before the expiration of the mandate, publishes the Announcement for election of the President, the Vice President and the members of the SEC in the "Official Gazette", as well as in the daily press. The announcement lasts for eight days from the day of its publication in the "Official Gazette". The procedure for election of members is prepared and implemented by the Committee on Elections and Appointments within the Assembly. This Commission prepares a draft list of the registered candidates and submits it to the Assembly. Of the candidates on the draft list, the opposition is proposing a president and two members, while the ruling parties are proposing a vice president and three members. In case of change of the political parties in opposition or the political parties in power, the Assembly harmonizes the composition of the SEC so that the political parties that have passed from power to opposition are obliged to submit to the Assembly a proposal for a SEC chairman from among the current members, and a proposal for termination of office before the expiration of the term of one of the members proposed by them. The parties that have passed from the opposition to the government submit to the Assembly a proposal for a vice-president of the SEC from among the members in the current composition and one member, for which the Assembly announces the election of one member of the SEC. All members are elected by a two-thirds

majority of the total number of Members of Parliament. Amendments have been made in Article 28 of the Electoral Code, in the part of the conditions for termination of the function of members of the SEC. With the changes, termination may occur:

- By force of law;
- After harmonization of the composition of the SEC by the Assembly, in case of change of the political parties in opposition or in power.
- At their personal request;
- Due to unprofessional and negligent performance in the position;
- Due to fulfilling the conditions for full retirement determined by law;
- Due to death; and
- If he / she has been sentenced to imprisonment of more than six months.

With a two-thirds majority vote of the total number of members, the SEC may submit a proposal to the Committee on Elections and Appointments of the Assembly, for dismissal of its member due to unprofessional and negligent performance in the position. Regarding the SEC, there are changes in Article 29, which refers to the deadline for nominating members of this body. In accordance with this article, the President of the Assembly informs the political parties to submit their proposals for president and two members (for the opposition), i.e., vice-president and three members of the SEC (for the ruling parties) within three days. If the opposition and the ruling parties do not exercise the right to nominate candidates, then the candidates will be nominated by the Committee on Elections and Appointments of the Assembly.[14]

The same deadline of 3 days for reporting to political parties remains in case of change of political parties in opposition or in power, where the parties, in accordance with the law, nominate a president, vice president from among the existing members, and one member of the SEC. Consequently, 30 days after the harmonization of the composition of the SEC, a new Secretary General is elected for the remaining period of the five-year term.[15]

The amendments made to the Electoral Code in February 2020 add an additional paragraph 34-i, which emphasizes that the opinion of the member of the SEC who voted against a decision or who believes that it should be based on other legal and factual grounds can be excepted. The excepted opinion should be explained in writing and be attached to the decision of the State Election Commission.

14 "Official Gazette": Law on Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code, 99/2018
15 "Official Gazette": Law on Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code, 215/2021

With the latest amendments, it has been decided to cancel and repeat the voting if the electoral board does not conduct the voting in accordance with the Electoral Code, and the irregularities affect the voting procedure, as well as in cases where there is a discrepancy between the number of fingerprints of the voters with the number of the ballots in the box.

Financing of political parties

In July 2018, the Parliament adopted the amendments regarding the financing of political parties. The Law on Financing of Political Parties has been amended in several provisions regarding the specification of property and the financing of political parties (movable and immovable property). These changes determine the amount of total funds for annual funding of political parties which is 0.15% of the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia, then determine the private sources of funding, the amount of individual donations that must not exceed the amount of 60 average salaries, as a donation from legal entities, and 30 net average salaries, if it is a donation from individuals. 30% of the funds for financing political parties provided from the Budget are distributed equally to all political parties that won at least 1% of the total number of votes in the last parliamentary or local elections. While 70% of the funds are distributed to political parties according to the number of elected members of Parliament in the last parliamentary elections and the number of elected councillors in the last local elections. Regarding the control over the financing of political parties, Article 26 of the Law has also been supplemented with several paragraphs, which emphasize the possibility for political parties to have only one bank account, and in case of financing by providing funds through loans from commercial banks, in addition to the basic bank account of the party, it may have another separate bank account for the party funds provided through loans. Moreover, the political party has the right to transfer funds between its accounts, while the party research-analytical centres (PIAC) have a separate account. Funds from the state budget in the amount of 280,000 euros in denar counter-value are provided for annual funding of PIAC, which are established in accordance with the law as part of the internal organization of the party.[16]

16 The party research-analytical centres were established by the Law on Party Research-Political Centres from 2013. They can employ at least two people. This Law stipulates that funds allocated for these centres can be given to the four political parties with the largest number of MPs in the Assembly, which have established such a centre ("Official Gazette", Law on Party-Research Centres, 23/2013 with amendments, 15/2015)

Furthermore, the amendments to the Law have created an obligation to submit a financial report for material-financial operations of the party, which contains the financial operations of the account, i.e., the accounts of the political party. The amendments, as an additional part of the financial report, recognize the items "sponsorship" and "loan". The amendments envisage the funds intended for financing the political parties to be paid in accordance with the budget possibilities, but not later than 1 March of each current year.[17]

Together with the Law on Financing of Political Parties, the Electoral Code has been amended in the part of raising funds for financing the political campaign, where a new paragraph (paragraph 7) has been added in Article 71. In addition to this paragraph, political parties may transfer funds from the basic account into the transaction account opened for the purposes of campaign financing. With the last amendments from September 2021, paragraph 8 of the same article was changed, which refers to non-submission or non-confirmation of the list of candidates. In such a case, the political entities that have secured a taxpayer identification number – TIN (EDB) and opened a transaction account have the responsibility to return the unspent donations to the donors in proportion to the donated amount within 15 days, and are obliged to close the transaction account intended for election campaign within 45 days from the announcement of election results. Additionally, the political party is authorized to transfer funds from the transaction account for financing the campaign to the basic bank account of the party.[18]

Public media

With the amendments to the Electoral Code of 2020 and 2021, the media covering the election process are obliged to do so in an impartial, balanced and fair manner in their programme, and the public and national broadcasters are obliged to do so in an approachable and accessible format and language (voice messages for the blind), as well as in sign language. Furthermore, from the day of announcing the elections until the day of the end of the voting, the broadcasters, print media and electronic media (internet portals) that broadcast paid political advertising with funds from the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia, are obliged to broadcast or publish informational and educational campaigns of the SEC too, intended for the citizens in relation to the election process, every three hours for thirty seconds.

17 "Official Gazette", Law on Amending the Law on Financing of Political Parties, 140/2018
18 "Official Gazette": Law on Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code, 215/2021

The SEC's campaigns will be published free of charge, they are intended to educate voters about exercising their right to vote and for fair and democratic elections, and they are not considered paid political advertising.

The Electoral Code stipulates that from the day of announcing the elections until the beginning of the election campaign, broadcasters, print media and electronic media (portals) may not broadcast paid political advertising, except for announcements for collecting signatures for support for the candidacy of a group of voters. In the case of broadcasting, i.e., publishing announcements for collecting signatures in support of candidacies, this is done in assigned advertising slots of the allowed advertising time of one real hour. Other significant changes in the Electoral Code, covered by Article 75-f, relate to the regulation of political advertising in the electronic media and the extension of advertising time. With the additions to this article, during the election campaign, the broadcasters covering the elections can broadcast a total of nine minutes and thirty seconds per real hour intended only for paid political advertising. From these 9 minutes and 30 seconds, a total of four minutes can be allocated for the ruling political parties, four minutes for the opposition political parties, one minute for the parties that did not win enough MPs in the last elections to form a parliamentary group, and 30 seconds are intended for political parties that are not represented in the Macedonian Parliament. Minutes for additional advertising time are allocated by prior written agreement.

With the latest changes, up to 7% of the advertising space on electronic media (internet portals) and print media can be allocated to parties that did not win enough MPs in the last parliamentary elections to form a parliamentary group. A maximum of 3% of the advertising space is provided for non-parliamentary political parties or candidates.

If they provide paid political advertising for the participants in the election campaign, they are obliged to register with the State Election Commission within three days from the day of announcing the elections.

There are additions in the manner of fulfilling the financial obligations incurred towards the broadcasters, print and electronic media that refer to the announcement of paid political advertising of the parties participating in the election campaign. With the latest changes, broadcasters and print media are obliged to apply the price lists for paid political advertising during the election campaign, for each media separately. The average price per second for one day is obtained according to the different price-advertising time periods. The price lists must not be changed until the completion of the election process, and the price cannot exceed the average advertising price of each broadcaster separately, calculated in the last five election cycles. The State

Election Commission is obliged to publish on its website the submitted price lists with the average calculated prices determined by the broadcasters, print media, electronic media (internet portals) within 10 days from the expiration of the deadline for submission of price lists. If the SEC finds irregularities in the price lists, it reports to the appropriate media to make a correction of the price list within 72 hours. Broadcasters who fail to act upon reporting lose the right to paid political advertising.

The State Election Commission pays the costs for the published paid political advertising to the broadcasters, print media and electronic media based on the submitted invoice within 30 days from the announcement of the final results. In addition to the submitted invoice, a media plan is submitted, as well as a Report on realized services that are confirmed by the broadcasters, print media and electronic media, and by the participant in the election campaign. The media plan and the Report on realized services are submitted on forms that are prescribed, adopted and published by the SEC. The report on realized services should contain a copy of each announcement with a clearly visible and legible date for each day of the period for which the advertising space in the print media is rented, a copy (print screen) of each published banner for each day of the period for which the advertising space of the electronic media (internet portal) is rented, and a copy of each published banner, as well as written statements for realized impressions for each day of the period for which the advertising space of the electronic media (internet portal) is rented.

When it comes to political advertising, in addition to the provided 2 euros in denar counter value (excluding VAT) per registered voter out of a total of registered voters in the country, with the latest changes, in the future, for local elections, an additional amount of 1 euro in denar counter value (excluding VAT) will be provided per registered voter on the territory of the municipality where the second round of voting is held. For non-parliamentary political parties or candidates, a maximum of 3% of the funds is provided, and 7% can be used by parties that did not win enough MPs in the last parliamentary elections to form a parliamentary group.

Article 76-c of the Electoral Code is amended to define the manner in which the Agency for Audio and Audio-visual Media Services (AAVMS) monitors the political advertising during the campaign period.

The Agency for Audio and Audio-visual Media Services is obliged to monitor the election media representation and the programme service of the broadcasters in the Republic of North Macedonia, from the day of announcing the elections until the end of the voting on the election day. From the day of announcing the elections, AAVMU is obliged to submit weekly reports to the SEC. During the election campaign, it should

submit daily reports and publish them on the Agency's website. In case of violations of the provisions on advertising, the AAVMU should initiate a misdemeanor procedure against the broadcaster within 48 hours from the determination of the violations of the provisions. Regarding these procedures, the competent court is obliged to decide within 48 hours with certain deadlines for appeal. AAVMU is obliged to establish full monitoring of the broadcasters participating in the election campaign.[19]

State Commission for Prevention of Corruption

In accordance with the Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest[20], the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (DKSK) has the authority to monitor the legality of the use, i.e., the management of budget funds from the day of announcing until the end of the elections, i.e., to monitor the legality of campaign financing. In case of suspicion of illegal financing of the election campaign, the DKSK may initiate a procedure to determine the factual situation, and if it determines that the suspicions are justified, it is obliged to initiate a procedure to determine responsibility before the competent authorities within 15 days of the decision.

With the amendments of 15 September, 2021, the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption is obliged to publish on its website the register of official motor vehicles of all public funds, public enterprises and other legal entities that have state capital. The deadline for submitting data on the number, type, license plate and driving status of motor vehicles to the DKSK is ten days from the date of the decision to call elections. The data are submitted in electronic form on a form prescribed by the State Election Commission on the proposal of the DKSK. In case the data is not submitted, the DKSK may initiate a misdemeanour procedure within 15 days from the expiration of the deadline for submission of data.

Moreover, if there are grounds for suspicion of bribery during elections and voting, the DKSK will immediately notify the competent prosecutor in writing. Additionally, it monitors public procurement procedures and inspects documentation to determine whether there are privileges or discrimination in relation to public procurement contracts, and it monitors possible pressures by a political party in selecting or appointing or dismissing persons holding official, managerial or other functions or duties. If it finds that there is a suspicion of a legal violation, the DKSK acts in accordance with its competencies.

19 "Official Gazette": Law on Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code, 42/20
20 "Official Gazette", Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest, 12/19

The organizers of the election campaigns are obliged to submit other data at the request of the State Commission in order to exercise its competence to monitor the legality of the financing of the election campaigns. Based on the received and obtained information, the State Commission prepares a special report on the determined conditions, which should be submitted to the Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia no later than three months from the day of the elections and published on the DKSK website.[21]

State Audit Office

The legal task of the State Audit Office (DZR) is to audit the use of public funds and to provide information to state institutions and the public on the proper use of funds. With the amendments to the Electoral Code in 2020, the State Audit Office ex officio audits the overall financial report for the election campaign, in accordance with the auditing standards of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) and the rules set out in the INTOSAI Code of Ethics, published by the Minister of Finance in the "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia".[22]

At the request of the State Audit Office, the participants in the election campaign are obliged to submit additional data and notifications for financing the election campaign. Holders of payment operations where the transaction account for financing the election campaign is opened are obliged to submit all required data for that account and its transactions. Additionally, the entities that provide media advertising services are obliged to submit all contracts, invoices and other financial documents for financing the election campaign at the request of the State Audit Office.

The State Audit Office has the right to request data on paid political information of the participants in the election campaign from AAVMU. It may also request financial documents from third parties regarding the financing of election campaign participants.

The SAO should publish the audit reports from the performed audit of the financial statements of the participants on its website within the deadline determined by law and should submit them to the SEC and the SCPC.

21 KAS, IDSCS, The Republic of North Macedonia's 2020 Parliamentary Elections Handbook, second supplemented edition. Available at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/prirachnici/Prirachnik_za_parlamentarni_izbori_2020_MKD.pdf (accessed: 1 September 2021)
22 "Official Gazette": Law on Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code, 42/20

If it finds irregularities in the financial statements of the participants in the election campaign, in accordance with the Electoral Code (Article 85-b paragraph 9), the SAO submits a request for initiating misdemeanor proceedings or a report to the competent public prosecutor within 3 days from the day of determining the irregularities.

1

History of local elections in the Republic of North Macedonia (1996-2017)

1. History of local elections in the Republic of North Macedonia (1996-2017)

The first local elections in the independent Republic of Macedonia were held in 1996, when the average voter turnout for the election of councilors for the municipalities was 60.17%, while it was 53.20% for the City of Skopje. The average voter turnout for the election of mayors was 60.28%, while it was 53.20% for the City of Skopje. Due to irregularities in the voting process, in some municipalities the votes were annulled, meaning that the data do not include the results of the election of mayors and council members from 9 municipalities in total. These local elections were held in accordance with the territorial organization as of 1996, according to which 123 municipalities were established, with the City of Skopje as a separate unit.[23] SDSM won the majority of mayoral positions, 51 in total, VMRO-DMPNE and MAAK-Conservative won 27 positions, and the Socialist Party won 19 positions.[24] 1,495,288 voters had the right to vote.

During the **local elections in 2000**, there were considerable violations in the election process according to the international standards for free and democratic elections. The elections took place with a series of incidents and outbursts of violence, as well as intimidation of citizens. In the municipalities of Gostivar, Tetovo, Labunista, Dzepciste, and Mavrovi Anovi, the elections were accompanied with armed incidents. In several electoral units of other municipalities the ballot boxes were opened and destroyed by force. Violence also occurred in various places during the second voting round. The mission of OSCE/ODIHR registered group voting in 25% of the monitored locations, in 8% of the locations an open voting was registered, and in 5% voting instead of other persons. The winner of these elections was the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE and Democratic Alternative (DA) with 59 mayoral positions, and the coalition led by SDSM "For Macedonia Together" won 32 mayoral positions.[25] The PDP-NDP coalition won 23 mayoral positions, the People's Democratic Party of Serbs – 1, the Democratic

23 The Law on Territorial Division of the Republic of Macedonia and Determination of the Areas of the Local Self-Government Units. Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, 49/1996, 14.09.1996. Available at: https://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/CAFFB1AA376347A0B1E3044B8FAC16C6.pdf (last visited on: 28 September 2021)

24 State Election Commission, 1996 Local Elections: Final results of the local elections for mayors and members of councils of the municipalities and the City of Skopje. Skopje 1997. Available at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/ Локални%20избори%201996/4_Резултати%20од%20избори/Извештај%20од%20локални%20избори%201996_ДИК.pdf (Accessed: 28 September 2021)

25 OSCE/OIDHR Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Municipal Elections 10 September 2000. OSCE/OIDHR Election Observation Mission Final Report. Warsaw, 2000. Available at: http://idscs.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/finalen-izvestaj-OSCE-ODIHR-2000.pdf (Accessed: 13 September 2021).

Party of Turks – 1, while two mayoral positions were won by independent candidates. 1,634,859 voters had the right to vote.[26]

The **local elections in 2005** again did not meet the key international standards for universality, equality and secrecy of the right to vote. Unlike the previous ones, these elections were not marked with violence, but there was a considerable amount of irregularities in the western and northwestern regions of the country, as well as in Skopje. At the same time, the elections in 2005 were the first ones held according to the territorial organization as of 2004 which established 84 municipalities on the territory of Macedonia, preserving the status of the City of Skopje as a separate unit of local government.[27] The mission of OSCE/ODIHR registered 30 cases of stuffing the ballot boxes and over 50 cases of voting instead of other persons. In 9 municipalities, among which the City of Skopje, as a result of the complaints related to the irregularities in the first voting round, the latter had to be repeated. The second round of voting was to take place at these locations as well, which resulted in delays of the second round that was then held on 10th April 2005. The voter turnout in the first round was 56.36%, in the second round on 27th March 53.66%, and on 10th April 35.6%. As a result of these elections, the coalition led by SDSM won 36 mayoral positions. VMRO-DPMNE and their coalition won 21 mayoral positions, DUI 15, VMRO-NP 3, DPA 2 and the Union of the Roma 1. Seven independent candidates became mayors, among which the candidate for the City of Skopje, Trifun Kostovski, who was supported by VMRO-DPMNE.[28] 1,711,293 voters had the right to vote.

The **local elections in 2009**, which were held on the same day as the presidential elections, were the first local elections which took place in general accordance with the international and OSCE standards for democratic elections. However, the OSCE/ODIHR mission still had major remarks related to the intimidation of voters during these elections. The monitoring report points at intimidation and pressure on the voters, particularly on those employed in the public administration as well as social welfare beneficiaries, who were threatened to vote for the ruling party.[29] In the 2009

26 Elections Archive, 2020 Local Elections, KAS/IDSCS. Accessed at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/#e-2000-local

27 The Law on Territorial Division of the Republic of Macedonia and Determination of the Areas of the Local Self-Government Units. Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, 49/1996, 14.09.1996. Accessed at: https://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/CAFFB1AA376347A0B1E3044B8FAC16C6.pdf (last visited on: 28 September 2021)

28 OSCE/ODIHR Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Local Elections 12th and 27th March and 10th April 2005. OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, Warsaw, 2005. Accessed at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/Локални%20избори%202005/6_Извештаи%20од%20меѓународни%20и%20домашни%20набљудувачи/Финален%20набљудувачки%20извештај%20локални%20избори%202005_Македонија_ОБСЕ-ОДИХР_АНГ_оригинал.pdf (last visited on: 28 September 2021)

29 OSCE/ODIHR Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Presidential and Municipal Elections 22 March and 5 April 2009. OSCE/OIDHR Election Observation Mission Final Report. Warsaw, June 2009. Accessed at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/Локални%20избори%202009/6_Извештаи%20од%20меѓународни%20и%20домашни%20набљудувачи/Финален%20набљудувачки%20извештај%20претседателски%20и%20локални%20избори%202009_Македонија_ОБСЕ-ОДИХР_АНГ_оригинал.pdf (last visited on: 28 September 2021)

elections there were also cases of family votes, voting instead of other persons (3% of the cases), one person "assisting" several other voters (4%), intimidation of voters and members of electoral boards (EB) (1%), identical signatures in the registry of the Voters List (2%) and multiple voting (1%).[30] VMRODPMNE won the elections in 56 municipalities, DUI in 15, SDSM in 7, and DPA, ND, DPTM, SR, PDSM won one mayoral position each. Two independent candidates also won mayoral positions. Aa total of 1,792,082 voters had the right to vote.

The priority recommendations from 2009, which would be repeated in the report on the early parliamentary elections in 2011, require the government to take measures and deal with the pressure on citizens and their intimidation. Besides this, the OSCE/ODIHR report provided five other priority recommendations: to separate the state from the party; to eliminate all drawbacks and ambiguities in the Electoral Code; to review and update the Voters List; to take measures in order to settle conflicts of interest among those involved in politics who control the private radio broadcasting services; to introduce deadlines for court decisions related to objections by the Broadcasting Council. In both reports, OSCE/ODIHR recommends reviewing the Voters List, which was one of the recommendations that were fulfilled. The European Union recognized the country's success achieved during the implementation of the elections and replicated the conclusions and recommendations of OSCE/ODIHR. The US Ambassador at the time, Philip Reeker, assessed the elections as well implemented.[31]

The local elections in 2013 were held in a peaceful atmosphere, receiving positive assessment of the efficiency of their implementation, although certain drawbacks were highlighted. The latter were mainly related to the lack of conditions for securing equal competitive space among the candidates. There were certain remarks regarding the overlapping of state and party activities, the financing of the campaign, the legal framework, as well as the media coverage.[32] In some rare cases, there were certain remarks related to violating the secrecy of voting, family voting and destroying campaign material. There were serious remarks about the media in relation to their division along ethnic and party lines.[33] OSCE/ODIHR prepared a range of recommendations for overcoming the drawbacks. The general

30 Ibid

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

32 OSCE/ODIHR Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Local Elections 24th March and 7th April 2013. OSCE/OIDHR Election Observation Mission Final Report. Warsaw, 2013. Accessed at: https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/8/8/103411.pdf (last visited on: 28 September 2021)

33 For more information see: KAS, IDSCS Republic of Macedonia's 2013 Local Elections Handbook, second updated edition. Available at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/prirachnici/kas_33810-1522-2-30.pdf

recommendations involved increasing the accuracy of the Voter List, protecting voters from intimidation, and amendments to the Electoral Code. Regarding the financing, the recommendations referred to changes in the relation between the donations from legal and physical entities, precising whether the limitations of the campaign expenses refer to both rounds of the elections, as well as more detailed reporting.[34] Regarding the media, the recommendations referred to securing a more balanced presentation of the candidates by improving the Electoral Code, the Law on Radio Broadcasting, and addressing the discrepancies between them.[35] A total of 1,743,403 voters, distributed across 2976 stations, were entitled to vote. The new Law on Local Self Government was brought into force with these elections, which was the first time mayors and councilors were elected in a total of 81 municipalities, since the municipalities of Vraneštica, Drugovo, Zajas, and Oslomej had joined the municipality of Kičevo. The turnout on these elections was rather high. In the first election round it reached 67%, while in the second round that took place in 29 municipalities the turnout reached 59%. The first round of voting was repeated in the municipality of Dolneni, while due to the annulled results, the voting in the second round was repeated in the municipalities of Center, Dolneni, Struga, and Gjorče Petrov. The turnout on the third election day was 65%.[36] These local elections were dominated by VMRO-DPMNE, which won most of the mayoral positions in relation to the other parties. VMRO-DPMNE won 56 mayoral positions, DUI 14 mayors, SDSM 4, DPA 2, the Democratic Party of the Turks (DPTM), the Serbian Progressive Party in Macedonia (SNS) and The Union of Roma in Macedonia (SRM) won one mayor each, and two independent candidates were elected.[37]

The local elections in 2017 were held in a peaceful and competitive atmosphere, without major incidents. The few irregularities did not affect the election results to a great extent. The voter turnout reached 59.51%, in the first and 51.92% in the second round, which is a decrease in relation to the local elections in 2013. The parties were enabled to freely run their campaigns, with respect for the fundamental freedoms of association, public gathering, and expression. Although not extensively, there was certain negative rhetoric noted between the two major political parties. In addition, the OSCE/ODIHR stated that there were solid findings about buying votes, intimidating voters, and isolated cases of violence that took place in the pre-election period. Remarkably, the candidates from the largest parties (at least most of them)

34 OSCE/ODIHR Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Local Elections 24th March and 7th April 2013. OSCE/OIDHR Election Observation Mission Final Report. Warsaw, 2013. Accessed at: https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/8/8/103411.pdf (last visited on: 25th August 2017)
35 Ibid.
36 State Election Commission, 2013 LOCAL ELECTIONS: http://www.sec.mk/lokalni-izbori-2013/
37 For more information see: KAS, IDSCS Republic of Macedonia's 2013 Local Elections Handbook, second updated edition. Available at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/prirachnici/kas_33810-1522-2-30.pdf

refrained from offensive speech on ethnic grounds, and some of the parties were concerned to get attention from voters representing other ethnic communities. The coalition led by SDSM won a convincing victory in the local elections with 57 mayoral positions, including the City of Skopje. The Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE won 5 mayoral positions, DUI 10, the political party Alliance of the Albanians, which participated in these local elections as a separate party for the first times, won 3 mayoral positions, and BESA, DPA, and DPT won one mayoral position each, while 3 mayoral positions were attained by independent candidates. Most media services respected the journalistic standards and enabled equal representation of diverse standpoints on current political and social topics and issues. However, during the election campaign prior to both rounds of the voting, certain violations of the rules for unbiased media coverage were registered, as well as violations of the Election Laws by several media services.[38]

Table 1: Turnout in the local elections from 1996 to 2017[39], for the first and second round[40]

Year	1996	2000	2005	2009	2013	2017
Turnout	60 % (51 %)	59 % (53 %)	56 % (53 %)	57 % (43 %)	67 % (65 %)	60 % (52 %)

38 For more information see: KAS, IDSCS Republic of Macedonia's 2013 Local Elections Handbook, second updated edition. Available at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/prirachnici/ENG_MANUAL.pdf)
39 Ibid.
40 The first percentage refers to the turnout in the first round, and the second percentage to the turnout in the second round. The percentages are rounded.

2

Macedonian electoral system for local elections

2. Macedonian electoral system for local elections

Electoral model[41]

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

The mayors are elected by the majority voting model. The candidate who has won the majority of votes in the first round is appointed as mayor, if the turnout amounts to at least a third of the number of registered voters in the Voters List for the respective Local Government Unit. If none of the candidates fulfills the necessary conditions, the elections are repeated in the second round for the two candidates with the largest number of votes. If there is only one candidate participating in the elections, but he or she fails to win the necessary majority, the voting procedure is repeated. The second round of voting is conducted 14 days after the end of the first round. In the second round, the candidate with the majority of votes is appointed as mayor.

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

41 KAS/IDSCS, Manual for Republic of Macedonia's 2017 Local Elections Handbook, second updated edition. Available on: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/prirachnici/ENG_MANUAL.pdf

Electoral bodies

The State Election Commission (SEC), together with the Municipal Election Commissions (MEC), the Election Commission of the City of Skopje, the Election Boards (EB), and the Special Election Boards (SEB) for voting within the country are the electoral bodies responsible for implementing local elections.

The SEC comprises seven members elected by the Assembly with a two-thirds majority. The mandate of the members is effective from the day of their appointment by the Assembly until the election of a new composition of the State Election Commission, but no more than two years. The Assembly announces the election of the members of the State Election Commission in the Official Gazette and in the printed media. The announcement is effectively valid eight days from the date of its publication. The Assembly's Committee on Election and Appointment Issues drafts the proposal of the list of applicants and submits it to the Assembly. Out of the proposed candidates, the political parties in the opposition nominate the President and two members to the State Election Commission, while the ruling parties nominate the vice-president and three members. If the political parties fail to submit their proposed nominations within three days from the receipt of the notification, the President, the Vice-President and the members of the State Election Commission shall be nominated by the Committee on Election and Appointment Issues. The SEC's competence also includes publicising the Voters' List for citizens' review within 15 days from the day of announcement of the elections. The Voters' List can be reviewed for a duration of 20. The SEC has within its remits a technical service managed by a secretary-general in charge of performing the professional, administrative, organisational and technical tasks.

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

The Election Board (EB) is a body established at each polling station comprised of five members, including a president and four members, each of whom have a deputy. The president of the Election Board and his/her deputy and two members

and their deputies are selected by random choice from among the employees in the state, public and municipal administration and the administration of the City of Skopje who have completed at least a secondary education degree for a mandate of four years. One member and their deputy are nominated by the political parties in opposition that won the highest number of votes in the previous parliamentary elections, and the final member and deputy are nominated by the governing political parties that won the majority of votes in the previous parliamentary elections. The random selection of members for the Election Boards is conducted by the MEC within their areas of responsibility upon the SEC's request.

In the municipalities in which at least 20% of the citizens are representatives of the nonmajority communities, the principle of proportionate and equitable representation is applied to the composition of the MECs and the Electoral Boards. Moreover, the Law prescribes each gender be represented in the electoral bodies by at least 30 % of its members. Members of the MECs and of the Election Boards shall not be elected or appointed if, at the moment of appointment, they hold the status of Government officials, Assembly officials or employees in the state administration of the Ombudsman, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Interior, the Secretariat for Legislation, the State Statistical Office, the Directorate for Protection and Rescue, the technical services at the Administrative Court, the SEC, the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) or the Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services.

Elective rights

Every Macedonian citizen who is at least 18 years old, who has legal capacity and whose permanent place of residence is the electoral unit or the municipality in which the elections are held is entitled to vote. Voting is secret and voters should not be held responsible for the cast vote, nor should they be asked to show who they voted for or why they did not vote at all. It is the responsibility of the SEC to inform and educate the citizens about the voting procedure and to provide the polling stations with voting instructions in Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Vlach, Serbian, Roma, and Bosniac. The lists of candidates are also displayed at the polling stations.

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

candidates for mayor or council member should maintain a permanent place of residence in the municipality they run for.

Limitations for current state officials[42]

The functions of councilor and mayor are professionally conducted, and they cannot coincide with the function of President of the Republic, President of the Republic of Macedonia's Government, minister, judge, public prosecutor, public attorney, ombudsman, or other of public offices, elected or appointed by the Republic of Macedonia's Assembly and Government. The function of mayor can neither coincide with the function of MP, nor with the provision of expert or administrative services in the state administrative organs, nor with any other economic or profitable vocation, nor with any membership in administrative boards of public companies, public institutions, fonds, agencies, institutes, and other legal entities, nor with the function of representative of the state and social capital in the trading companies. In addition, the function of mayor of the City of Skopje and the function of councilor in the City of Skopje's Council cannot coincide with the function of municipal mayor and the function of councilor of the municipalities in the area of the City of Skopje.[43] From the day the decision to call elections was made until the end of the elections, they are forbidden to do the following:

- to initiate construction work with budget resources, public funds, public proprieties and other legal persons who own state capital, or to initiate the construction of new objects for infrastructure such as roads, water conduits, transmission lines, sewage systems, sports playgrounds, and other facilities, or facilities for social activities such as schools, kindergartens, and other facilities, unless budget resources have already been allocated to that goal;
- to carry out disbursements of salaries, pensions, social assistance or other allowances and material fees, from the budget funds or from public funds, other than regular monthly payments, or to disburse one-year transfers and payments as one-off transfers from the budget funds or from public funds;
- to initiate the procedure for employing new employees or for terminating employment in state and public institutions, while the initiated procedures shall be put on halt, except for cases considered as urgent and non-deferrable;
- to sell state capital;
- to sign collective agreements; as well as other limitations according to the Election Code;

In case a high official has breached these rules, a fine in the denar countervalue of 1.000 to 2.000 euros shall be imposed on him/her. The attempt of acting against these rules as well as contravention against them is considered a criminal act according to the provisions of the Criminal Code.

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

Additionally, from 20 days before the start of the election campaign until the end of the elections, it is not allowed to pay subsidies which are not part of regular monthly wages, nor is it allowed to organise public events to initiate or put into operation construction works of facilities for public use or infrastructure financed from the budget, public funds, or resources of public companies or other legal entities with state capital.

From the day of the adoption of the decision to announce elections until the completion of the elections, i.e., until the constitution of the council of the municipalities and the City of Skopje, no public events can be held, the Ministry of Finance is obliged to publish all budget reimbursements on its website, except for salaries, pensions and communal expenses, in a separate database for budget expenses during the election period. The Ministry is also obliged to submit a pre-election financial report two weeks following the announcement of the elections. This report has to include an overview of all planned and realised income and expenditures from the budget per budget items, covering the period from the beginning of the fiscal year until the time of submission of the report published on the website.

The number of council members

The number of council members in each of the Local Government Units is determined in proportion to the size of the population living within the respective unit. The municipalities with less than 5000 inhabitants establish councils that consist of 9

42 Electoral Code (consolidated text), unofficial version prepared by the Expert Service of the State Election Commission ("Official Gazette" No. 40/06, 136/08, 148/08, 155/08, 163/08, 44/11, 51/11, 54/11, 142/12, 31/13, 34/13, 14/14, 30/14, 196/15, 35/16, 97/16, 99/16, 136/16, 142/16, 67/17, 125/17, 35/18, 99/18, 140/18, 208/18, 27/19, 98/19, 42/20 and 74/21). Available on: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EWMBfikRINVP2r5Y6fY8uAWeCrAd0XhU/view (Accessed: 9 September, 2021)

43 KAS/IDSCS, Manual for Republic of Macedonia's 2017 Local Elections Handbook, second updated edition. Available on: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/prirachnici/ENG_MANUAL.pdf

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members, between 5001 and 10,000 inhabitants – 11 members, between 10,001 and 20,000 inhabitants– 15 members, between 20,001 and 40,000 inhabitants – 19 members, between 40,001 and 60,000 inhabitants – 23 members, between 60,001 and 80,000 inhabitants – 27 members, between 80,000 and 100,000 inhabitants – 31 members, and over 100,000 inhabitants – 33 members. The City of Skopje Council consists of 45 members.[44]

The procedure and the right to appoint candidates for mayors and councilor lists

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

On the candidate list for councilors, a candidate belonging to the less represented gender should be placed on every third position. The lists of candidates for mayors and council members are presented to the MEC at least 35 days before the elections take place. The MEC should publish the lists at least 25 days prior to the elections.

The right to nominate candidates is exercised by submitting a candidate list to the SEC. An individual candidate can only be nominated on one list and a submitter can only submit one list of candidates for mayoral or municipal counselors.

Election campaign

The election campaign for the 2021 local elections starts 20 days before the election day, i.e., on 27 September at 00:00, and ends on 15 October at 24:00. [45] The election campaign for the second voting round lasts until 24:00 on 29 October. In both the

44 Article 34 of the Local Self Government Law, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 05/16.
45 Schedule for conducting the election activities for implementing elections for members of the municipal councils and the Council of the City of Skopje, and for mayors of the municipalities and mayor of the City of Skopje, 2021. Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/17yILq1t-2jvAkZ-Rz4bvVM9UezgKM09P/view (Accessed: 11 September 2021).

first and second voting rounds, the election campaign must not run 24 hours before election day and on the election day. The day before the first election round, i.e., 16 October, is a day of pre-election silence, when the candidates are not allowed to run an election campaign, and the media are not allowed to promote the participants in the election process. The same applies to 30 October, the day before the second election round.

The political entities are obliged to provide a single tax identification number (TIN)[46], and to create a transaction account no earlier than 48 hours after the announcement of the elections, and no later than 48 hours after the confirmation of the candidate lists, and within that period the proof of secured TIN (EDB) and the created transaction is submitted to the competent Municipal Election Commission (MEC). The transaction account is closed within 60 days from the announcement of the final election results from the held elections, thus deleting the TIN of the political entity registered before a competent authority.

The campaign may be financed from the funds of the regular account of the political party, the political party membership fees, donations that must not exceed 3.000 euros for physical persons and 30.000 euros for legal persons, and by means of loans taken by political parties for the purpose of their electoral campaign. The campaign may be financed with monetary assets, goods and services, the value of which must not exceed the respective amounts. If the amount of the donation exceeds the allowed amount, the participant in the electoral campaign is obliged to transfer the difference between the allowed and the donated value to the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia within five days from the date of receipt of the donation. The participants in the electoral campaign are allowed to spend 110 denars at most per registered voter in the electoral unit for which they have submitted their list of candidates.[47]

The electoral campaigns must not be financed from the budget funds of the municipalities and of the City of Skopje, from the funds of public enterprises and institutions, from the funds of citizen association, religious communities,

46 Electoral Code, draft consolidated text (unofficial version prepared by the Expert Service of the State Election Commission)
(„Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 40/06, 136/08, 148/08, 155/08, 163/08, 44/11, 51/11, 54/11, 142/12, 31/13, 34/13, 14/14, 30/14, 196/15, 35/16, 97/16, 99/16, 136/16, 142/16, 67/17,125/17,35/18, 99/18,140/18, 208/18, 27/19 and „Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia", No. 98/19, 42/20 and 74/21) Available on: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EWMBfikRINVP2r5Y6fY8uAWeCrAd0XhU/view (Accessed: 11 September, 2021)
47 KAS/IDSCS, Handbook for Parliamentary Elections 2020, second updated edition. Available on: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/prirachnici/Prirachnik_za_parlamentarni_izbori_2020_ENG.pdf

religious groups or foundations, from funds of foreign governments or international institutions, authorities or organisations of foreign states and other foreign persons, nor from funds of enterprises with combined assets with prevailing foreign assets or from unidentified sources. Broadcasters, printed media and electronic media (internet portals), as well as their related parties must not finance or make donations to political parties or independent candidates, including campaigns. Related parties[48] in the sense hereof are considered members of the family and of the family of the marital or extramarital partner, persons who have shares in the ownership structure, who take part in the management, persons who have spent a long period in marketing or who are bound to other service contracts earning them more than 30% of their income from advertisement, tele shopping, or sponsorship.[49]

In case the candidacy is not executed, the organisers of the electoral campaign are obliged to return the unspent donations to the donors not later than 60 days. The participant in the election campaign is obliged to immediately, and no later than 30 days from the day of closing the transaction account, to submit a total financial report with a specification for the incomes and expenditures in the election campaign. In order to limit the fund spent on election campaigns, as well as to reduce corruption in the media, amendments to the Electoral Code were adopted. The participants in the election campaign return the excess of the collected funds to the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia, which is then redirected to humanitarian activities. With the amendments to the Electoral Code, the right to monetary allowance from the state budget for the elected candidates for council members of mayors who have won 1.5% of the cast votes in the electoral unit was abolished. Previously, the amount of the allowance had been 15 denars per won vote. In addition, the amendments and addenda stipulate that the financial liabilities incurred in relation to the broadcasters and printed and electronic media which relate to the publication of paid political advertisement of the participants in the electoral campaign shall be covered by the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia.

From the day elections are called until their end, radio broadcasting companies, printed and electronic media (internet-portals) may not publish advertisements financed from the state budget, from the budget of the municipalities and the City of Skopje, or from persons that have been provided public authorisations by law.

48 The concept „related parties" is precisely defined by the Law on Audio and Audio-visual Media Services, Official Gazette No. 184 of 26 December 2013. www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/b063254742a44129b8dfe1221762ddb4.pdf (Accessed: 28 September 2021)

49 Ibid.

If the rights of a candidate are violated during public appearances and announcements, they have the right to press charges. In such a case, the competent general court presides urgently and the decision is announced in the public media.[50]

The role of the public media[51]

During the campaign, private media, including the electronic media (internet portals) and the public broadcasting service, are obliged to provide equal access to the presentation of the electoral programmes and candidates in a just, unbiased and balanced manner. The Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services (AVAMS)[52] is obliged to monitor the electoral presentation of the parties and the candidates as well as the broadcasters' programme service from the day the elections are announced until the end of voting on election day. In case of violation of the principle of equal access, the Agency is obliged to initiate a misdemeanour procedure against the responsible media.

Editors, journalists, programme hosts and presenters who have been engaged in the preparation of the broadcasters' programmes must not take part in the pre-election activities of political parties, coalitions, groups of voters or their representatives, i.e. participants in the election campaign, during the election process. In case they do decide to take part in such activities, their engagement in the broadcasters' programmes shall be suspended from the day of the announcement until the end of the elections.

The public broadcasting service, Macedonian Radio Television (MRTV), is obliged to inform the citizens on voting procedures and electoral matters without any financial compensation whatsoever. MRTV is required to provide equal access to the informative programme. That means that 30% of the programme should relate

50 Schedule for conducting the election activities for implementing elections for members of the municipal councils and the Council of the City of Skopje, and for mayors of the municipalities and mayor of the City of Skopje, 2021. Available on: https://drive.google.com/file/d/17ylLq1t-2jvAkZ-Rz4bvVM9UezgKM09P/view (Accessed: 11 September 2021)

51 Electoral Code (consolidated text), unofficial version prepared by the Expert Service of the State Election Commission („Official Gazette", No. 40/06, 136/08, 148/08, 155/08, 163/08, 44/11, 51/11, 54/11, 142/12, 31/13, 34/13, 14/14, 30/14, 196/15, 35/16, 97/16, 99/16, 136/16, 142/16, 67/17, 125/17, 35/18, 99/18, 140/18, 208/18, 27/19, 98/19, 42/20 and 74/21). Available on: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EWMBfikRINVP2r5Y6fY8uAWeCrAd0XhU/view (Accessed: 9 September 2021)

52 The former competent authority was the Broadcasting Council which, under the Law on Audio and Audio-visual Media Services, was renamed Agency for Audio and Audio-visual Media Services, Official Gazette 184/2013

to events in the country and around the world, 30% to activities of the parties in power, 30% to activities of the opposition parties, and 10% to the activities of non-parliamentary political parties and independent candidates.

During the election campaign, MRTV is obligated to broadcast the political presentation of participants in the elections in a balanced manner, free of charge. For the election of mayors, in accordance with the principle of equality, for all candidates for mayors in both the first and second rounds of elections. For the election of members of the councils, in accordance with the principle of proportionality, according to the number of confirmed lists of candidates for members of the councils. Unlike MRTV, radio broadcasting companies are not allowed to broadcast free of charge political presentation from the day the elections are called until their end.

In the period between the call for elections and the start of the election campaign, radio broadcasters and the printed media are not allowed to broadcast or publish any paid political advertising. During this time, advertisements financed from the state or municipal budget or the budget of the City of Skopje are not allowed either. Radio broadcasters are compelled to record their programmes from the day elections are called until their conclusion, and they should keep that material for 30 days after the elections in order to provide the AAMS with respective data in case it is requested.

The media must determine the price-lists[53] for political advertisement within five days after the announcement of elections and shall publish them, ensuring they undergo no changes during the campaign. The broadcasters who cover the elections may broadcast up to nine minutes and 30 seconds of additional time for advertisement of one actual hour of broadcast programme exclusively intended for paid political advertisement purposes whereas the two largest ruling political parties and the two largest opposition parties who won the majority of votes at the last parliamentary elections may be granted four minutes each. Parliamentary political parties that do not have a parliamentary group can be granted 1 minute each, and non-parliamentary political parties or candidates, thirty seconds. Minutes for additional advertising time are allocated by prior written agreement. If there is an interest to merge the additional time slots intended for advertisement of a political party in two subsequent actual hours, the media outlet should provide for

53 The media price lists for paid political advertising of the participants in the election process for the 2021 local elections are available on the website of the State Election Commission. Price list for TV broadcasting services: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Eoperya7nIQl0fSdcp4scQB466mKWNdJ/view. Price list for radio stations: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IZR3OKONQo2kVo819Yk4AWmqYAvz0dH4/view

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alternate presentation of the ruling and the opposition political parties on a two-hour basis. If these parties/coalitions support the candidacy of an independent list, that list receives its paid political advertising in the minutes of the party/coalition that supports it.[54]

Under the amendments to the Electoral Code, all costs related to publishing paid political advertisement shall be covered by the State Election Commission upon invoice submitted by the broadcaster, print medium or electronic medium (internet portal). The Agreement should be submitted together with the invoice, as well as the media plan of the participant in the electoral campaign and the report on the services offered by the broadcaster, print medium or electronic medium (internet portal). The invoice and the enclosed documents should be submitted within 30 days after the publishing of the final election results.[55]

The funds for the paid political advertisement are allocated from the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia and they must not exceed the amount of 2 euros in denar countervalue (without VAT) per registered voter, and for the local elections, an additional 1 euro in denar counter value (excluding VAT) per registered voter on the territory of the municipality where the second voting round is held. These funds are distributed by prior written agreement, as follows: up to 45% of these funds may be used by the two largest political parties in power, which won the largest number of votes in the last parliamentary elections, and up to 45% of these funds may be used by the two largest political parties in the opposition, which won the largest number of votes in the last parliamentary elections. The remaining funds, however no more than 10%, may be used by those political parties in the Assembly which did not win sufficient MP seats at the last parliamentary elections to form a party group, or by extra-parliamentary political parties or candidates.

The amount to be paid by a participant in the electoral process to a single electronic medium (internet portal) or print medium may not exceed 15.000 (fifteen thousand) euros in denar countervalue (without VAT). The total amount that one participant may spend for presentation in all electronic media (internet portals) and printed media cannot be more than 25% of the funds earmarked for paid political advertisement.

54 Guidelines for paid political advertising for the 2021 local elections. Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, 01.09.2021. Available on: https://avmu.mk/lokalni-izbori-2021/ (Accesse: 13 September 2021)

55 Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Electoral Code, Offical Gazette of RNM 2015/2021.

Results from public opinion polls related to the candidates should not be published by public services during the last 5 days before the elections. When public opinion poll results related to candidates in the election process are published, the media are obligated to indicate the entity that has commissioned and funded the poll, the institution that has conducted the poll, the methodology applied, the size and structure of the sample, and the period in which the research was conducted. Results of public opinion polls conducted on the day of the elections must not be published before the polling stations close[56] at 19:00 hours.[57]

Monitoring the elections[58]

Accredited observers are entitled to monitor the elections, and the accreditation is issued by the SEC. The observer accreditation may be obtained by domestic as well as international civil organisations which have been registered at least one year prior to the elections and which have enshrined the principle of protection of human rights in their statutes. Representatives of foreign states may also observe the elections. The authorised representatives of the list submitters are entitled to designate their own representative to monitor the work of the electoral authorities.

56 KAS, IDSCS, Handbook for 2020 Parliamentary Elections in the Republic of North Macedonia, second supplemented edition Available on: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/prirachnici/Prirachnik_za_parlamentarni_izbori_2020_MKD.pdf (Accessed: 28 September 2021)

57 KAS/IDSCS, Handbook for Parliamentary Elections 2020, second updated edition. Accessed: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/prirachnici/Prirachnik_za_parlamentarni_izbori_2020_ENG.pdf

58 KAS/IDSCS, Handbook for Presidential Elections 2019, second updated edition. Accessed: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/prirachnici/Belegexemplar_2019_The_Republic_of_Macedonia_s_2019_Presidential_Elections_Handbook_ENG.pdf (Accessed: 28 September 2021)

3

Political parties and coalitions

3. Political parties and coalitions[59]

VMRO-DPMNE[60]

VMRO-DPMNE (VMRO – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity) declares itself a center-right people's party within the parameters of Christian-Democratic ideology. In 2017, the party announced that it would preserve its values, but focus on wider legitimation as a civic right wing party. Since Macedonia`s independence, VMRO-DPMNE has been one of the two largest parties. It has participated in almost all the parliamentary and local elections, except the 1994 parliamentary elections when the party boycotted the second round. As a result of the third parliamentary elections, held in 1998, VMRO-DPMNE established the Government for the first time after having won 49 mandates in coalition with the Democratic Alternative, which won 13 seats, and PDPA-NDP (later DPA) with 11 seats, as well as several smaller parties. VMRO-DPMNE remained in power until 2002. However, during the conflict from May until November 2001, a broad coalition government was established, which included ministers from SDSM and LDP. In 2002, VMRO-DPMNE and their coalition partners won 33 seats in the Parliament, lost the elections and formed the opposition until 2006. In 2006, together with the coalition "For a Better Macedonia", they achieved victory in the parliamentary elections, winning 45 mandates in total and thus being entitled to establish the Government. During these elections, the party promoted its program for the first time, with specific deadlines, which was a novelty in the electoral competitions. Since then, VMRO-DPMNE has achieved victory in three other election cycles: in the snap parliamentary elections in 2008, 2011, and 2014. In the 2008 elections, the party won a record of 63 parliamentary seats together with the coalition "For a Better Macedonia". In the 2011 snap parliamentary elections, VMRO-DPMNE won 56 seats together.

In the 2016 snap parliamentary elections, VMRO-DPMNE won 51 MP seats. Notwithstanding the fact that they had gained the majority of MP seats and that the president of the party, Nikola Gruevski, was given the mandate to form a government

59 The party logos have been downloaded from the websites of the respective parties. The internet has been used as a source for all logos and photos.
60 The political parties are in alphabetical order starting with the three largest parliamentary parties.

by State President Ivanov, the party was not able to gather the necessary majority of 61 MPs within the given deadline, and, therefore, failed. The mandate to form a government was then passed to Zoran Zaev, the president of SDSM, which had won 49 MP seats at the elections. Zoran Zaev's Government was elected in May 2017, with 62 votes in favour. Compared to the previous local elections in 2013, when VMRO-DPMNE won 57 mayoral seats, this is a decrease of 52 mayoral seats.

Ljubčo Georgievski was the president of VMRO-DPMNE from its establishment until 2003. Georgievski resigned at the party congress in May 2003, and Nikola Gruevski was elected to the position. Gruevski was the leader of the party until December 2017, when he submitted his resignation, which was accepted by the Central Committee. At the 16th Congress, also held in December 2017, Hristijan Mickoski was elected Party President. In the 2020 parliamentary elections, VMRO-DPMNE led the coalition "Renewal of Macedonia" and won 44 seats.

In these local elections, under the slogan "Macedonia for all people", the Coalition "Renewal of Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE will run with 63 candidates for mayors and lists of councilors in 74 municipalities. The coalition consists of 17 parties: VMRO-DPMNE, Civic Option for Macedonia - GROM, VOICE for Macedonia, Movement for National Unity of the Turks, Democratic Party of Serbs in Macedonia, Democratic Party of Roma, Democratic Forces of Roma, Macedonian Action (MAAK), New Liberal Party, Party of the Vlachs from Macedonia, Party of United Democrats of Macedonia, Roma United of Macedonia, Workers' Agricultural Party of the Republic of Macedonia, Socialist Party of Macedonia, Serbian Progressive Party, Communist Party of Macedonia - Tito's Forces and People's Party of Roma..[61] Also, in these local elections, VMRO-DPMNE announced a pre-election coalition with the Alliance for Albanians and Alternative.

VMRO-DPMNE
Plostad VMRO br. 1 1000 Skopje
contact@vmro-dpmne.org.mk
www.vmro-dpmne.org.mk

61 The composition of the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE varies to a small degree in various municipalities.

Democratic Union for Integration

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

In the 2016 parliamentary elections, the party showed much weaker results, winning only 10 seats, partly due to the growth of the Alliance for the Albanians and BESA, as well as the transfer of votes to SDSM. However, owing to the coalition with SDSM, DUI is again part of the Republic of Macedonia's Government. Ali Ahmeti has been president of DUI since its establishment.

At the local level in the 2017 local elections, DUI has 10 mayors from a total of 80 municipalities and the City of Skopje. In the 2020 snap parliamentary elections, DUI won 15 seats, which after the post-election negotiations with SDSM again, formed a parliamentary majority and formed a government. In June 2021, at the celebration of the 19th anniversary of DUI, the party announced that it would establish a green agenda and focus on preserving the environment.

In the 2021 local elections, DUI will run with candidates for mayors in 19 municipalities and councilor lists in 34 municipalities, and in the municipality of Caska, it will run together with the Alliance for Albanians. They will act under the slogan "Choose life, vote green".

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Social Democratic Union of Macedonia

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

September 2015, until the signing of the Przino Agreement. In the 2016 parliamentary elections, SDSM and the coalition won a total of 49 seats, which is two less than VMRO-DPMNE, but managed to form a parliamentary majority together with DUI.

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

In the last local elections in 2017, SDSM has won in 57 out of 80 municipalities and the City of Skopje. While in the last early parliamentary elections in 2020, SDSM and its coalition partners won 46 seats and in the post-election negotiations with DPA and DUI managed to form a parliamentary majority and form a government.

In the local elections in 2021, SDSM will run together with other political parties in a coalition titled "The best for my municipality" with candidates for mayors in 68 municipalities and a candidate for mayor of Skopje, as well as 80 councilor lists and councilor list for the City of Skopje. Besides SDSM, the coalition consists of New Social Democratic Party-NSDP, Democratic Union of Vlachs from Macedonia-DSVM, Pensioners Party-PP, Social Democratic Union-SDU, Democratic Union-DS, Political Party Dignity-PPD, Party for Economic Changes 21-PEP 21, Party for Social and Economic Progress-POEN, Party for European Future-PEI, United for Macedonia-OM, Union of Roma from Macedonia, Party of Democratic Action of Macedonia, Party for Democratic Prosperity of Roma-PDPR, New Alternative-NA, Party for the Full Emancipation of Roma from the Republic of North Macedonia-PCER, Party for Movement of Turks in Macedonia-PDT, United Party for Roma Equality-OPER.[62]

62 The composition of the coalition led by SDSM varies to a small degree in different municipalities.

Social Democratic Union of Macedonia
Ul. Bihacka br.8
1000 Skopje
web@sdsm.org.mk
www.sdsm.org.mk

Alliance for Albanians

Alliance for Albanians is a political party emerging from the Movement for Reforms in the Democratic Party of Albanians. The party is led by Zijadin Sela. The main goal of the Alliance for Albanians is full equality between Albanians and Macedonians in all areas, such as investment, institutional representation, fair access to state institutions, employment, infrastructure and raising national awareness. In the 2017 local elections, then as a Coalition Alliance of Albanians, the party ran in the municipalities of Gostivar and Debar. In the 2020 parliamentary elections, the coalition Alliance for Albanians and Alternative won 12 seats. In the upcoming local elections, the party will run in a coalition with the political party Alternative with a total of 15 candidates for mayors.[63] In these elections, the Alliance for Albanians and the political party Alternative announced a pre-election coalition with VMRO-DPMNE.

Alliance for Albanians
Ul. Vidoe Smilevski Bato, br. 1, Tetovo
info@aleanca.eu
www.paster.mk/

63 Application of the State Election Commission for registration of political parties and candidate lists (sec.mk)

Alternative

The political party **Alternative** was formed in 2019. The Central Assembly appointed Afrim Gashi as its first president. The party derives from members of the Besa movement, who decided to form a new party after the poor results of the 2017 local elections. In the 2020 parliamentary elections, the Alliance for Albanians and Alternative coalition won 12 seats. The political program relies on four main pillars: Development, Integration, Open Dialogue and Justice.[64] In the upcoming local elections, the party will run in a coalition with the political party Alliance for Albanians with a total of 15 mayoral candidates.[65] In these elections, the political party Alternative and the Alliance for Albanians announced a pre-election coalition with VMRO-DPMNE.

Alternative
Bul. "Krste Misirkov" br.11/1 lok.68 A, 1000 Skopje
kontakt@alternativa.mk
https://alternativa.mk

Bosniak Democratic Union (BDS)

The **Bosniak Democratic Union** was founded on 1 March, 2018 with its ideological principles to the right of the center, and with its president Munir Kolasinac. The party ran in the 2020 parliamentary elections in the coalition led by SDSM. These elections will be the first local elections for the party. BDS is running independently in these elections with its candidate for mayor in the City of Skopje, Veles, Dolneni and Cair. It also competes in 11 municipalities and the City of Skopje with its candidates for councilors.

Bosniak Democratic Union (BDS)
bosnjackidemokratskisavez@gmail.com
https://www.facebook.com/bds.org.mk/

64 KAS / IDSCS, the Republic of North Macedonia's 2020 Parliamentary Elections Handbook, second supplemented edition. Available at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/prirachnici/Prirachnik_za_parlamentarni_izbori_2020_MKD.pdf
65 Application of the State Election Commission for registration of political parties and candidate lists (sec.mk)

Civic Option for Macedonia – GROM

The **Civic Option for Macedonia (GROM)** is a political party from the center, which was formed in 2014. The president of the party and its founder is Stevce Jakimovski. The party participated for the first time in the 2014 presidential elections, with its candidate Zoran Popovski, who won 3.6% of the total number of votes. In the parliamentary elections of the same year, the party ran independently, winning one seat. In the parliamentary elections in 2016 and 2020, the GROM party was part of the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE. In the last local elections, the party won three council seats. These were the first elections in which the party ran independently with its own candidate for mayor in the municipality of Karpos. In these local elections, the party is again running independently in the municipality of Karpos, and in other municipalities in the coalition «Renewal of Macedonia» led by VMRO-DPMNE.

Civic Option for Macedonia – GROM
ul. Praska br. 21 vlez 1, local 2 & 3
1000 Skopje
info@grom.mk
www.grom.mk

Movement for Democracy, Rights, Freedom (DPS)

The **Movement for Democracy, Rights, Freedom** is a new political party founded on 21 May, 2021. At the founding assembly held in Bitola, Edin Jakupovic was elected its president. They will run in the local elections independently with their own list of councilors in Studenicani and with their own candidate for mayor in the municipality of Tetovo.

Movement for Democraci, Rights, Freedom (DPS)
infodpsorg@gmail.com
https://www.facebook.com/DemokratijaPravaSlobodaDPS

BESA Movement

The political party **BESA Movement** was founded on 23 March, 2015 in Skopje. BESA Movement aims to promote the interests of all citizens, especially Albanians. The basic commitments are based on equality, justice, freedom and prosperity. The movement derives from the asymmetric position of the state towards the peoples in it. Instead of asymmetry, the state should be based on: the principles of freedom, equality, justice, prosperity, the fight against corruption. To achieve these goals, Besa strives to change the functioning of the system in the country, to develop the universal values of humanism, to improve democracy in the country, to eliminate all forms of discrimination, to build a state governed by the rule of law, etc. This party participated in the parliamentary elections for the first time in 2016, where it won a total of 5 MPs, one each in the first and second constituencies and three MPs in the sixth constituency (4.86% of the votes at the national level). In the previous parliamentary elections in 2020, Besa participated in the coalition "We can" led by SDSM, which was the first pre-election coalition between political parties from the Macedonian and Albanian bloc.

In the last local elections, the party ran independently with its candidates for mayors in 19 municipalities and the City of Skopje. For the municipalities of Bitola, Ohrid and Gazi Baba, BESA came up with joint councilor lists with DUI and the Alliance for Albanians. They won one mayoral seat, 63 council seats, and four more councilors from the coalition with DUI and the Alliance for Albanians. In these elections, BESA is running independently with 11 candidates for mayors, as well as proposed councilor lists in 21 municipalities and the City of Skopje.

BESA Movement
Hristijan Todorovski – Karpos, br. 84 A
1000 Skopje
kontakt@levizjabesa.mk
www.levizjabesa.mk

Movement for National Unity of the Turks

The **Movement for National Unity of the Turks (DNET)** is one of the political parties representing the rights of the Turkish minority in the Republic of Northern Macedonia. Ideologically, this political party is positioned at the center. The party is chaired by Erdogan Sarac. The party participated in the parliamentary elections for the first time in 2006. In this election as well as in the next ones in 2008, this party did not register a significant success. In the 2011 parliamentary elections, DNET was part of the coalition led by SDSM, and won one parliamentary seat. In the elections in 2014, this party did not participate in the elections, while in 2016 and 2020 it was running in a coalition with VMRO-DPMNE. In the 2014 local elections, DNET won 9 council seats in the municipalities of Debar, Centar Zupa and Suto Orizari. In the previous local elections, DNET ran in a coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, with the exception of the municipality of Dolneni where it ran with its own candidate for mayor. As a party, they won three council seats in 2017. In these local elections, DNET is again in a coalition with VMRO-DPMNE. Outside the coalition, the party has its own candidate for mayor in Centar Zupa, and candidates for councilors in the municipalities: Butel, Gostivar, Dolneni, Centar Zupa and Cair.

Movement for National Unity of the Turks
ul. Leningradska br. 2
1230 Gostivar
tmbh-2006@t-home.mk
http://tmbh.org.mk/

Democratic Party of Albanians – DPA

The **Democratic Party of Albanians** was founded in June 1997 by merging the Party for Democratic Prosperity of Albanians (PDPA) and the People's Democratic Party (NDP). The PDPA was founded in 1994 after the radical wing of the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP), Arben Xhaferi and Menduh Thaci, left the parent party. DPA declares itself as a party to the right of the center and stands for greater

rights of Albanians in the country and for redefining the constitutional framework set by the Ohrid Framework Agreement. The president of the DPA is Menduh Thaci, who was elected to this position on 30 June, 2007. Thaci takes office following the resignation of former President Arben Xhaferi. In the 1998 elections, the DPA won 11 seats and became part of the VMRO-DPMNE-led government. During the 2001 conflict, the DPA remained part of the Government of a broad coalition, which later signed the Framework Agreement. The signatory of the Framework Agreement by DPA is its then president Arben Xhaferi. Following the dissolution of that government, the DPA remained in the governing coalition. In the next parliamentary elections in 2002, the DPA won 5.2% of the votes, and 7 seats, and became the opposition in the Parliament. DPA returned to power when after the elections in 2006 it successfully completed the negotiations with VMRO-DPMNE, which had received the mandate to form a government. In these elections, DPA won 7.5% of the votes and 11 seats, which was less than the seats of the rival DUI. In the 2008 snap elections, the DPA won 11 more seats. After the 2008 snap parliamentary elections, the largest parliamentary party, VMRO-DPMNE, severed its traditional partnership with the DPA and formed a coalition with the largest Albanian party in the Parliament, DUI. In the 2011 snap parliamentary elections, the DPA won eight seats. In the Parliamentary composition 2014 – 2016, DPA had 7 MPs, in the composition of 2016 there were only two MPs in the Assembly, and in 2020, 13,930 voters or 1.53% voted for this party, enough for one parliamentary term. In the local elections of 2017, DPA won 23 councilor seats and one mayoral post, and in these local elections DPA is running with 14 proposed candidates for mayors and 16 lists for councilors, including the councilor list for the City of Skopje.

Democratic Party of Albanians
Plostad Ilirija 15/1
1200 Tetovo
info@gurra-pdsh.org
https://gurra-pdsh.org/

Democratic Party of the Turks of Macedonia

The **Democratic Party of the Turks of Macedonia (DPTM)** is also a political party representing ethnic Turks in the Republic of North Macedonia. The party is led by Bacon Ilyas. In the 2016 parliamentary elections, DPTM ran in a VMRO-DPMNE-led coalition, winning one seat. In the previous local elections in 2013, the party won 20 council seats. In the 2017 local elections, the party was running in a coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, with the exception of the municipalities of Vrapciste and Centar Zupa, where DPTM nominated candidates for mayors independently. They won three council seats and won the election for mayor of Centar Zupa. For the 2021 local elections, the Democratic Party of the Turks proposed 5 candidates for mayors in Vrapciste, Dolneni, Konce, Plasnica and Centar Zupa, and additionally with its lists of councilors in 15 municipalities. In other municipalities, the party runs in a coalition with SDSM.

Democratic Party of the Turks
ul. Stiv Naumov 1
1000 Skopje
info@tdp.org.mk
www.tdp.org.mk

Coalition "Determined for Change"

The coalition **"Determined for Change"**[66] that will run in the 2021 local elections is composed of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and Democratic Renewal of Macedonia (DOM). These are the first elections in which this coalition participates. The coalition will run with candidates for mayors in 16 municipalities and a candidate for mayor of the City of Skopje, as well as councilor lists in 48 municipalities and a councilor list for the City of Skopje.

66 State Election Commission – Application for entery of candidate lists. Available at: https://candidatelist.sec.mk/CandidateListCouncils (accessed: 22 September 2021)

In the 1998 parliamentary elections, **the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)** ran in a coalition with the Democratic Party of Macedonia (DPM). In this election, the LDP won 79,000 votes (4 seats). At the first congress of the LDP in the spring of 1999, after the failure of the parliamentary elections in 1998, Petar Gosev resigned from the presidency. Risto Penov, the party's former vice president, has elected the new president. In 1999, the LDP entered the VMRO-DPMNE-led government. In the 1999 presidential election, the LDP ran with its own candidate, Stojan Andov. He won 112,000 votes in this election and failed to place in the second round. In the local elections in 2000, the LDP participated as part of the coalition "For Macedonia together", which also included SDSM, SPM and the League for Democracy. In coalition with SDSM, the LDP participated in the 2002 parliamentary elections, winning 13 seats and entering the new government with 4 ministers. In the parliamentary elections in 2006, the LDP again ran in a coalition with SDSM and won 5 seats. The president of the party, Risto Penov, resigned from the presidency, after which, on 11 February, 2007, Jovan Manasijevski was elected the new president of the party. After the defeat in the elections in 2011, he resigned and was replaced by Andrej Zernovski, who was the president of the LDP until 2015. Since 2015, the president of LDP has been Goran Milevski. In the 2008 snap parliamentary elections, the LDP was in a coalition with SDSM and won 4 seats. In 2009, the party ran for the first time independently in the local and presidential elections, by nominating Nano Ruzin as its candidate. In the 2011 parliamentary elections, the LDP decided to run on its own, but did not win a single parliamentary seat. In the parliamentary elections in 2014, the LDP re-entered the coalition with SDSM and won 3 parliamentary seats. In the 2016 parliamentary elections, the LDP was again in a coalition with SDSM and won 3 parliamentary seats. After the agreement of SDSM with DUI and the Alliance for Albanians to form a parliamentary majority and a government, the LDP as a coalition partner of SDSM became part of the parliamentary majority, and thus part of the Government.

In the 2017 local elections, the LDP was again in coalition with SDSM and had councilors in most of the Councils across the country.

In the 2020 parliamentary elections, the party again participated in a coalition led by SDSM and won 2 seats. Following the agreement between SDSM and DUI to form a parliamentary majority and a government, the LDP, as a coalition partner of SDSM, has also become part of the parliamentary majority and the government.

Liberal Democratic Party
Ul. Vasil Glavinov, br. 14-1/7
1000 Skopje
office@ldp.mk
https://ldp.mk/

Democratic Renewal of Macedonia

Democratic Renewal of Macedonia (DOM) was established in 2006. In the parliamentary elections in 2006, it ran independently and won 1 MP. In the 2008 snap parliamentary elections, DOM was part of the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE and won 1 MP, and then became part of the Government led by the then President of VMRO-DPMNE, Nikola Gruevski.

In the local elections in 2009, the party was again part of the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE and won 1 mayoral post and 22 council seats in the municipalities of the country. In the 2011 snap parliamentary elections, again as part of the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, it won one MP. Following the agreement between VMRO-DPMNE and DUI, it became part of the parliamentary majority and the Government led by VMRO-DPMNE.

In the 2013 local elections, DOM decided to run on its own and won 10 council seats. In the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2014, it was again part of the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE and won 1 MP. Following the agreement between VMRO-DPMNE and DUI to form a parliamentary majority and a government, DOM became part of that government. But in 2015, DOM's central board decided to leave the governing coalition.

In the 2016 parliamentary elections, it was part of the coalition led by SDSM and won 2 seats, and with the agreement between SDSM, DUI and the Alliance for Albanians to form a parliamentary majority and government, the party became part of it.

In the 2017 local elections, DOM again participated in a coalition with SDSM and won 21 council seats. In the 2020 parliamentary elections, DOM was again part of the SDSM coalition and won 2 seats. Following the agreement between SDSM

and DUI to form a parliamentary majority and a government, DOM, as a coalition partner of SDSM, became part of it.

The president of the party from its founding until 2018 was Liljana Popovska. At the 4th Congress of the party, Maja Moracanin was elected the new president, who is still in the same position.

Democratic Renewal of Macedonia
Ul. Dame Gruev, br.5, zgrada 1, vlez 2, kat Mezanin
1000 Skopje
Phone: +389 2 5112 900
e-mail: dommakedonija@yahoo.com

The Left

The Left political party was founded at the end of 2015. Statutory, the party has a strong leftist ideology and advocates leftist values, including anti-capitalism, anti-nationalism, anti-militarism, anti-clericalism, and anti-conservatism. The focus of the party is on workers' and basic human rights, and as a party it stands, above all, for the poor, the underprivileged, the marginalized, the oppressed. In the 2016 elections, the party ran on its own, winning 12,120 votes (1.02%), while in the 2020 snap parliamentary elections, the party came in fifth place in terms of the number of votes won. 37,426 voters voted for the candidate lists of this party, which represents 4.1% of the total number of votes. The Left thus wins 2 terms and for the first time has its own MP in the Assembly.

The initiative for the establishment of the Left came from members of the Movement for Social Justice "Lenka", members of the leftist movement "Solidarity", members of the Communist Party of Macedonia, trade unionists, activists and leftist individuals. Until 2019, the Left had a collective presidency, the Presidium, consisting of seven members with an imperative mandate. At the regular session of the Plenum of the political party Left, a new party statute was adopted which altered the organizational structure, where in addition to the basic governing bodies, the Plenum, the Central Committee, the Presidium and the Tribunal, the position of president was introduced for a term of four years. The current president of the Left is Dimitar Apasiev.

The Left party, in the 2017 local elections managed to win a total of three council seats, one of which in the Council of the City of Skopje, and one council seat in the municipalities of Karpos and Rosoman. In these elections, the Left submitted its candidate lists for election of mayors in 8 municipalities, as well as candidate lists for councilors in 37 municipalities and the City of Skopje.

The Left - political party
ul. "Miroslav Krleza" br. 20, vlez 1, kat 3, local br. 12
1000 Skopje
contact@levica.mk
www.levica.mk

Permanent Macedonian Radical Unification – TMRO

Permanent Macedonian Radical Unification (TMRO) is a Macedonian political party founded in 2002. Ideologically, the party has a right-wing orientation promoting values of conservatism and Macedonian patriotism, understanding the state of Macedonia as a national state of the Macedonian people. The president and founder of the party is Vancho Sehtanski. In the 2006 and 2008 parliamentary elections, the party achieved insignificant results. In the 2011 parliamentary elections, the party became part of a coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, in which it participated in the elections in 2014 and 2016. In the previous local elections in 2017, TMRO ran independently, with its own candidates for mayors in the municipality of Kavadarci and the City of Skopje. In these local elections, TMRO ran independently with its lists of councilors in 16 municipalities and the City of Skopje, and in the election for mayors it participated in 8 municipalities and the City of Skopje.

Permanent Macedonian Radical Unification – TMRO
Bul. Jane Sandanski br.67 B-2
1000 Skopje
t_tmro@yahoo.com
http://tmro-mk.weebly.com/

Political party – Democrats

Democrats - Macedonian political party. The party was founded in 2018, and Jorgo Ognenovski was elected president of the party at the Constituent Assembly. The party stands for democratic values and respect for basic human rights, including voting in elections or referendums, and respect for the will of the people. In the previous parliamentary elections, the party submitted its candidate lists in the six constituencies, but did not win enough votes to secure a representative in parliament. In the 2021 local elections, they will run independently with 6 candidates for mayors in the municipalities of Bitola, Dolneni, Struga, Gjorce Petrov, Centar and the City of Skopje. The party is participating with their candidates for the council seats in 10 municipalities and the City of Skopje.

Democrats
Porta Bunjakovec, br.19
1000 Skopje
demokratimk@yahoo.com
https://demokrati.mk/

Integra – Macedonian conservative party

Integra is a Macedonian conservative political party with a Christian-Democratic ideology, with a right-wing orientation. It was registered in 2019, and the president of the party is Ljupco Ristovski. Its basic commitments are the reinstitution of basic human values, general well-being and quality of life, and the preservation of the Macedonian national identity.

In the 2020 parliamentary elections, Integra ran independently with its own candidate lists in the six constituencies, and won a total of 12,291 votes (1.35%), insufficient for a parliamentary term. The upcoming elections will be the first local elections for Integra. The party runs independently

with its candidates for mayor in 10 municipalities and the City of Skopje and a list of councilors in 16 municipalities and the City of Skopje.

Integra
ul. "Dame Gruev" 16-3/1
1000 Skopje
contact@integra.org.mk
https://integra.org.mk/

Yours – political party

The party was founded in 2020, and some of the founders are lawyer Aleksandar Tortevski, and professor Mirjana Najcevska. According to the party's statute, "Yours" is a democratic party, which activity is based on combining policies for social change with policies to solve major environmental problems nationally and internationally, in order to create a just, fair and sustainable society.

In the 2020 parliamentary elections, "Yours" party submitted its candidate lists in three constituencies, i.e., in EU 1, EU 2 and EU 5, but failed to win a sufficient number of votes for its representative in the Assembly. In these local elections, "Yours" party has its own candidates for mayors in the municipality of Center and the City of Skopje, as well as its own candidates for councilors in 7 municipalities.

Yours – political party
info@tvoja.org
http://www.tvoja.org

Communist Party of Macedonia – Tito's Left Forces

The party was founded on 26 October, 2005. It is based on the communist ideology, and its founder is Slobodan Ugrinovski. In the 2006 and 2008 parliamentary elections, the party ran alone, but did not win enough votes to secure an MP seat in the Parliament. In the 2009 local elections, it had its own councilor in the Council of the City of Skopje. In the 2011 parliamentary elections, the party entered a coalition with SDSM, but departed from it in the 2013 local elections. In the parliamentary elections in 2016 and 2020, as well as in the previous local elections in 2017, the party was running in the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE. For these local elections, Tito's Left Forces will run in a coalition with VMRO-DPMNE, except for a candidate for mayor of the City of Skopje. where the party is running independently.

Tito's Left Forces
Ul. Gjorgji Sugare br. 2/1-2
1000 Skopje

Party of United Democrats of Macedonia (PODEM)

The United Democrats Party was founded on 12 July, 2008. Its founder and president is Zivko Jankuloski. Ideologically, the party declares itself as a party from the center.

PODEM participated in the local elections for the first time in 2009, winning 18 council seats with an independent performance. In the previous local elections in 2013 and 2017, the party was in a coalition with VMRO-DPMNE. It is also running in these elections in a coalition with VMRO-DPMNE, except in the municipalities of Dojran, Krivogashtani and Lozovo, where it will run independently in the election for mayor. Additionally, they have their own councilor lists in six municipalities.

Party of United Democrats of Macedonia
ul. Kukus br. 13, 1000 Skopje
contact@podem.org.mk
https://podem.org.mk/

Rodina (Homeland)

Rodina is a party founded in 2019. The main goal of the party is to develop as a people's party built on the cultural and traditional values of the Macedonian people and the natural principles of equality. Its president is Zoran Jovancev. The party appears for the first time in the 2021 local elections with its candidates for mayors in Berovo, Centar and the City of Skopje. Additionally, it runs in these elections in 9 municipalities and the City of Skopje with its own councilor lists.

Rodina
ul. Nikola Parapunov br. 3A/52
1000 Skopje
organizacija@rodina.org.mk
https://rodina.org.mk/

Macedonian Third Era / Macedonian Independent Lists

Macedonian Third Era is a new political structure formed in 2021 at the initiative of the movement with the same name. The ideology of the party originates from the tradition and the basic principles of sovereignty as a foundation. Its founder and president is Goran Taskovski, and the party is based in Bitola. It will run in these local elections for the first time with 7 candidates for mayors and lists of councilors in 5 municipalities.

Macedonian Third Era
makedonskaeratretamnl@gmail.com
https://www.facebook.com/pg/makedonskinezavisnilistiE3

4

Overview of candidates for mayors

4. Overview of candidates for mayors[67]

This section presents the candidates for mayors in the 2021 local elections. The nominees in 29 municipalities and the City of Skopje[68] are presented with their CVs and photographs[69], while the candidates in the other municipalities are listed only with their names and surnames, as well as with the list submitter. The comprehensive overview covers only the larger municipalities located in urban areas, including all municipalities within the City of Skopje. Criteria for inclusion of municipalities in this handbook were: urban status, number of inhabitants (including larger ones), ethnic structure of the population (taking into account the inclusion of as many multiethnic municipalities) and the number of nominated candidates for mayors.

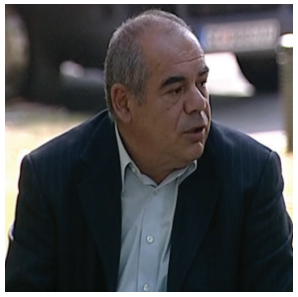
City of Skopje

Area	1854 km^2
Number of inhabitants	506 926
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (66,75 %) Albanians (20,49 %) Roma (4,36 %) Serbs (2,82 %) Turks (1,7 %)
Number of council members	45
Budget for 2021	6 302 000 000
Address	Bul. Ilinden No. 82 Skopje
Telephone	02/3297 204
Website	www.skopje.gov.mk

67 The Internet is used as a source for all photos. Photos from the official Facebook profiles of the candidates for mayors are most often used.
68 The presentation of the candidates for mayors in 29 municipalities and the City of Skopje is in alphabetical order of the first letter of the candidates' surname.
69 Due to lack of information, some candidates do not have CVs and/or photographs. The review of candidates for mayors refers to the candidates announced by the State Election Commission. The official list is available at https://kandidati.sec.mk.

Candidates for mayor of the City of Skopje

Danela Arsovska
(independent candidate, supported by VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition) is the President of the Economic Chamber of North Macedonia. Arsovska is a law graduate of the University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" with additional education at the University of Oxford and the University of Sheffield. In 2015, she was appointed President of the Macedonian Union of Employers' Organizations. Since 2016 she has been a representative in the National Council for European Integration in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia and a member of the Council for Public Private Partnership in the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia.



Goran Arsovski
(Communist Party of Macedonia - Tito's forces)

Pero Georgievski
(independent candidate supported by the Levica Party) also known as Pero Kamikaze, is a musician by profession. He graduated from the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Skopje, and then worked as an actor in the Theater of Subotica. He worked as the editor of the entertainment editorial office of music production on MRTV, and in the period from 1996 to 2006 was the Assistant General Program Manager of MRTV. He is the founder and current manager of an event organization company.

Ljubomir Josifovski
(Democrats, workers and independents) was a Member of Parliament from the ranks of the NSDP in the period from 2014 to 2016. He has a master's degree in historical-archival sciences from the University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius"in Skopje.

Munir Kolashinac
(Bosniak Democratic Union) is the president of the Bosniak Democratic Union.

Slave Nestorovski (TMRO)

Todor Noshpal
(Integra) is a specialist orthopedic surgeon. From 1994 to 2006 he was a faculty assistant at the Medical Faculty in Skopje. He completed a course in Health Management at the University of Sheffield.

Ana Petrovska
(Green Human City) is an architect-engineer with experience in environment and spatial planning. She has worked in the Construction Institute "Macedonia", the Public Enterprise for Spatial and Urban Plans, "ABC Consulting" and the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe. Petrovska is part of the list of experts for environmental impact

assessment of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

Aleksandar Tortevski
(Political Party "Your Party") is a lawyer and founder of the political party "Your Party".

Vladimir Trajkovski
(Political Party Rodina Makedonija)

Arben Shaqiri
(Movement Odluchni za promena (Determined for Change) is a musician by profession and one of the founders of the music group Non-Stop.

Petre Shilegov
(SDSM and the coalition) is the mayor of the City of Skopje. He is the vice president of SDSM, and previously was a spokesman for the party. In the 2014 parliamentary elections he was elected Member of Parliament. He won a second parliamentary term in the 2016 parliamentary elections and held this position until October 2017 when he was elected mayor as a candidate of SDSM. Before performing the function of MP and then Mayor of Skopje, Shilegov worked as a lawyer. He graduated from the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus" at the University "St. Cyril and Methodius"in Skopje.

Municipality of Aerodrom

Area	20 km²
Number of inhabitants	72 009
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (89,4 %) Serbs (4,28 %) Albanians (1,41 %)
Number of council members	27
Budget for 2021	1 357 605 000
Address	Bul. Jane Sandanski No. 109 b Skopje
Telephone	02/2400 970
Website	www.aerodrom.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Aerodrom

Biljana Avramovska Gjoreska

(Movement Determined for Change) holds a Master's degree in International and European Security from the Center for Security Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. In the period from 2004 to 2007 she was a spokesperson for the Ministry of Defense, and from 2007 to 2019 she was hired to organize trainings for the employees in the ministry. From 2002 to 2004 she worked in the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

Vesna Kiradzieva

(Levica Party) is a member of the athletics national team of North Macedonia, president and coach of the "Endurance" Athletics Club. She graduated in criminology at the Faculty of Security. In the period 2013-2014 she worked as a volunteer in Ljubljana, Slovenia in the Center for training of children with special needs "Janez Levec".

Timcho Mucunski

(VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition) is a Member of Parliament. In the period from 2015 to 2017 he was Deputy Minister of Information Society and Administration. In 2018, he was elected International Secretary of VMRO-DPMNE. Mucunski is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus" at the University "St. Cyril and Methodius"- Skopje.

Mile Petkovski (TMRO)

Aleksandar Filipovski

(SDSM and the coalition) is a Member of Parliament. He graduated in banking management at the European University in Skopje. He was previously a member of the Management Board of the Directorate for Technological Industrial Zones.

Municipality of Butel

Area	57 km²
Number of inhabitants	36 154
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (62,25 %) Albanians (25,19 %) Turks (3,61 %) Serbs (4,28 %) Bosniaks (2,68 %) Roma (1,55 %)
Number of council members	19
Budget for 2021	539 836 000
Address	Butelska Street No. 4 Skopje
Telephone	02/2600 506
Website	www.opstinabutel.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Butel

Darko Kostovski
(VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition) is a Member of Parliament and President of the Municipal Committee of VMRO-DPMNE in Butel. Kostovski is the coach of the Macedonian Taekwondo national team. He has a Master's degree in political science from the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus" at the University "St. Cyril and Methodius" in Skopje.

Velimir Smilevski
(SDSM and the coalition) is the mayor of the municipality of Butel. Before coming to the position of mayor, he was a businessman. In the period from 2013 to 2017 he was a councilor in the municipality of Butel. He graduated from the Faculty of Economics at the University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" in Skopje.

Municipality of Gazi Baba

Area	92 km²
Number of inhabitants	72 617
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (73,67 %) Serbs (17,22 %) Albanians (2,89 %) Roma (2,87 %)
Number of council members	27
Budget for 2021	1 113 641 000
Address	Archimed Street No. 2 Skopje
Telephone	02/3226 655
Website	www.gazibaba.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Gazi Baba

Boris Georgievski
(SDSM and the coalition) is the current mayor of the municipality of Gazi Baba. He previously served as a councilor in the municipality for two terms: 2000-2005 and 2009-2013. In 2015 he specialized in medical laboratory diagnostics at the University "Goce Delchev" - Stip, and in 2012 specialized as a medical laboratory analyst at the University "St. Kliment Ohridski "in Bitola.

Katerina Jovanovska Ivanovska (TMRO)

Georgi Todorov (Political Party Integra)

Boban Stefkovski
(VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition) is a state advisor at the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. He previously worked as an associate in the office of the State Secretary of the Ministry of Defense. From 2009 to 2013 he was a counselor in the municipality of Gazi Baba from the ranks of VMRO-DPMNE. He has a Master's degree in Security Sciences from the Institute for Defense and Peace Studies at the University "St. Cyril and Methodius" in Skopje. In 2018 he was elected president of the municipal committee of VMRO-DPMNE in Gazi Baba.

Municipality of Gjorche Petrov

Area	67 km^2
Number of inhabitants	41 634
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (85,16 %) Serbs (4,16 %) Albanians (3,84 %) Roma (3 %)
Number of council members	23
Budget for 2021	815 921 622
Address	Gjorce Petrov Street No. 73 Skopje
Telephone	02/2039 307
Website	www.opstinagpetrov.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Gjorche Petrov

Aleksandar Dimitrievic
(Party Levica) is a lawyer in his own law office. He graduated from the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus" at the University "St. Cyril and Methodius"in Skopje.

Ljupcho Janevski
(Movement Determined for change) is the director of the Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism. He has a master's degree in strategic management from "Business Academy Smilevski". From 2010 to 2012 he was the marketing director of "Business Academy Smilevski". From 2012 to 2014 he was Director of Marketing and Sales at "MRI Informatics" - Skopje. He is a doctoral student at the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Ohrid.

Aleksandar Naumoski
(SDSM and the coalition) is the mayor of the municipality of Gjorce Petrov. He was previously the director of the Skopje Remand Prison in Suto Orizari. In the period 2006-2011 he was an associate in the Ministry of Justice and an advisor in the Central Registry. He has work experience as a manager in the private sector and as a private entrepreneur. He holds a master's degree from the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus" in Skopje.

Sasho Pankovski (TMRO)

Dimche Petkovski (Political Party Democrats, Workers and Independents)

Aleksandar Stojkoski
(VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition) is a former Member of Parliament and a member of the municipal council of Gjorce Pertov. Stojkoski is a radiologist at the Institute of Radiology within the Clinical Center in Skopje. He is a longtime member of the municipal committee of VMRO-DPMNE in Gjorche Petrov.

Municipality of Karposh

Area	35 km^2
Number of inhabitants	59 666
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (88,51 %) Albanians (3,27 %) Serbs (3,66 %) Roma (1,03 %)
Number of council members	23
Budget for 2021	1 152 000 000
Address	Radika Street No. 9 Skopje
Telephone	02/3061 353
Website	www.karpos.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Karposh

Dushko Veskovski
(SDSM and the coalition) is the director of the Public Enterprise Water Supply and Sewerage. In 2019, he was appointed organizational secretary of SDSM. He holds a master's degree in Human Resource Management. He previously worked for the Holocaust Fund of the Jews of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Oliver Zafirovski

(VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition) is a specialist pediatrician and pulmonologist at the Institute for Lung Diseases in Kozle. He was director of the Institute In the period from 2006 to 2017.

Stevce Jakimovski
(GROM) was the mayor of the municipality of Karpos for three terms. He served the first term in the period from 2000 to 2003, the second from 2009 to 2013, and the third from 2013 to 2017. In 2003 he was appointed Minister of Economy, and from December 2004 to 2006 he served as Minister of Labor and social policy. After the end of his ministerial term, he worked in his private company. Before starting his political career, he was engaged in private business, and was also the director of "Katlanovo Tours". Jakimovski graduated from the Faculty of Economics in Skopje.

Vasko Kostov
(Makedonska era third (Macedonian Era Third) / Macedonian independent lists)

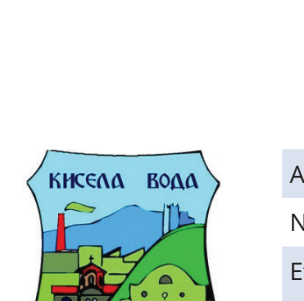
Hrista Najdanov
(Movement Odluchni za promena (Determined for Change) is a lawyer by profession. He received his master's degree from the University of Lumsa in Rome.

Darko Ristovski
(Levica Party) graduated from the Institute of Informatics at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, University "St. Cyril and Methodius"- Skopje. He has 19 years of work experience in the field of informatics.

Municipality of Kisela Voda

Area	47 km^2
Number of inhabitants	57 236
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (91,69 %) Serbs (2,49 %) Roma (1,25 %) Vlachs (1,13 %)
Number of council members	23
Budget for 2021	1 043 004 471
Address	Petara Deljan Street No. 17 Skopje
Telephone	02/2785 400
Website	www.kiselavoda.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Kisela Voda



Orce Georgievski
(VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition) is a councilor in the municipality of Kisela Voda. He is the organizational secretary of VMRO-DPMNE and an expert on hydropower plants in EVN - Power Plants.

Gyulistana Markovska
(Movement Odluchni za promena (Determined for change) is a former member of the Parliament in two terms: from 1990 to 1994 and from 1998 to 2002 as part of the parliamentary group of VMRO-DPMNE. She is a specialist in eye diseases at the Medical Faculty. She worked as a general practitioner at the Medical Center in Kumanovo and as a specialist doctor at the Military Hospital in Skopje.

Rosanda Markovska (TMRO)

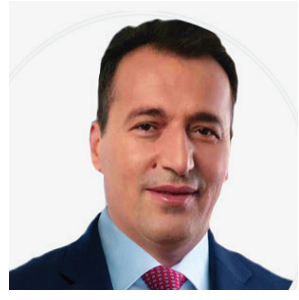
Filip Temelkovski
(SDSM and the coalition) is the current mayor of the municipality of Kisela Voda. In the period 2008-2009, Filip Temelkovski was the Secretary General of the Social Democratic Youth of Macedonia, and was also the president of the municipal organization of SDSM in Kisela Voda. Outside of politics, Filip Temelkovski works in the catering sector.

Julijana Shtrkovska - Kolaric
(Levica Party) is a Master of Science in Economics at the University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius"- Skopje. Works as an internal auditor in the PE National Broadcasting. She had previous work experience in PE Macedonian Radio Television as an accountant, expert associate and Deputy Assistant General Manager for Joint Functions. She also worked as an internal auditor at the Crisis Management Center.

Municipality of Saraj

Area	241 km²
Number of inhabitants	35 408
Ethnic structure of the population	Albanians (91,53 %) Macedonians (3,89 %) Bosniaks (3,16 %)
Number of council members	19
Budget for 2021	/
Address	Recreataional Center Saraj nn Municipality of Saraj
Telephone	02/2057 990 02/2057 996
Website	www.saraj.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Saraj



Blerim Bexheti
(DUI) was mayor of the municipality of Saraj from 2009 to 2011. Previously, from 2006 to 2009 he was a Member of Parliament. In the period from 2011 to 2014 he was Minister of Justice. He graduated from the Faculty of Law at the University of Pristina.

Ilir Krosi (DPA)

Kerim Mamuti
(Alliance for Albanians and Alternativa) is a former director of the Idrizovo Penitentiary.

Hasim Murtezani
(Besa Movement) has a master's degree in security sciences and is chairman of the party's municipal branch in Saraj.

Municipality of Centar

Area	10 km^2
Number of inhabitants	45 412
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (85,4 %) Serbs (4,49 %) Albanians (3,23 %) Roma (2,14 %) Turks (1,08 %) Vlachs (1,01 %)
Number of council members	23
Budget for 2021	1 075 055 000
Address	Mihail Tsokov Str. nn Skopje
Telephone	02/3203 600
Website	www.opstinacentar.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Centar

Goran Gerasimovski
(SDSM and the coalition) is the Director of the State Office of Industrial Property. He has a master's degree in human resource management from the University of Tourism and Management in Skopje. In the period from 2006 to 2008 he was a trainee civil servant in the State Statistical Office.

Andrea Jankov
(Levica Party) holds a master's degree in engineering in architecture from the Faculty of Architecture at the University "St. Cyril and Methodius "in Skopje. Works as a designer and construction engineer in the private sector.

Silva Jovanovska (Rodina (Homeland) Macedonia)

Natasha Kotlar Trajkova
(VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition) is a senior research associate and associate professor at the Institute of National History at the University "St. Cyril and Methodius"- Skopje. In 2011 she became president of the Association of Historians of the Republic of Macedonia (ZIRM).

Antoni Novotini
(Movement Odluchni za promena (Determined for Change) is a psychiatrist at the University Clinic of Psychiatry. He is a full professor of psychiatry at the Faculty of Medicine at the University "St. Cyril and Methodius". He is the President of the Macedonian Psychiatric Association.

Goga Pop Georgievski
(Tvoja (Your) Party) is a musician and civil activist.

Aco Stojanovski (Political Party Democrats, Workers and Independents).

Municipality of Cair

Area	4 km^2
Number of inhabitants	64 773
Ethnic structure of the population	Albanians (57 %) Macedonians (24,13 %) Turks (6,95 %) Roma (4,76 %) Bosniaks (4,55 %)
Number of council members	27
Budget for 2021	901 841 014
Address	Bul. Hristijan Todorovski No. 5 Skopje
Telephone	02/5101 855
Website	www.cair.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Cair

Visar Ganiu
(DUI) is a specialist doctor in kinesiology. He taught at the Faculty of Physical Education at the State University of Tetovo. In 2002 he was elected first president of the youth forum in the Cair branch of DUI, and then a member of the central presidency of the party. Prior to his candidacy for mayor of the municipality of Cair, he was acting Deputy Minister of Education and Science.

Misin Gardinaj (DPA)

Kastriot Rexhepi
(BESA Movement) is a Member of Parliament. He graduated from the Faculty of Economics at the South East European University - Tetovo.

Bekim Sali
(Alliance for Albanians and Alternativa) is the General Secretary of the political party Alternative, and previously was the chairman of the party branch in Cair. He is a dentist by profession and owns two private companies.

Eldan Dzigal (Bosniak Democratic Union)

Municipality of Shuto Orizari

Area	7 km^2
Number of inhabitants	22 017
Ethnic structure of the population	Roma (60,6 %) Albanians (30,32 %) Macedonians (6,53 %)
Number of council members	19
Budget for 2021	229 355 108
Address	Hadzi Jovan Shishko nn 1000 Skopje
Telephone	02/2614 666
Website	www.sutoorizari.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Shuto Orizari

Ferat Asan
(SDSM and the coalition) is a businessman and president of the municipal organization of SDSM in Suto Orizari. In the parliamentary elections in 2020, he ran for MP from the coalition led by SDSM.

Gege Demirovski
(People's Party of Roma) is the president of the People's Party of Roma.

Kurto Dudush
(Movement Odluchni za promena (Determined for Change) is the current mayor of the municipality of Suto Orizari, elected in 2017 as a candidate of SDSM. He was previously a Member of Parliament in the period from 2016 to 2017. He graduated in business management at MIT University in Skopje.

Halim Iseini (DPA)

Tefik Mahmut
(Levica Party) is a longtime activist for the protection of Roma rights. He holds a Master's degree in Migration from the University of Oxford. Has work experience in human rights organizations including the OSCE, ODIHR, UNICEF.

Municipality of Bitola

Area	792 km²
Number of inhabitants	95 385
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (88,71 %) Albanians (4,36 %)
Number of council members	31
Budget for 2021	2 165 719 368
Address	Bulevard 1 May No. 61 Bitola
Telephone	047/208 442
Website	www.bitola.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Bitola

Hristo Kondovski
(SDSM and the coalition) is a businessman, and since 2014 he is a co-owner and one of the founders of an insurance brokerage company. He graduated from the Faculty of Economics in Prilep at the University "St. Kliment Ohridski "- Bitola.

Toni Konjanovski
(VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition) is a councilor in the municipality of Bitola. He specialized in epidemiology at the Faculty of Medicine at the University "St. Cyril and Methodius"- Skopje. In the past years he has been an active member of the Central Health Commission of VMRO-DPMNE.

Zoran Lazarovski
(Group of voters Zoran Lazarovski) is the owner of a fitness club in Bitola.

Goran Milevski
(Movement Odluchni za promena (Determined for Change) is the current Minister of Local Self-Government and President of the Liberal Democratic Party. In the period from 2014 to 2019, he was a Member of Parliament. Master in Business Administration MBA - Management at the Faculty of Economics - Prilep.

Jorgo Ognenovski
(Political Party Demokrati (Demokrats)) is the president of the party Democrats. He ran as an independent candidate in the 2017 local elections. He is a professional actor who founded a company for the production of films and TV series. He has produced 4 feature films in Hollywood, USA, one of which in co-production with the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of North Macedonia. He is also the founder of the humanitarian organization "For Better Health" - Bitola, intended for the needs of the hospital in Bitola. He graduated from the Faculty of Economics in Skopje.

Goran Taskovski
(Makedonska era third (Macedonian era third) / Macedonian independent lists) is one of the founders of the political party "Macedonian era third". He is a former Macedonian ambassador to Turkey.

Municipality of Veles

Area	464 km²
Number of inhabitants	55 108
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (84,86 %) Albanians (4,17 %) Turks (3,13 %) Roma (1,45 %)
Number of council members	23
Budget for 2021	932 153 846
Address	Panko Brashnar Street No. 1 Veles
Telephone	043/232 406
Website	www.veles.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Veles

Semir Alimov (Bosniak Democratic Union)

Zlatko Arsov
(Levica Party) is a PhD and full professor at the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food at the University "St. Cyril and Methodius " in Skopje.

Marko Kolev
(VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition) graduated from the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics at the University "St. Cyril and Methodius" in Skopje. In 2009 he started working as a consultant in the Center for Development of the Vardar Planning Region, and in mid-2013 appointed Head of the Center.

Nenad Kocic
(SDSM and the coalition) is a Member of Parliament and a specialist in internal medicine.

Municipality of Gevgelija

Area	485 km^2
Number of inhabitants	22 988
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (96,82 %) Serbs (1,6 %)
Number of council members	19
Budget for 2021	733 066 292
Address	Dimitar Vlahov Street No. 4 Gevgelija
Telephone	034/213 843
Website	www.gevgelija.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Gevgelija

Ljupcho Kadiev (Integra)

Gligor Petkov
(Group of voters Gligor Petkov)

Viktor Petkov
(Movement Odluchni za promena (Determined for Change) owns a fruit and vegetable processing company.

Sasho Potskov
(SDSM and the coalition) is the current mayor of the Municipality of Gevgelija. From 2009 to 2013 he was a councilor in the municipality of Gevgelija. He was previously a Member of Parliament from 2014 to 2016 and from 2016 to 2020, but in 2017 his term ended because he was elected mayor. He holds a Master's degree from the Faculty of Economics. He is the president of the municipal organization SDSM Gevgelija.

Andon Saramandov
(VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition) is a councilor in the municipality of Gevgelija. He is the president of the municipal committee of VMRO-DPMNE in Gevgelija.

Municipality of Gostivar

Area	519 km²
Number of inhabitants	81 042
Ethnic structure of the population	Albanians (66,68 %) Macedonians (19,59 %) Turks (9,86 %) Roma (2,76 %)
Number of council members	31
Budget for 2021	1 120 000 000
Address	Braka Ginovski Street No. 61 Gostivar
Telephone	042/ 213 511
Website	www.gostivavri.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Gostivar

Nevzat Bejta
(DUI) is a former mayor of the municipality of Gostivar in two terms: 2005-2009 and 2013-2017. In 2000 he was elected councilor in the municipality of Gostivar, and in 2005 mayor of the municipality and vice president of ZELS. From 2002 to 2005 he was a Member of Parliament, and from 2011 to 2013 he was Minister of Local Self-Government. He previously worked as a history teacher in the villages of Cegrane and Gostivar. He holds a master's degree from the University of Tirana.

Renata Elezi
(DPA) is vice president and member of the DPA central presidency. She is also the vice-president of the party's women's forum. She graduated from the Faculty of Medical Sciences and works at the General Hospital in Gostivar.

Fadil Zendeli
(BESA) is a Member of Parliament and Vice President of the Assembly. In the period from 2009 to 2013 he was President of the Council of the Municipality of Gostivar. He taught as an associate professor at the Faculty of Contemporary Social Sciences at the South East European University in Tetovo. He is the Vice President of the BESA movement.

Arben Taravari
(Alliance for Albanians and Alternativa) is the current mayor of the municipality of Gostivar. In the period from June to November 2017 he was Minister of Health. Taravari is a Senior Research Fellow at the University Clinic of Neurology, and since 2011 has been elected Head of Department and Chairman of the Clinic Board.

Municipality of Debar

Area	145 km²
Number of inhabitants	19 542
Ethnic structure of the population	Albanians (58,07 %) Macedonians (20,01 %) Turks (13,73 %) Roma (5,53 %)
Number of council members	15
Budget for 2021	341 897 000
Address	September Street No. 72 Debar
Telephone	046/831 196
Website	www.dibra.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Debar

Hekuran Duka
(DUI) is the mayor of the municipality of Debar elected in the early local elections in April 2019, and from 31.01.2019 until the elections he was acting mayor of the municipality. He was previously a councilor in the municipality. He is a specialist urologist-surgeon by profession.

Petrit Klenja (DPA)

Bekim Pocesta
(Alliance of Albanians and Alternativa) is employed at the Cardiology Clinic in Skopje. He graduated from the Faculty of Medicine at the University "St. Cyril and Methodius" University in Skopje, after which he specialized in cardiology.

Municipality of Delchevo

Area	423 km²
Number of inhabitants	17 505
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (95,04 %) Roma (3,72 %)
Number of council members	15
Budget for 2021	291 775 400
Address	Svetozar Markovic Street No. 1 Delchevo
Telephone	033/411 550
Website	www.delcevo.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Delchevo

Nikolcho Stojmenovski

(VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition) is a doctor of veterinary medicine.

Goran Trajkovski

(SDSM and the coalition) is the mayor of the municipality of Delchevo elected in the local elections in 2017, and from 2013 to 2017 he was councilor in the municipality. In the period from 2010 to 2013 he was president of the municipal organization of SDSM in Delchevo.

Municipality of Kavadarci

Area	1132 km²
Number of inhabitants	38 741
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (96,79 %) Roma (1,75 %)
Number of council members	19
Budget for 2021	1 049 967 00
Address	Marshal Tito Square nn Kavadarci
Telephone	043/416 130
Website	www.kavadarci.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Kavadarci

Mitko Jancev

(VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition) is the current mayor of the municipality of Kavadarci. He owns a private company for production of mineral water. He holds a Master's degree from the Faculty of Natural and Technical Sciences at the University "Goce Delchev" - Stip.

Goran Todorov

(SDSM and the coalition) is the president of the municipal organization of SDSM in Kavadarci. Previously he was a member of the Executive Board of SDSM Kavadarci in two terms: from 2006 to 2010, and from 2013 to 2017. He graduated from the Faculty of Natural Sciences at the University "Goce Delchev" in Stip.

Municipality of Kichevo

Area	839 km^2
Number of inhabitants	56 734
Ethnic structure of the population	Albanians (54,51 %) Macedonians (35,74 %) Turks (5,28 %) Roma (2,87 %)
Number of council members	23
Budget for 2021	836 536 000
Address	Boris Kidrich Street No. 1 Kichevo
Telephone	045/223 001
Website	www.kercova.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Kichevo

Gjorgji Bileski
(Makedonska era third (Macedonian era third) / Macedonian independent lists)

Fatmir Dehari
(DUI) has been the mayor of the municipality of Kicevo since 2013. Previously, from 2009 to 2013 he was mayor of the municipality of Oslomej. Prior to his election as Mayor, he was the Director of the PE Makedonski Posti Kicevo, Deputy Minister of Interior and Deputy Director of Administration for Security and Counterintelligence. He graduated from the Faculty of Physical Education at the University of Pristina.

Aleksandar Jovanovski
(VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition) is a family doctor in a private health institution. From 2006 to 2013 he worked as a professor of medical subjects at OSU "Mirko Mileski". He graduated in general medicine at the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Ss. "Cyril and Methodius" - Skopje.

Fatmir Limani
(Fatmir Limani Group of Voters) is a professor of history and former Deputy Director of Power Plants of North Macedonia. He graduated from the State University in Tetovo.

Municipality of Kochani

Area	382 km²
Number of inhabitants	38 092
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (93,12 %) Roma (5,12 %)
Number of council members	19
Budget for 2021	604 631 000
Address	Rade Kratovche Street No. 1 Kochani
Telephone	033/274 001
Website	www.kocani.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Kochani

Nikolcho Iliev

(SDSM and the coalition) is the current mayor of the municipality of Kochani elected in the local elections in 2017. He was previously a businessman and director of the company INT. He is not a member of SDSM, but is nominated as a non-partisan candidate by the party bodies.

Ljupco Papazov

(VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition) is the owner of a private company and the former director of CPE Vodovod-Kochani.

Municipality of Kriva Palanka

Area	481 km²
Number of inhabitants	20 820
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (96,06 %) Roma (3,21 %)
Number of council members	19
Budget for 2021	421 051 329
Address	St. Joakim Osogovski No. 175 Kriva Palanka
Telephone	031/375 035
Website	www.krivapalanka.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Kriva Palanka

Sasko Mitovski

(SDSM and the coalition) is the owner of a catering facility and a manager in the private sector. He was a member of the youth organization of SDSM in 2008 and a candidate for councilor in the municipality of Kriva Palanka in 2009. In the period from 2013 to 2017 he was a member of the Executive Board of the municipal organization of SDSM in Kriva Palanka. He graduated in economics at the University of Tourism and Management in Skopje.

Zoran Pavlovski

(Coalition Movement Odluchni za promena (Determined for Change)

Aleksandar Rangelov
(VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition) is a member of the Municipal Council of Kriva Palanka and vice president of the municipal organization of VMRO-DPMNE. He was previously the director of the Center for Culture in Kriva Palanka. He graduated in political science at the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus" at the University "St. Cyril and Methodius"- Skopje.

Slavcho Stankovski
(Integra) works as an educator (instructor and theorist) training candidates for future drivers.

Municipality of Kumanovo

Area	509 km²
Number of inhabitants	105 484
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (60,43 %) Albanians (25,87 %) Serbs (8,59 %) Roma (4,03 %)
Number of council members	33
Budget for 2021	1 872 112 941
Address	11 Oktomvri Street nn Kumanovo
Telephone	031/475 800 031/438 633
Website	www.kumanovo.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Kumanovo

Maksim Dimitrievski
(independent candidate) is the current mayor of the municipality of Kumanovo. Until recently, he was a longtime member of SDSM, and due to the decision for independent participation in these elections, he was expelled from the party. He is a former member of parliament, elected in the 2016 parliamentary elections. His parliamentary term ended the following year due to his candidacy for mayor. Previously, he was the President of the Council of the Municipality of Kumanovo for several years. In addition to his political involvement, he has been a private entrepreneur since 1998.

Teodora Dimitrovska

(Coalition Movement Odluchni za promena (Determined for Change) is the chairman of the municipal board of the Liberal Democratic Youth in Kumanovo and the general secretary of the party's youth. She graduated from the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus" in Skopje. Dimitrovska is the youngest candidate for mayor in this election.

Oliver Ilievski

(SDSM and the coalition) is the director of AD Vodostopanstvo Kumanovo-Lipkovo Pole. He previously worked as a branch manager of Invest Bank and Sparkasse Bank in Kumanovo. He worked as a professor of accounting and marketing at the high school "Pero Nakov" in Kumanovo. He graduated from the Faculty of Economics at the University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" in Skopje.

Toni Mihajlovski

(VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition) is a theater, film and television actor, radio and television presenter and stand-up comedian. He graduated in acting at the Academy of Dramatic Arts in Skopje, and currently works at the Macedonian National Theater. Mihajlovski is a former member of the VMRO-DPMNE municipal committee in Kumanovo and the party's Executive Committee.

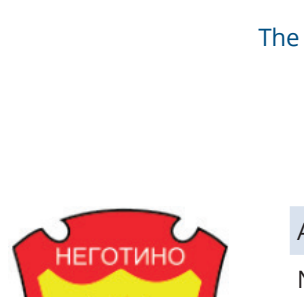
Bekim Saliu

(Alliance for Albanians and Alternativa) is the president of the Humanitarian Charity Association "St. Mother Teresa" - Kumanovo.

Municipality of Negotino

Area	414 km²
Number of inhabitants	19 045
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (92,48 %) Serbs (3,26 %) Roma (2,36 %) Turks (1,26 %)
Number of council members	15
Budget for 2021	391 299 986
Address	Aco Adzi Ilov Street No. 2 Negotino
Telephone	043/361 045
Website	www.negotino.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Negotino



Toni Delkov

(SDSM and the coalition) is the current mayor of the municipality of Negotino. He was previously a member of the Municipal Council in the composition 2013-2017. Delkov is a private businessman and former handball player in HC Povardarie.

Goran Stojanov

(VMRO-DPMME) is an internist and head of emergency medical care, and previously was head of the Covid Center in Negotino. Stojanov was a member of the Municipal Council in the period from 2009 to 2013.

Municipality of Ohrid

Area	390 km^2
Number of inhabitants	55 749
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (84,93 %) Albanians (5,31 %) Turks (1,26 %)
Number of council members	23
Budget for 2021	1 298 764 503
Address	Dimitar Vlahov No. 57 Ohrid
Telephone	046/262 492
Website	www.ohrid.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Ohrid

Konstantin Georgievski

(SDSM and the coalition) is the current mayor of the municipality of Ohrid, elected in the early local elections in 2019. Previously, from December 2018, he was acting mayor of the municipality of Ohrid. He specialized in internal medicine at the Medical Faculty in Skopje.

Kiril Pecakov

(VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition) is a current Member of Parliament and a member of the Executive Committee of VMRO-DPMNE. Pecakov has a degree in dentistry and works at the Health Center in Ohrid. He was elected president of the Union of Youth Forces (UMS) of VMRO-DPMNE in Ohrid in 2008, and held the post until 2011. In the same period he was a member of the Executive Committee of UMS of VMRO-DPMNE. In 2017 he was

elected president of the municipal organization of VMRO-DPMNE in Ohrid. In the period from 2009 to 2013 he was a member of the Council of the Municipality of Ohrid.

Goce Cvetkovski

(TMRO) is an activist from the Boycott Movement, supported by the political party TMRO. Goce Cvetkovski is a former member of the Levica political party.

Municipality of Prilep

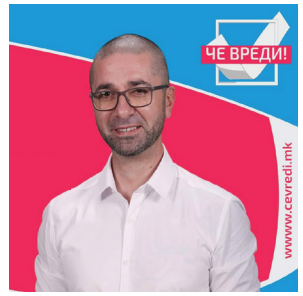
Area	1194 km^2
Number of inhabitants	76 768
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (92,35 %) Roma (5,77 %) Turks (1,19 %)
Number of council members	27
Budget for 2021	1 410 981 000
Address	Prilepski Braniteli Street nn Prilep
Telephone	046/262 492
Website	www.prilep.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Prilep

Borce Jovcheski
(VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition) is a councilor in the municipality of Prilep. He is an orthopedic specialist by profession. Works in the private Health Institution "Dr. Jovcheski ".

Zoran Mitreski
(Integra) is the owner of a company in the energy sector.

Slave Petreski
(Coalition Movement Odluchni za promena (Determined for Change) is a former director of the Public Enterprise for Spatial and Urban Plans in Prilep.



Zarko Stevanoski
(independent, civic initiative "It's worth it") is a former member of the municipal organization of SDSM Prilep. He is a lawyer by profession.

Goran Sugareski
(SDSM and the coalition) is a former member of Parliament in the period from 2008 to 2016. In the previous government he was Minister of Transport and Communications, and until some time ago he was acting director of the Customs Administration. From 2000 to 2003 he was a councilor in the municipality of Prilep, after his mandade and until 2008 he worked as a communal inspector in the municipality. He holds a Master's degree from the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus" at the University "St. Cyril and Methodius"- Skopje.

Municipality of Resen

Area	739 km²
Number of inhabitants	16 825
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (76,07 %) Turks (10,68 %) Albanians (9,13 %)
Number of council members	15
Budget for 2021	340 226 923
Address	Car Samoil Square No. 20 Resen
Telephone	047/551 884
Website	www.resen.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Resen

Zivko Gosarevski
(SDSM and the coalition) is the current mayor of the municipality of Resen. He is a longtime member of SDSM. He was previously a member of the Municipal Council of Resen in the period 2013-2017. He graduated from the Faculty of Dentistry at UKIM in Skopje. He owns a private dental practice.

Vesna Mirkova
(Movement Odluchni za promena (Determined for Change) is a former councilor in the municipality of Resen. She is a sociologist by profession.

Gordana Popovska
(Makedonska treta era (Macedonian Third Era)

Jovan Tozievski
(VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition) is the president of the municipal organization of VMRO-DPMNE in Resen. He was previously a councilor in the municipality of Resen. He is a graduate economist by profession, employed in PCE "Proleter".

Osman Shukriu
(DUI) is the director of the Public Institution National Park "Pelister" - Bitola. He was previously Deputy Director of the Emigration Agency.

Municipality of Struga

Area	507 km²
Number of inhabitants	65 375
Ethnic structure of the population	Albanians (56,85 %) Macedonians (32,09 %) Turks (5,72 %)
Number of council members	27
Budget for 2021	978 872 313
Address	Majka Tereza Square nn Struga
Telephone	046/781 223
Website	www.struga.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Struga

Idri Istefi
(Alliance for Albanians and Alternativa) is a member of the Central Board of the Alliance of Albanians. He is an electrical engineer by profession, and is employed in ELEM. From 1996 to 2004 he was president of the Council of the Municipality of Veleshta.

Ramis Merko
(DUI) is the current mayor of the municipality of Struga. Previously, he was a minister without portfolio in charge of foreign investments. Before being appointed to this position in the period from 2014 until the elections in 2016, he was a Member of Parliament. Previously, in the period from 2005 to 2013, Merko was mayor of the municipality of Struga for two consecutive terms. From 2003 to 2005 he was the head of the Health Fund in Struga, and from 1983 to 1999 he was a senior officer at the Agency for Agricultural Development. He is a graduate economist.

Samir Murtezoski
(DPA)

Nasto Palioski
(TMRO) is a pensioner, and was a former vice president of the VMRO-DPMNE Overseas Committee for Europe. These are the second local elections in which he is running for mayor, after the previous elections in 2017. In 1999, Palioski was elected President of the Macedonian Congress for Europe.

Lube Petrevski (Demokrati)

Abdulla Kazimoski
(BESA) is a former councilor and chairman of the Council of the Municipality of Struga. In 2017, he left the then coalition "Alliance for Albanians". For some time he served on the Council as an independent.

Dimce Shipinkarovski
(SDSM and the coalition) is the head of the regional office of the Health Insurance Fund in Struga. He graduated in economics at the Faculty of Economics in Prilep.

Nikola Shuleski (Integra)

Municipality of Strumica

Area	32 km^2
Number of inhabitants	54 676
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (32,09 %) Turks (6,87 %)
Number of council members	23
Budget for 2021	1 112 708 869
Address	Sando Masev Street No. 1 Strumica
Telephone	034/348 030
Website	www.strumica.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Strumica

Vase Vitanov
(Integra)

Zan Drvoshanov
(VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition) is a graduate economist and owner of an accounting services and financial consulting company. In 2020 he was elected president of the municipal organization of VMRO-DPMNE in Strumica.

Kostadin Kostadinov
(SDSM and the coalition) is an MP and spokesman for SDSM. In the period from 2013 to 2016 he was a councilor in the municipality of Strumica, and in 2017 acting Mayor of the municipality of Strumica for ten months. He was previously a member of the executive board of SDSM and president of the Social Democratic Youth in Strumica. He completed higher education at the Faculty of Economics at FON University.

Municipality of Tetovo

Area	1080 km²
Number of inhabitants	86 580
Ethnic structure of the population	Albanians (70,32 %) Macedonians (23,16 %) Roma (2,72 %) Turks (2,17 %)
Number of council members	31
Budget for 2021	1 783 887 702
Address	Dervish Cara Street nn Tetovo
Telephone	044/511 930
Website	www.tetova.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Tetovo

Teuta Arifi
(DUI) is the current mayor of the Municipality of Tetovo elected in two terms (2013 and 2017). In the period from 2011 to February 2013, she was the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of European Affairs. Previously, from 2002 to 2011 she was a Member of Parliament. She has a doctorate in philological sciences. For one year she taught at the Faculty of Philology at the University "St. Cyril and Methodius" University - Skopje, and was a professor at the University of Southeast Europe, where from 2001 to 2006 she was dean of the Faculty of Pedagogy.

Sadi Bexheti
(DPA) is a university professor, former rector of the University of Tetovo and mayor of Tetovo from 2009 to 2013. He graduated from the Medical Faculty in Pristina, and received his doctorate degree from the Institute of Anatomy at the Medical Faculty in Zagreb.

Hamdija Elezovic
(SDSM and the coalition) is a dentist and chairman of the Health Commission at SDSM Tetovo. He studied at the Faculty of Dentistry at the University "St. Cyril and Methodius" in Skopje.

Afrim Ibraimi
(Movement for Democracy, Rights and Freedoms) is a psychiatrist. He began his medical studies in Pristina and completed them in Tirana.

Bilal Kasami
(BESA) is a Member of Parliament and President of the political party BESA. He received his PhD from the Faculty of Economics at the University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" in Skopje. From 2000 to 2004 he worked in the Customs Administration of the Republic of North Macedonia, and from 2004 to 2006 he was Secretary of State in the Ministry of Economy. In 2009 he worked in the private sector, while from 2009 to 2011 he was a professor at the International Balkan University.

Vulnet Murseli
(Alliance for Albanians and Alternativa) graduated from the Faculty of Law, and completed a master's degree in public health at the Faculty of Medicine, and has passed the bar exam. He was the director of the sector for implementation of international agreements from a social aspect in the Health Insurance Fund of North Macedonia. At the same time he is the owner of diagnostic laboratories LAOR - Tetovo.

Snezana Stojanovska
(Integra) is the president of the Skillful Woman Association.

Municipality of Shtip

Area	556 km^2
Number of inhabitants	47 796
Ethnic structure of the population	Macedonians (87,19 %) Roma (4,59 %) Vlachs (4,34 %) Turks (2,66 %)
Number of council members	23
Budget for 2021	920 736 000
Address	Vasil Glavinov Street nn Shtip
Telephone	032/266 600
Website	www.stip.gov.mk

Candidates for mayor of the municipality of Shtip

Ivan Jordanov

(VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition) is a member of Parliament and president of the municipal organization of VMRO-DPMNE in Shtip. He has a master's degree in economics, completed his studies at the Faculty of Economics at UGD - Shtip.

Sasko Nikolov

(SDSM and the coalition) is the current mayor of Shtip, elected in the early local elections in December 2020. In 2017 he was member of the Council of the municipality of Shtip. In the early parliamentary elections in 2020, he was elected Member of Parliament, but resigned due to his candidacy in the early local elections. He is an interventional cardiologist by profession and is the founder of the Department of Interventional Cardiology in the hospital in Shtip.

Simon Polycarp

(Integra) is running for mayor for the second time, after the candidacy in the early local elections in December 2020 in Shtip. In 2008 he was the holder of the electoral list of the TMRO party in the third constituency. He was born in Nigeria and has been living in Shtip since the time of his studies.

Vancho Sanev

(Movement Odluchni za promena (Determined for Changes) is a former member of the Council of the municipality of Shtip. In the parliamentary elections in 2020, he was nominated by the DOM party as a candidate for MP in the third constituency. He is the president of the municipal organization of DOM in Shtip. He is an economist.

Municipality	Candidate for mayor	List submitter
Arachinovo	Ridvan Ibraimi	DUI
	Milikije Halimi	Coalition led by SDSM
	Naim Sinani	Aliance for Albanians and Alternativa
Berovo	Goran Alachki	INTEGRA - MACEDONIAN CONSERVATIVE PARTY
	Gorancho Kostevski	RODINA MACEDONIA
	Zvonko Pekeski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Eleonora Rashkovska	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Bogdanci	Marjan Peev	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Blaze Shapov	Coalition led by SDSM
	Risto Dzakov	Group of voters Risto Dzakov
Bogovinje	Besnik Emshi	DUI
	Dashmir Arifi	DPA
	Dashmir Arifi	Alliance of Albanians and Alternativa
	Fatmir Sabriu	BESA
Bosilovo	Zoran Zimbakov	Coalition led by SDSM
	Risto Manchev	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Brvenica	Enver Pajaziti	Group of voters Enver Pajaziti
	Mikail Rasimi	DPA
	Jovica Ilievski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Mirko Stojanovski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Argent Gura	Alliance of Albanians and Alternativa
	Arkin Yahiji	DUI
Valandovo	Pero Kostadinov	Coalition led by SDSM
	Toni Uzunov	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Vasilevo	Marjan Janev	Coalition led by SDSM
	Slave Andonov	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Vevchani	Sasho Jankovski	SDSM
	Spase Kochovski	VMRO-DPMNE
Vinica	Ivica Dimitrov	SDSM
	Mile Petkov	VMRO-DPMNE
Vrapchishte	Shakir Islami	Group of voters Shakir Islami
	Refik Mustafi	Democratic Party of Turks in Macedonia
	Xhezmi Mamuti	Coalition led by SDSM
	Senat Ameti	BESA
	Irfan Sherifi	DPA
	Isen Shabani	Alliance of Albanians and Alternativa
	Nebi Rexhepi	DUI
Gradsko	Kiro Nackov	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Robert Beshovski	Coalition led by SDSM
Debarca	Sasho Siljanovski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Igor Krcoski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Zoran Nogacheski	Group of voters Zoran Nogacheski candidate for mayor of municipality of Debartsa
Demir Kapija	Andon Donev	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Lazar Petrov	Coalition led by SDSM
Demir Hisar	Nikola Najdovski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Stevche Mitrevski	Coalition led by SDSM
Dojran	Filip Donchovski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Zoran Veselinovic	Party of United Democrats of Macedonia - PODEM
	Ango Angov	Coalition led by SDSM

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Dolneni	Lado Gligiroski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Agim Kera	BESA
	Admir Ujkanovic	Bosniak Democratic Union
	Sead Sadikovski	Democratic Party of Turks in Macedonia
	Urim Ibeski	DUI
	Adnan Xhaferoski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Samedin Imeri	Alternativa
	Izet Zejnelovic	Political party Democrats, Workers and Independent
Zelino	Mahir Ziberi	Alliance of Albanians and Alternativa
	Fatmir Izairi	DUI
	Blerim Sejdi	BESA
	Mehdin Nazifi	DPA
Zelenikovo	Borche Gievski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Katerina Georgievska	Movement Odluchni za promena (Determined for Change)
	Kosta Manevski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Zrnovci	Viktor Angjelov	Coalition led by SDSM
	Borche Kocev	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Ilinden	Zika Stojanovski	Group of voters Zika Stojanovski
	Stole Atanasovski	Group of voters Stole Atanasovski
	Aleksandar Todorovski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Aleksandar Georgievski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Jegunovce	Darko Blazeski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Dimitar Kostadi-noski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Karbinci	Viktor Paunov	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Jordan Nasev	Coalition led by SDSM
Konche	Zlatko Ristov	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Blagoj Iliev	Coalition led by SDSM
	Orhan Barov	Democratic Party of Turks in Macedonia

Kratovo	Marjancho Kolevski	Group of voters Marajancho Kolevski
	Vlatko Bojkovski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Todorche Nikolovski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Krivogashtani	Aleksandar Bogdanoski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Goce Chirunoski	Party of United Democrats of Macedonia
	Nikolche Mickoski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Igor Graoroski	Makedonska era third (Macedonian era third)/ Macedonian independent lists
Krushevo	Tome Hristoski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Biljana Proeska	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Lipkovo	Erkan Arifi	DUI
	Evzi Jashari	DPA
	Arsim Idrizi	Alliance of Albanians and Alternativa
	Luan Ramadani	BESA
Lozovo	Jovica Anakievski	TMRO Permanent Macedonian radical unification
	Velin Nikolov	Party of United Democrats of Macedonia
	Jordan Pavlov	Group of voters Jordan Pavlov
	Aco Velkovski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Boshko Cvetkovski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Mavrovo I Rostusha	Mevded Xhaferu	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Medat Kurtovski	Coalition led by SDSM
Makedonska Kamenica	Pero Mitrevski	Group of voters Pero Mitrevski
	Sonja Stamenkova	Coalition led by SDSM
	Miran Mitrevski	Group of voters Miran Mitrevski
	Dimcho Atanasovski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Angelcho Georgievski	Group of voters Angelcho Georgievski

Makedonski Brod	Aco Noveski	Group of voters Aco Noveski
	Zivko Siljanovski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Zarko Risteski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Mogila	Jasmina Gulevska	Coalition led by SDSM
	Angela Chagorska	Makedonska era treta (Macedonian era third)/ Macedonian independent lists
	Dragancho Sabotkovski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Novaci	Ljube Kuzmanoski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Stevche Stevanovski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Vasko Naumovski	Makedonska era treta (Macedonian era third) / Macedonian independent lists
Novo Selo	Zvonko Angelov	Coalition led by SDSM
	Gjorgje Bozinov	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Petrovec	Elizabeta Zelenikovska	Coalition led by SDSM
	Petre Janevski	Movement Odluchni za promena (Determined for Change)
	Borche Mitevski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Pehchevo	Aleksandar Gjorgjievski	Group of voters
	Aleksandar Kitanski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Slavcho Pandurski	Coalition led by SDSM
Plasnica	Alija Jaoski	DUI
	Abdulvait Karamaleski	Democratic Party of Turks in Macedonia (DPTM)
Probiship	Dragan Anastasov	Coalition led by SDSM
	Marijan Milenkovski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Radovish	Gerasim Konzulov	Movement Odluchni za promena (Determined for Change)
	Goran Pocev	Group of voters
	Aco Ristov	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Kole Chakarchiev	Coalition led by SDSM

Rankovce	Daniel Krstevski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Mihajlo Ristovic	Integra
	Borche Spasovski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Ivica Toshevski	Group of voters
Rosoman	Stojan Nikolov	Coalition led by SDSM
	Tihomir NIkolov	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Sveti Nikole	Sasho Velkovski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Dejan Vladev	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Slobodan Danevski	Group of voters
Sopishte	Sasho Stojanovski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Stefche Trpkovski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
Staro Nagorichane	Velibor Denkovski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Vlaste Dimkovic	TMRO
	Zaklina Jovanovska	Coalition led by SDSM
Studenichani	Ejup Abazi	DUI
	Fatmir Ejupi	Coalition Alliance of Albanians and Alternativa
	Azem Sadiki	DPA
Tearce	Daut Emini	DPA
	Daut Memishi	Movement BESA
	Nuhi Neziri	DUI
	Nazim Taipi	Coalition Alliance of Albanians and Alternativa
Centar Zupa	Arijan Ibraim	Democratic Party of Turks in Macedonia (DPTM
	Shain Shakir	Movement for national unity of Turks (DNET)
Chashka	Zoran Zdravevski	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Goran Stojanovski	Coalition led by SDSM
	Suat Shakirov	DUI

Cheshinovo - Obleshevo	Dalibor Angelov	Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Gorancho Krstev	Coalition led by SDSM
	Darko Stefanov	Movement Odluchni za promena (Determined for Change)
Chucher Sandevo	Sashko Komnenovic	Coalition led by SDSM
	Jovan Pejkovski	Group of voters
	Goran Rajchevski	Group of voters
	Goran Chepalovic	Group of voters

5

Electoral archives of the elections in the Republic of North Macedonia since 1990

5. Electoral archives of the elections in the Republic of North Macedonia since 1990

Since March 2016, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, with its representative office in the Republic of North 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 North Macedonia since 1990", with the goal of enabling comprehensive monitoring of the election processes in the Republic of North 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 North 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, seven manuals have been compiled: for the local elections in 2013 and 2017, the presidential elections in 2014 and 2019, and the parliamentary elections in 2014, 2016 and in 2020. All manuals are available on the website of the Election Archive (izbornaarhiva.mk) in Macedonian, Albanian and English.