

Handbook on 2024 Parliamentary Elections in the Republic of North Macedonia



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Introduction

Introduction to the parliamentary Elections in the Republic of North Macedonia

The 11th parliamentary elections in the Republic of North Macedonia will be held on 8 May 2024. The parliamentary elections were called on 14.2.2024, and, the President of the Assembly, Jovan Mitreski, in line with constitutional and legal obligations signed the decision to call elections for MPs in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia.¹ Pursuant to this decision, the regular parliamentary elections will be held on 8 May 2024 (Wednesday), concurrently with the possible run-off voting for presidential elections, with an election campaign overlap both for the parliamentary and presidential elections. 120 MPs of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia are elected according to the proportional model, with country's territory divided into six electoral districts, each with 20 MPs, as specified in the Electoral Code.²

On 14 February, the SEC adopted the calendar of electoral activities to administer the elections for MPs in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia.³ The technical government for administering elections was elected on 28 January of this year, i.e. 100 days before the elections, in compliance with the law.⁴

After months of political turmoil over the constitutional changes and intensified demanding by the opposition for extraordinary parliamentary elections, the leaders of political parties represented in the Assembly convened on 4 December 2024 and reached a political agreement for presidential and parliamentary elections. Political leaders reached a consensual agreement that parliamentary elections will be held on Wednesday, May 8, concurrently with the second round of presidential elections. The first round of presidential elections will be held earlier, on Wednesday, 24 April. They opted for 8 May to be Election Day in order to ensure that parliamentary

1 Decision to call elections <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XP6jrSKDr-BVIDuMAwCJqBGak88qbx2g/view> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

2 Electoral Code stipulates that up to 123 MPs may be elected, with three additional MPs being elected by Macedonian citizens temporarily working or residing abroad (diaspora vote), provided the candidates win the required number of votes. Since the number of registered out-of-country voters for the 2024 parliamentary elections (2,605) is lower than the threshold of votes required to win an in-country seat (5,355), out-of-country voting will not be organized for these elections, so the Assembly in the next term will have 120 MPs.

3 Calendar of electoral activities https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yt9v5sjARjR2_FqqebBM6xv7Ucuwze5w/view (last visit on 07.04.2024)

4 Elections announced - candidates still kept in secret <https://www.dw.com/mk/jovan-mitreski-gi-raspisazborite-i-povika-na-fer-i-demokratski-izboren-proces/a-68254138> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

elections are held within the regular term and presidential elections are completed until 12 May when Stevo Pendarovski's term of office ends.

Both the SDSM leader, Dimitar Kovacevski and VMRO-DPMNE leader, Hristijan Mickoski, highlighted that there was a broad consensus during the leadership meeting not only about the dates of elections, but also to accept OSCE/ODIHR remarks on the Electoral Code. However, no agreement was reached on the constitutional changes during the leadership meeting.⁵

In accordance with the law, the technical (Przino) government was formed on 28 January, or 100 days before the elections. Prime Minister Dimitar Kovacevski and Assembly Speaker Talat Xhaferi resigned on 25 January. SDSM parliamentary group coordinator, Jovan Mitreski, was elected as the new president of the Macedonian Assembly on 26 January. 65 MPs voted for his election and 40 were against.⁶

With 65 votes in favor and three against, the Assembly of North Macedonia voted the technical government headed by the first Albanian Prime Minister, Talat Xhaferi of DUI.⁷ Prime Minister Talat Xhaferi stressed that the outlined politics of the current government would not change, both internal and foreign policy, underlining that no disruption of the electoral process would be allowed.⁸ DUI leader, Ali Ahmeti stressed that it was a historic day, and DUI celebrated this election by wearing red ties that read Prime Minister – Albanian – 28.01.2024.⁹

This government is mainly tasked with organizing fair and democratic parliamentary elections. Even though the largest opposition party VMRO-DPMNE proposed its own candidates, they did not vote the technical government, objecting about Talat Xhaferi leading the government. Given the experiences with technical governments thus far, this political maneuver happens for the second time when in 2016 even though SDSM proposed their ministers, they left the session and did not vote for

5 Agreement reached on elections: Presidential elections on 24 April, and parliamentary and a second round of presidential elections on the 8 May <https://360stepeni.mk/postignat-dogovor-za-izborite-na-24-april-pretседателски-a-na-8-maj-parlamentarni-so-vtor-krug-pretседателски/> (last visit 07.04.2024)

6 Jovan Mitreski is the new President of the Macedonian Assembly <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/32793109.html> (last visit 07.04.2024)

7 Technical government headed by Xhaferi is elected <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/32795231.html> (last visit 07.04.2024)

8 Xhaferi: The outlined policy of the current government will not change <https://makfax.com.mk/makedonija/%D1%9F%D0%B0%D1%84%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B8-%D0%B7%D0%B0%D1%86%D1%80%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B8-%D0%BA%D0%B0-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%B4%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%B3%D0%B0/> (last visit 07.04.2024)

9 DUI celebrates Xhaferi's election as technical prime minister with red ties - <https://360stepeni.mk/dui-go-slavi-izborot-na-dhaferi-za-tehnicki-premier-so-tsrvni-vratovrski/> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

the technical government led by Emil Dimitrev from VMRO-DPMNE.¹⁰

Bojan Maricic was elected as the first Deputy Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs, replacing Artan Grubi, who still holds the position of Minister for Political System and Inter-Community Relations.

The opposition was granted ministerial posts in the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, as well as additional posts of deputy ministers in the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy. Panche Toshkovski from VMRO-DPMNE was elected technical Minister of the interior and Gjoko Velkovski a Minister of labor and social policy. Elena Petrova was elected as deputy Minister of finance, Stefan Andonovski as Deputy minister of information society and administration and Cvetan Tripunovski as deputy Minister of agriculture, forestry and water economy.¹¹

Following the dissension in the Alliance for Albanians (AA) caused by the presidential candidacy of Arben Taravari and the accession of the Taravari's wing to the joint Albanian opposition "Vredi", on the proposal of the technical Prime Minister Talat Xhaferi, on February 9, the Minister of Health - Fatmir Medziti and Minister of Information Society and Administration - Azir Aliu, were dismissed¹², while directors of the Taravari wing were dismissed earlier at a government session.

On 28 March, the wing led by Zijadin Sela decided to join the DUI-led "European Front" in the upcoming elections. In respect of the legal battle over who is the legitimate leader of the party, the Court in Tetovo took a first-instance decision that the seals of the Alliance for Albanians party would be awarded to the wing of Zijadin Sela, after which Arben Taravari announced that this decision will be appealed.¹³

Prime Minister Xhaferi and the ministers in the technical government will remain in office after the elections held on May 8 until the new government is formed. Once the final election results are released, the term of office of the additional deputy ministers will end. The government led by Talat Xhaferi is the third technical government so far, after the governments of Emil Dimitriev in 2016 and Oliver Spasovski in 2020.

10 In 2016, SDSM did not vote the technical Government <https://alsat.mk/mk/vo-2016-godina-sdsm-ne-glasashe-za-tehnickata-vlada/> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

11 The Assembly of North Macedonia elected the transitional government to be led by Talat Xhaferi <https://vlada.mk/node/35835> (last visit 07.04.2024)

12 Ministers Mejiti and Aliu dismissed <https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/razresheni-ministrite-medhiti-i-aliu/> (last visit 07.04.2024)

13 The court in Tetovo decided that Sela should receive the seals from the Alliance for Albanians, Taravari announces an appeal <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/32888402.html> (last visit 07.04.2024)

The period ahead of the political agreement to organize elections was marked by polarized political views of the government and the opposition on adopting the constitutional changes aimed to pursue the European integration processes of the country, and by continuous demands of the opposition for early elections. Opposition party VMRO-DPMNE maintained that it would not vote for constitutional changes, adding that once they came to power, they will secure a better agreement with Bulgaria.

In the context of elections, in January 2022, VMRO-DPMNE requested that the concept of the Przino government is abolished. This opposition party expressed readiness to concede 100 days of technical government for the sake of having early elections, whereby VMRO-DPMNE parliamentary group filed an initiative for draft amendments to the Law on Government. The ruling majority was repeatedly rejecting the claims for early parliamentary elections, and the ruling coalition challenged the way in which this solution was proposed as it was conditioned on early elections. The then SDSM parliamentary group coordinator, Jovan Mitreski, stressed that all political parties need to consent to the removal of the technical government, not just one political party, and called for a political agreement for regular elections. DUI stated that proposing a solution to remove the technical government unilaterally is not deemed good, and such a solution requires a broad consensus, as was the case when the Przino Agreement was adopted and signed in 2015.¹⁴ VMRO-DPMNE's proposal to abolish the technical government 100 days before the elections, also known as the Przino government, was not adopted in the Assembly.¹⁵

In March 2023, Prime Minister Kovacevski stated that regular elections will be held in 2024, also decisively saying they will observe the coalition agreement reached by former Prime Minister Zoran Zaev and DUI leader Ali Ahmeti in 2020 that the first Albanian Prime Minister will be appointed in the last 100 days of the current government's term.¹⁶

To reach an agreement on such important political topics, the Presidents of SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE, Dimitar Kovacevski and Hristijan Mickoski, convened for a lead-

14 VMRO-DPMNE demands abolishing of Przino government and early elections, SDSM and DUI say this will be agreed before the 2024 elections <https://sdk.mk/index.php/makedonija/vmro-dpmne-bara-da-se-ukine-przhinskata-vlada-i-predvreteni-izbori-sdsm-i-dui-velat-deka-toa-ke-se-dogovori-pred-izborite-vo-2024-godina/> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

15 VMRO-DPMNE's proposal to abolish the Przino government not adopted by the Assembly https://sdk.mk.translate.google/index.php/makedonija/predlogot-na-vmro-dpmne-za-ukinuvane-na-przhinskata-vlada-ne-pomina-vo-sobranieto/?_x_tr_sl=mk&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en&_x_tr_pto=sc (last visit on 07.04.2024)

16 Kovachevski against technical government and early elections <https://www.dw.com/mk/kovacevski-protiv-tehnicka-vlada-i-predvreteni-izbori-mickoski-samo-za-izbori/a-65011414> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

ership meeting on 6 June 2023. However, they failed to reach a specific agreement.¹⁷

At the leadership meeting, Kovachevski proposed that constitutional changes are voted together, and that transitional and final provisions to stipulate that constitutional changes will come into force after the Second Intergovernmental Conference with the EU, while Mickoski demanded that the constitutional changes come into force as of the end of the negotiation process with the EU, i.e. when EU member states start the ratification process.

In order to secure the necessary two-thirds majority, Prime Minister Kovacevski proposed a broad coalition that would include all parties in favor of the country's European integration. Kovachevski came forward with a concrete proposal for VMRO-DPMNE to enter the government and SDSM to let 5 ministerial posts to VMRO-DPMNE after change of Constitution is voted by a two-thirds majority.¹⁸ Mickoski underlined that possible broad government coalition would be acceptable to VMRO-DPMNE, but DUI would not be part of such a government.

On the topic of early parliamentary elections, Kovacevski proposed that early elections are held after adopting the constitutional changes and the opening of two or three chapters of the EU membership negotiations, while Mickoski stressed that the constitutional changes cannot be adopted by this parliamentary composition and called for early elections as soon as possible.¹⁹

After the leadership meeting, the government and the opposition still had political disagreement regarding the main political topics of the leadership meeting. For this reason, VMRO-DPMNE leader Hristijan Mickoski, on 8 July 2023, announced that they withdraw all offers to reach consensus with the government on constitutional changes and that they would discuss only on early elections. SDSM announced that the government will consider the constitutional changes and this will be publicly announced and submitted to the Assembly, followed by initiating a parliamentary procedure.²⁰

17 Leadership meeting, Kovachevski - Mickoski, proposals exist, but no agreement <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B4%D0%B5%D1%80%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8-%D1%81%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%B1%D0%B8---%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%88%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5-%D0%B8%D0%BB%D0%B8-%D0%B2%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%B7-%D0%B2%D0%BE-%D1%9C%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%BA/32445902.html> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

18 Constitutional changes with a government without DUI? <https://www.dw.com/mk/liderska-sredba-siroka-vlada-bez-dui-pet-ministri-za-vmrodpmne-garancii-od-eu/a-65847609> (last visit on 09.04.2024)

19 A broad government for constitutional changes without DUI? <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/%D1%88%D0%B8%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%BA%D0%B0-%D0%B2%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B0-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D1%83%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8-%D0%B7%D0%BC%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8-%D0%B1%D0%B5%B7-%D0%B4%D1%83%D0%B8-/32448927.html> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

In response to VMRO-DPMNE's requests, on 30 July 2023, DUI ministers and officials submitted their resignations to Prime Minister Dimitar Kovacevski, provided they are activated as soon as the constitutional changes are adopted. The decision on the conditional resignations of the five ministers was announced by DUI leader Ali Ahmeti. SDSM stated that their coalition partner in the Government made the right move to fulfill everything requested by VMRO-DPMNE in order to vote on the constitutional changes. VMRO-DPMNE demanded that the resignations of the DUI ministers are irrevocable and that early parliamentary elections are organized quickly, because everything else is protraction and contrary to citizens' will.²¹

Amid the pronounced political polarization between the government and the opposition, constitutional changes were adopted at the government session on 18 July, and then were submitted for parliamentary procedure.²² Even though no consensus was reached between the government and the opposition to adopt the constitutional changes, the 123rd parliamentary session began on 18 August 2023 with only one item on the agenda – Proposal for amending the Constitution. Seventy out of 119 attending MPs, voted in favor of adopting the agenda, 47 were against, and there were no abstentions.²³ The session lasted less than three hours and after several deliberations, voting did not take place. Assembly Speaker Talat Xhaferi ended the session and stressed that the vote would be additionally scheduled. Speaker Xhaferi had previously announced that a vote would be taken when conditions were met, that is, when a two-thirds majority is secured.²⁴

As it became clear that the ruling majority would not be able to secure a two-thirds majority in this parliamentary composition, political confrontations with the opposition continued and the topic of early elections was readdressed. In October 2023, VMRO-DPMNE gave up exerting pressure to hold early elections and accepted to participate in working groups that would determine the date for the 2024 elections. Saying that elections are extremely important for the state, Mickoski proposed that the second round of presidential and parliamentary elections are held on the same day,

20 Only elections to be discussed – VMRO-DPMNE withdraws all offers for consensus on constitutional changes <https://telma.com.mk/2023/07/08/kje-razgovara-samo-za-izbori-vmro-dpmne-gi-povlekuva-site-ponudi-zakonsenzus-za-ustavnite-izmeni/> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

21 DUI ministers deposit conditional resignations, VMRO-DPMNE demands they be irrevocable <https://telma.com.mk/2023/07/30/ministrite-na-dui-deponiraa-usloveni-ostavki-vmro-dpmne-bara-tie-da-bidat-neotpoviklivi/> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

22 The constitutional changes adopted at a government session, the Assembly on the <https://360stepeni.mk/ustavnite-izmeni-pominaa-na-vladina-sednitsa-na-red-e-sobranieto/> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

23 Session on constitutional changes begins – 70 MPs voted for the agenda <https://360stepeni.mk/pochna-sednitsata-za-ustavni-izmeni-70-pratenitsi-glasaa-za-dnevniot-red/> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

24 Short debate on constitutional changes, voting postponed <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/kusa-debata-za-ustavnite-izmeni-za-glasanje-kje-se-cheka-/32554063.html> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

i.e. on 8 May, 2024.²⁵ A political agreement on holding parliamentary and presidential elections was reached at a leadership meeting between the presidents of all parliamentary political parties on 4 December²⁶.

In the pre-election period, political parties promoted the candidate lists and their leaders, and presented the programs for the upcoming parliamentary elections. On April 3, the SEC informed that within the legally established deadline, until April 2, 2024, by 24 o'clock, 17 MP candidacies had been received:²⁷

Political parties and coalitions	Electoral Districts
SDSM (Coalition "Za Evropska idnina")	ED1, ED 2, ED 3, ED 4, ED 5, ED 6
VMRO-DPMNE (Coalition "Tvoja Macedonia")	ED 1, ED 2, ED 3, ED 4, ED 5, ED 6
ZNAM – Za nasa Makedonija	ED 1, ED 2, ED 3, ED 4, ED 5, ED 6
Rodina	ED 1, ED 2, ED 3, ED 4, ED 5, ED 6
Avaja	ED 3, ED 4, ED 5, ED 6
Rabotnichka partija	ED1, ED2, ED3, ED4, ED5, ED6
Tvoja partija	ED1, ED2, ED3, ED4
GROM	ED1, ED2, ED3, ED4, ED5, ED6
Makedonska era Treta suverenost	ED1, ED2, ED3, ED4, ED5, ED6
DUI (Coalition "Za Evropski front")	ED1, ED2, ED3, ED4, ED5, ED6
Demokrati	ED1, ED2, ED3, ED4, ED5, ED6
Edinstvena Makedonija	ED1, ED2, ED3, ED4, ED5, ED6
Voter group DJULA CELIKU	ED 6
Coalition "Vredi"	ED1, ED2, ED3, ED4, ED5, ED6
Levica	ED1, ED2, ED3, ED4, ED5, ED6
Desna	ED1, ED2, ED3, ED4, ED5, ED6
Nova alternativa	ED 1, ED 2, ED, ED4

25 VMRO-DPMNE gave up early elections <https://www.dw.com/mk/mickoski-se-otkaza-od-predvremenite-izbori-kako-sto-ke-kaze-kovacevski-za-datum-i-den-taka-ke-bide/a-67161999> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

26 Agreement on the date - double election on 8 May <https://www.dw.com/mk/partiite-se-dogovorija-pretsedatelski-i-parlamentarni-izbori-na-8-maj/a-67626319> (last visit on 11.04.2024)

27 17 lists of MPs for the parliamentary elections submitted to the SEC <https://nezavisen.mk/podneseni-17-listina-pratenici-za-parlamentarnite-izbori-do-dik/> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

In parallel to these activities, the political polarization amplified and the political rhetoric intensified, expecting that these processes will culminate during pre-election campaigns. The ODIHR report published on 29 February noted²⁸ that media coverage of the campaign is fragmented and polarized, coupled with a notable increase in nationalist rhetoric that may result in heightened unrest and tensions, as well as increase in intolerant and violent rhetoric.²⁹

The technical Minister of the Interior, Pance Toshkovski, expressed concern about possible irregularities in the sixth electoral district, criticizing that since he was appointed, he had not been enabled by the current government to appoint a new head of the Sector for Internal Affairs Tetovo, even though he has the right to do so in accordance with the law.³⁰

On 29 March, the Director of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (AAVMS), Zoran Trajcevski, stressed that the prosecution should carefully monitor how state money is spent on election advertising for online portals. Trajcevski believes that the Public Prosecutor's Office should pay attention to the online media, which receive 15,000 Euros of state money for party advertisements during elections, adding that 251 internet portals have been registered this year. According to Trajcevski, many of those portals are partisan and disappear after the elections. The same risk was highlighted by the Chairwoman of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), Tatjana Dimitrovska, who stressed that it was not regulated how 2.5 million Euros would be spent on party advertising on the Internet.³¹

Even before the start of election campaigns, SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE began their political confrontations, and the situation in the Albanian political bloc is similar. SDSM accused VMRO-DPMNE of creating fake news and polls, presented on the public broadcasting service, while VMRO-DPMNE denied it and announced defamation lawsuits.³² Political confrontations between SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE on these topics can be expected to continue until the elections.

28 OSCE/ODIHR Report <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/b/e/563592.pdf> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

29 ODIHR with more than 300 election observers, intensified unrest and tensions expected <https://telma.com.mk/2024/03/11/odih-so-poveke-od-300-nabluduvachi-na-izborite-ochekuva-zasileni-nemiri-i-tenzii/> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

30 Toshkovski doubts the regularity of the elections in Tetovo, Gostivar and the surrounding area <https://telma.com.mk/2024/03/27/toshkovski-otvora-somnezh-za-regularnosta-na-izborite-vo-tetovo-gostivar-i-okolinata/> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

31 Risk of misuse of money for election advertisements <https://prizma.mk/rizik-od-zloupotreba-od-parite-za-izborni-reklami/> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

32 VMRO-DPMNE announces defamation lawsuit against SDSM: The documents they published were invented <https://360stepeni.mk/vmro-dpmne-najavi-tuzhba-za-kleveta-protiv-sdsm-dokumentite-shto-gi-objavija-se-izmisleni/> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

In these elections, SDSM will lead the “Coalition for a European Future” promising to be on the forefront of the reform processes and striving for negotiations with the EU to be completed by 2028 and join the EU by 2030.³³ A total of 14 parties will form this coalition.

Although there were some announcements that SDSM and DUI would run jointly in the upcoming elections and form a so-called broad European front, which according to them would unite all political and social actors who support EU membership, these ruling majority parties decided to run independently. To a large extent, this decision is due to intra-party analyses and assessments, but also to the fact that a united opposition front was formed in the Albanian bloc. Due to the emerging political constellations and the fact that the united Albanian opposition “Vredī” came forward with a joint presidential candidate, DUI decided to run with its own candidate for president and not to support SDSM’s candidate, Stevo Pendarovski, who in the previous presidential elections was a consensus candidate of SDSM and DUI. Prior to taking this decision, DUI had political confrontation with the incumbent President Stevo Pendarovski, as he did not sign the Law on Games of Chance and Entertainment Games, pointing out that he did so because of serious indications from the EU that the European flag was being abused in the process of adopting this law.³⁴

VMRO-DPMNE will lead the coalition “Tvoja Makedonija” and, according to the pre-election program “Platform 1198”, priority will be given to the economy, the fight against corruption and restoring citizens’ trust in institutions.³⁵ A total of 24 parties have joined this coalition.

The parties “Dostoinstvo”, Obединeti za Makedonija (OM) and Demokratski Sojuz (DS), which were coalition partners of SDSM, decided to leave the current coalition with SDSM and joined the VMRO-DPMNE coalition. VMRO-DPMNE leader Hristijan Mickosi stressed that they have a principled joint agreement with these parties to run in the next parliamentary elections.³⁶ The leaders of “Dostoinstvo”, - Stojanche Angelov, and of “Demokratski Sojuz”- Pavle Trajanov, stressed that their decisions

33 SDSM and 13 parties formed the “Coalition for a European Future “ <https://www.dw.com/mk/sdsm-i-13-partii-so-koalicijata-za-evropska-idnina-ke-odat-na-izbori/a-68684980> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

34 President Pendarovski did not sign the Decree proclaiming the Law Amending the Law on Games of Chance and Entertainment Games https://pretsedatel.mk/dopis_13022024/ (last visit 09.04.2024)

35 VMRO-DPMNE presented a pre-election coalition “Za tvoja Makedonija” <https://kanal5.com.mk/vmro-dpmne-ja-pretstavi-predizborna-koalicija-narechena-za-tvoja-makedonija/a632907> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

36 Mickosi: We have a principled agreement for the parliamentary elections and we will function as a future government - (last visit on 09.04.2024) <https://makfax.com.mk/makedonija/%D0%BC%D0%B8%D1%86%D0%BA%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8-%D0%B8%D0%BC%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%B5-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%86%D0%B8%D0%BF%D0%B8%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD-%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%80/> (last visit on 09.04.2024)

were largely due to unfulfilled promises and expectations by the current coalition partner, as well as to the blocking of their proposals in Assembly.³⁷ The leader of “Obedineti za Makedonija” - Ljube Boskovski stressed that the decision to be in coalition with VMRO-DPMNE was for ideological reasons.³⁸

In the Albanian political bloc, DUI will lead the Coalition “European Front” in these elections.³⁹ Confronted with the allied Albanian opposition, DUI decided to run with a broad coalition in these elections. On 25 March in Tetovo, DUI, DPA, Evropska demokratska partija and Narodno Dvizenje signed a coalition agreement on the “European Front” led by Ali Ahmeti. The agreement was signed by the presidents of the four parties, Ali Ahmeti, Menduh Thaci, Arjanit Hoxha and Skender Rexhepi-Zejd, and later joined by other parties from smaller ethnic communities, as well as the wing of Zijadin Sela from AA. Ahmeti stressed that he expected a big victory in the elections and that the front would function until the goal of EU membership was achieved.⁴⁰ This coalition is made up of a total of nine parties.

The joint Albanian opposition “Vredi” will try to weaken the long-standing political position of DUI. This coalition is made up of several parties: Izet Medziti’s Demokratsko dvizenje, Biljal Kasami’s Dvizenje BESA, Afrim Gashi’s Alternativa, a part of the Alliance for Albanians party led by party leader Arben Taravari, as well as supporters of Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti’s Samoopredeluvanje party. The goal of this opposition bloc is to squeeze DUI out of power after many years.

The political parties Levica, Maksim Dimitrievski’s “ZNAM – Za nasa Makedonija” and the coalition “Hrabro za Makedonija” led by the Civil Option for Macedonia (GROM) will also claim parliamentary seats, and the party Nova Alternativa of the Mayor of the City of Skopje, Danela Arsovska, will run for elections in the first four electoral districts.

The first round of presidential elections will significantly determine the positions of political parties and will largely be an indicator of the outcome of parliamentary elections. At the same time, political parties will seek to use the first round of presidential elections to mobilize the electorate ahead of the parliamentary elections

37 Party regroupings before elections <https://www.dw.com/mk/partiite-se-pregrupiraat-pred-izborite-se-pravat-novi-koalicii-se-zaokruzuvaa-izbornite-listi/a-68659288> (last visit on 09.04.2024)

38 Boskovski: Coalition with VMRO-DPMNE will be for ideological reason <https://netpress.com.mk/boshkoski-koalici-a-so-vmro-dpmne-e-bide-od-ideoloshka-prichina/> (last visit on 09.04.2024)

39 Ahmeti will mobilize voters with the European front <https://www.dw.com/mk/ahmeti-so-evropskiot-front-ke-gi-mobilizira-glasacite-i-ke-se-bori-protiv-ruskoto-vlijanie/a-68613769> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

40 Four parties entered the European front of DUI <https://nezavisen.mk/vo-evropskiot-front-na-dui-vlegoa-chetiri-partii/> (last visit on 09.04.2024)

and the decisive second round of presidential elections. The main focus during the election campaign is expected to be on the adoption of constitutional changes aimed at unblocking European integration processes, as well as economic topics to improve citizens' living standards and fight corruption. The issue of the adoption of constitutional changes can also be a key factor in political combinatorics and in the formation of new political constellations after the elections.

Preparations for the parliamentary elections

On 14 February, the SEC adopted the Calendar of electoral activities to administer the parliamentary elections.⁴¹ As part of its preparatory activities, the SEC continuously replaces the members of the Municipal Election Commissions (MECs) whose mandate either terminated or they requested to be dismissed, but no later than 26 March. According to the calendar, the Municipal Election Commission (MEC) should establish the Election Boards (EBs) no later than 26 March, and by that time the SEC should also form the EBs in the DCOs⁴².

The public inspection of the Voter list in the SEC regional offices, on the website <http://izbirackispisok.gov.mk/>, as well as in the DCOs (for out-of-country voting) was opened in the period 28 February - 18 March 2024. During this period, any citizen who found they are not on the Voters list and who meets the eligibility criteria to vote, could request to be registered. In the period from the announcement of elections to closing of Voter list public inspection, citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia who live abroad and meet the conditions for out-of-country voting could apply to exercise this right.

The Voter List which includes all changes resulting from the public inspection, printed in the form of extracts, is closed by the SEC no later than 15 days after the completed public inspection, that is, by April 2 at latest. At the session held on 2 April, the SEC closed the Voter List both for the parliamentary and presidential elections. 1,815,350 voters are registered in the Voter List for the parliamentary elections, while 1,814,317 voters are registered for the presidential elections.⁴³

41 Calendar for parliamentary elections https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iN8Gim1W542gkDasz_aDhK0pX_43dEcZ/view (last visit on 07.04.2024)

42 Given the insufficient number of registered voters, out-of-country voting will not be organized for these elections.

43 SEC closed the Voter List: For the presidential elections there are 1,814,317 voters, and 1.815.350 for the parliamentary elections <https://360stepeni.mk/dik-go-zakluchi-izbirackiot-spisok-za-pretседателските-izbori-ima-1-814-317-glasachi-a-za-parlamentarnite-1-815-350/> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

Out-of-country elections will be organized only for the president, because the legal norm on the number of registered voters has not been reached for parliamentary elections. To organize out-of-country voting for parliamentary elections, it was necessary that at least 5,355 voters are registered, equal to the lowest number of votes to win an in-country seat in the electoral districts on the territory of the state in the previous elections.⁴⁴

The SEC signs the concluded Voter List, i.e. the extracts of the Voter List on which votes are cast, no later than 15 days before the Election Day, i.e., no later than 22 April.

According to the calendar, financial reports of campaigners (specifying the costs of income and expenditures on the bank account) are submitted to the SEC, the State Audit Office (SAO) and the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) within the following deadlines:

- » report on received donations for the election campaign on the 11th day of the election campaign, i.e. April 28, as well as within one day after the end of the campaign, i.e. 7 May;
- » overall financial report specifying the income and expenditure costs is submitted immediately, and at the latest within 15 days from the date of closing of the bank account.

Also, broadcasters, print media and electronic media (Internet portals) are obliged to submit a report to the Ministry of Finance (MoF), SEC, SAO and SCPC, on the advertising space used by each of the participants in the election campaign, no later than 21 May.

Organizations and persons file an application to observe the elections to the SEC from the day of the announcement of the elections, and no later than 10 days before the day of voting, i.e. in the period from 14 February to April 27 for these elections. The SEC issues authorizations to election observers within seven days from receiving the application.

44 Dashtevski: Preparations for the presidential and parliamentary elections without problems, in compliance with the law and calendar <https://mia.mk/en/story/%D0%B4%D0%B0%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%B2%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B3%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%82%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BB%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5-%D0%B8-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%BF%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5-> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

Political parties submitted their candidate lists for parliamentary elections to the SEC by 24:00 hrs. on 2 April., i.e. 35 days before the day of the elections. By this deadline, lists of 17 participants were submitted, i.e. 11 political parties, five coalitions, as well as one independent list of a group of voters.

Election campaigning for the parliamentary elections begins 20 days before the Election Day, i.e. on 18 April at 00:00 hrs. and lasts until 24:00 hrs. on 6 May.

In accordance with Article 8-a of the Electoral Code, 20 days before the start of the election campaign, no public events can be held on the occasion of commencing a construction or commissioning of a facility or infrastructure financed with funds from the Budget, public funds, as well as funds of public enterprises with state capital.⁴⁵

Coalitions and parties that have their own candidate in the presidential elections will be presented on the ballot under the same order as in presidential candidates, while additional drawing of lots will be organized by SEC for the other parties, in accordance with the latest amendments to the Electoral Code that the Assembly voted at the 150th session.⁴⁶

Latest amendments to the electoral legislation

Since the last electoral cycle to date, several changes have been made regarding the provisions of the Electoral Code of the Republic of North Macedonia (RNM). In March this year, the Assembly, in a shortened procedure and with 84 votes in favor, adopted the new amendments to the Electoral Code. The changes are related to state election management bodies, political campaign finance, campaign participants, as well as media coverage of the election campaign.⁴⁷

Due to the new developments with the expired validity of citizens' personal documents, there was a serious danger that over 100,000 citizens would be denied the right to vote in the upcoming elections. At the proposal of the SEC, the amendments

⁴⁵ Electoral Code <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZJMruqcNI-yC5VuWSzpfT9BFekPhm5An/view> (last visit on 09.04.2024)

⁴⁶ Parties submitted MP candidate lists for parliamentary elections on the 8 May, deadline to submit lists ended <https://360stepeni.mk/partiite-do-dik-gi-dostavija-listite-za-pratenitsi-za-izborite-na-8-maj-rokot-za-podnesuvane-zavrshi/> (last visit on 07.04.2024)

⁴⁷ Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, Law Amending the Electoral Code 58/2024

to the Electoral Code also included a transitional provision regulating the right of the voter to be able to vote with an ID card or passport with expired validity in the period of nine months until the day of the presidential and parliamentary elections.⁴⁸

In addition, the provisions regarding the registration of new voters have been clarified, so everyone who turns 18 until the day of elections will have the right to vote. This means that citizens who become adults between the two election cycles will only have the right to vote in the parliamentary elections.⁴⁹

Changes made to Article 61 and 62 of the Electoral Code will significantly impede the election of independent citizens, both locally and nationally. According to Article 61, submitters of independent candidate lists, instead of 1.000 signatures, in future will have to provide signatures of 1% of the registered voters in the Voter List in the specific electoral district.⁵⁰ Furthermore, according to the changes of Article 62 concerning the election of municipal councilors and mayor, instead of the required 100 to 1.000 signatures (depending on the number of citizens in the respective municipality), now that requirement is increased to 1% of the registered voters in the Voters List for the specific municipality.⁵¹ Some independent councilors that run at the last local elections reacted to the changes, saying there is a danger that they will be removed from participation in the next 2025 local elections.⁵²

State Election Commission

A citizen of the Republic of North Macedonia having a permanent residence in the country, university degree, at least eight years of work experience and who is not a member of a political party body can be elected as member of the State Election Commission. The Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, within 30 days

48 "Over 100,000 citizens do not have documents for voting in elections, the SEC proposed amendments to the Electoral Code, the Assembly on the move" Telma, March 04, 2024. Access at <https://telma.com.mk/2024/03/04/nad-100-000-gragani-nemaat-dokumenti-za-glasane-na-izbori-sobranieto-na-poteg-otkako-dik-predlozhi-izmeni-na-izborniot-zakonik/> (last visit: 27 March 2024)

49 "SEC: Citizens who turn 18 between the two rounds of the presidential election on May 8 will only be able to vote for the election of MPs" 360 degrees, March 15, 2024. Access at: <https://360stepeni.mk/dik-graganite-shto-ke-napolnat-18-godini-pomegu-dvata-kruga-na-pretседателските-izbori-na-8-maj-ke-mozhe-da-glasaat-samo-za-izbor-na-pratenitsi/> (last visit: 26 March 2024)

50 For the independent MP list in ED1, instead of 1.000, 3.372 signatures will be needed in future.

51 For independent candidate list or Mayor of the City of Skopje, instead of 1.000, 4,674 signatures will be needed in future.

52 "Parties removed the independent from the ballot" Radio Slobodna Evropa, 12 March 2024. Accessed at: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/partiite-gi-istisnaa-nezavisnite-na-glasachkoto-livche/32858134.html> (last visit on 1 April 2024)

before the expiration of the mandate of the Commission, publishes the announcement for election of the new composition, i.e. election of the President, Vice President and members of the SEC in the Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, as well as in the daily newspapers. The advertisement lasts for eight days from the date of publication in the Official Gazette.

The procedure for electing members remains the same and is prepared and implemented by the Committee on Election and Appointment Issues within the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia. This committee prepares a proposal for a list of registered candidates and submits it to the Assembly. Of the candidates on the list, the opposition proposes a president and two members, while the ruling parties propose a vice president and three members. All members are elected by a two-thirds majority of the total number of MPs, for a 5-year term as of the Election Day.

Amendments to the Electoral Code of this year oblige the State Election Commission to establish a Center for Continuous Electoral Education as a separate organizational unit in its secretariat, headed by a state adviser at B1 level⁵³, who reports to the Commission and the Secretary General. The Center will aim to provide continuous training to the election administration, voters, election participants, media, and election observers, as well as to develop various research and analysis for the needs and at the request of the SEC.⁵⁴

Party Finance

The Law on Party Finance has not been amended in the last few years. The provisions relating to the specification of assets and party finance (movable and immovable property), the amount of the total funds for annual party finance in the amount of 0.15% of the total source revenues of the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia, the private sources of funding, the amount of individual donations that may not exceed the sum of 60 average salaries as a donation from legal entities and 30 net average salaries as a donation from individuals, still remain valid. With the latest amendments to the Electoral Code in March 2024, a new paragraph was added to Article 83 that regulates the individual donations that political parties receive for election campaigns. Namely, the amount of the funds cumulatively on the election campaign bank account must not exceed 3,000 euros in denar counter value from

⁵³ According to Article 24 of the Law on Administrative Servants, a civil servant of B1 category is an administrative management officer of the first level, who meets the conditions, i.e. at least two years in a managerial position in the public sector, or, at least three in a managerial position in the private sector.

⁵⁴ Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, Law Amending the Electoral Code 58/2024

the same natural person or 30,000 Euros in denar counter value from the same legal entity.

Funding for political parties, that is, 30% which is provided from the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia, is further distributed equally to all political parties that have won at least 1% of the total number of votes at the last parliamentary or local elections. 70% of the funds are allocated to political parties according to the number of elected MPs in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia at the last parliamentary elections and according to the number of elected councilors at the last local elections.

Article 26 of the Law on Party Finance stipulates that the State Audit Office oversees the financing. This Article also stipulates that parties have only one bank account, and in the case of financing by securing funds from loans from commercial banks, in addition to the basic bank account, they may have another special bank account for party funds provided through loan. Also, the political party can transfer funds between its accounts, and the party research-analytical centers have a separate account. Funds from the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia in the amount of 280,000 euros in denar counter value are also envisaged for annual funding of party research-analytical centers which are established in accordance with the law as part of the internal organization of the party.⁵⁵

The amendments to the law in 2018 created an obligation to submit a financial report on the material and financial operations of the party, including the financial operations on the account, i.e. accounts of the political party. According to the amendments, an additional part of the financial report are the items “sponsorship” and “loan”. The amendments stipulate that the funds intended for party finance will be paid from the Budget, as possible, but no later than March 1 of each current year.

Public media

This election cycle remains subject to the ban made with the amendments to the Electoral Code in 2018, which from the day of the announcement of the elections until the start of the election campaign, broadcasters, print media and electronic media (portals) may not broadcast, i.e. publish paid political advertising, except advertisements and announcements for collecting signatures in support of the candi-

⁵⁵ Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, Law Amending the Law on Party Finance, 140/2018

dacy of a group of voters. In the cases concerning the broadcasting, i.e. publishing of announcements for collecting signatures in support of the candidacies, this is done in marked advertising blocks of the allowed advertising time per real hour. The amendments to the Electoral Code from March 2024, provide for a restriction in the promotion of candidates, i.e., from the moment of confirmation of the candidate lists until the start of the election campaign, election contestants have the right to organize one public event to promote their confirmed lists of candidates and electoral programs. Consequently, Article 69-a prohibits the parties to spend the funds allocated for the election campaign in the previously mentioned period.

Broadcasters covering elections, in the first and second round of election campaign, may broadcast a total of nine minutes and thirty seconds per real hour of program that is solely intended for paid political advertising. Of these nine and a half minutes, a total of four minutes may be allocated to the two biggest ruling parties, four minutes for the two biggest oppositional parties, one minute for political parties in the Assembly that did not win sufficient number of seats at the last election to establish a parliamentary group, as well as thirty seconds for political parties not represented in the Assembly. Given that double elections are held this year, there is a possibility that political parties are advertised for a total of 19 minutes per hour. Earlier, this was the case with the electoral campaign for the 2014 double elections when the political parties agreed on a limit of 15 minutes promotion per hour.⁵⁶

With the latest amendments to the Electoral Code, the public broadcasting service, as well as the television stations that will broadcast paid political advertising, have the obligation to broadcast election-related content in a format accessible to persons with disabilities, i.e. using sign language, subtitles, tone description or other tools to ensure accessibility, at least once, in the period from 16:00 to 24:00 hrs. Furthermore, Article 75 obliges service providers, prior to the start of the election campaign, to submit a schedule to the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Services (AAVMS) of the edition of news and other content that will be broadcast in a format accessible to persons with disabilities, and AAVMS to publish them on its website.

⁵⁶ "Elections 2024: A party propaganda program of epic proportions", Prizma, 08 February 2024. Accessed on: <https://prizma.mk/izbori-2024-partisko-epp-od-epski-razmeri/> (last visit: 26 March 2024)



**History of parliamentary
elections in the Republic
of North Macedonia
(1990 – 2020)**

1. History of parliamentary elections in the Republic of North Macedonia (1990 – 2020)

Political pluralism that was introduced in 1989 enabled the formation of political parties, giving an opportunity to Macedonian voters to vote in multi-party elections for the first time in **1990**. This year, free multi-party elections were held in all six republics of the SFRY. In 1990, the elections were administered according to the majority, two-round voting system with 120 electoral districts. The then only ruling party, the Union of Communists of Macedonia – Party for Democratic Transformation (SKM-PDP) won in the first round of voting, while VMRO-DPMNE won in the second round of elections. On March 20, 1991, the Assembly voted the first technical government of the Republic of Macedonia, headed by Nikola Kljusev. During this period, the Assembly also elected Kiro Gligorov as the country's first president, and Ljubco Georgievski, the leader of VMRO-DPMNE, as his vice president. The first Government did not last long, when in August 1992 the Assembly voted no confidence. After several attempts to form a new government, the mandate was granted to Branko Crvenkovski from SDSM,⁵⁷ and the first political government was formed in independent Macedonia.

After the independence, **the first parliamentary elections** were held in **1994**, concurrently with the first direct presidential elections. MPs were elected under the same model as in the 1990 elections. 38 parties and 283 independent candidates run for elections. The coalition led by the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) won the elections, while the main opposition parties, VMRO-DPMNE and the Democratic Party of Macedonia, boycotted the second round of voting, accusing of a series of irregularities in the first round of voting. After the elections, Branko Crvenkovski formed the new government, which in its four-year term functioned without the main opposition parties that boycotted the work of the Assembly.

The next **parliamentary elections in 1998** were administered according to an amended electoral model – a mixed electoral system, a combination of a proportional and a majority model, with two-round voting. VMRO-DPMNE won the elec-

⁵⁷ The SKM-PDT at the Party Congress in April 1991 changed its name to the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia, and transformed its ideology from communist to social democratic.

tions with 49 seats, and their leader Ljubco Georgievski formed the government together with the Democratic Alternative (DA) and the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA). It was the first time that OSCE/ODIHR Mission monitored these elections in the country on invitation extended by the Macedonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The **parliamentary elections in 2002** were marked by strained post-conflict atmosphere. In this election cycle, the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) that was formed by the leadership of the former National Liberation Army (NLA), emerged as new political entity of the Albanian political bloc on the political scene. In these elections, the electoral model underwent changes once again, by resorting to a proportional electoral model in six electoral districts. This electoral model remained for all subsequent parliamentary elections to date, except for some modifications regarding the diaspora voting. 33 parties ran for the elections, and the government changed as the SDSM-led coalition won the majority of seats. Branko Crvenkovski, one more time, was a prime minister-designate for the new government composed of SDSM, LDP and DUI.

Voter turnout at the **parliamentary elections in 2006** was lowest thus far, and only 56% of all registered voters who exercised their right to vote. Political actors changed roles once again after VMRO-DPMNE won a majority in the Assembly. After the elections, Nikola Gruevski was granted his first mandate to form a government. The new government was made up of the political parties VMRO-DPMNE, DPA, NSDP and PEI. For this government composition, even though DUI won more votes and parliamentary seats, VMRO-DPMNE opted for Menduh Thaci's DPA to be its partner from the Albanian bloc. This led to a political crisis and various blockades imposed by DUI. Given the results, they considered to be the only legitimate representative of the majority of Albanians in the country, and therefore must partake in the government. In 2008, DPA decided to leave the Government as many of the conditions agreed with its partner VMRO-DPMNE were not fulfilled.

Two years after winning the elections in **2008**, the ruling VMRO-DPMNE accepted DUI's parliamentary initiative to dissolve the Assembly and organize new, early elections. Voter turnout in these elections was 57.06%. The VMRO-DPMNE-led coalition won a record 63 seats. Nikola Gruevski once again formed the government, which included ministers of the coalition as well as of DUI who won the elections in the Albanian political bloc.

In **2011**, in the aftermath of the most serious political crises in the country, the second early parliamentary elections requested by the oppositional SDSM were held in the country. These were specific elections because Macedonian citizens abroad

could vote and the number of electoral districts increased from 6 to 9, along with the number of MPs from 120 to 123. MPs from the six in-country electoral districts were elected according to the proportional model, while the majority model applied for the three new electoral districts. 53 political parties participated in the elections, with the VMRO-DPMNE-led coalition winning again. After the elections, VMRO-DPMNE leader Nikola Gruevski formed a government for the third time, which again included DUI as a representative of the Albanian bloc. Voter turnout in these elections was 63.48%.

Parliamentary elections in 2014 were held concurrently with the presidential elections in the country. The electoral model of the previous elections, including the out-of-country voting, remained unchanged. VMRO-DPMNE's candidate, incumbent President Gjorge Ivanov, once again won the presidential elections, while VMRO-DPMNE's leader, Nikola Gruevski, was given the mandate to form the new government for the fourth time. The Democratic Union for Integration re-entered the new government as a partner from the Albanian bloc. Voter turnout was 62.96%.

The period before the ninth parliamentary elections in **2016** was turbulent and dynamic, marked with great political turmoil that culminated in 2015 with the “wire-tapping affair”, followed by a series of mass protests that contributed to great destabilization and the beginning of one of the largest crises in the modern history of the country. To stabilize the relations, the Przino Agreement was signed under the auspices of the international community, which provided for a wide package of measures to resolve the political crisis. In January 2016, SDSM announced that it would not participate in the scheduled elections as the conditions of the Agreement were not met, after which the elections were postponed until December of the same year. In these elections, VMRO-DPMNE-led coalition won the biggest number of 51 seats, while the opposition led by SDSM won 49 seats. Shortly after the elections, DUI and the two largest Macedonian parties started intensive negotiations. The negotiations resulted in a coalition agreement between SDSM and DUI, however, the then president of the country, Gjorge Ivanov, refused to entrust the mandate to the SDSM leader Zoran Zaev, accusing him of “destroying the sovereignty of the state” by accepting the so-called Albanian Platform. After a months-long crisis, including the storming of the Macedonian Assembly on 27 April 2017, Ivanov granted the mandate to Zaev on May 17, 2017, and on May 31, the Assembly voted the new SDSM-led coalition government with 62 votes in favor.

Parliamentary elections in 2020

The 10th parliamentary elections in 2020 were held during the Covid-19 pandemic. It was specific that these were the first elections to be administered over a period of three days. Self-isolated citizens voted on the first day, i.e. on 13 July, in their homes. On the second day, ill and incapacitated citizens, persons under house arrest, as well as prisoners in penitentiary institutions cast their votes, while July 15 was the main Election Day. Under such circumstances, turnout at elections (52.02%) was lower by 14% compared to 2016 when 66.79% of the registered voters exercised their right to vote.

15 political entities, i.e. 3 coalitions and 12 political parties took part in the elections. Participating coalitions were the ruling SDSM-led coalition “Mozeme”, the opposition VMRO-DPMNE-led coalition “Obnova za Makedonija” and the coalition of the Alliance for Albanians and Alternative. DUI, DPA, political party Levica, Integra – Macedonian Conservative Party, Civil Democratic Union (GDU), MORO – Workers’ party, political party Glas za Makedonija, Edinstvena Makedonija, Social Democratic Union Skopje, Tvoja party, Political party Demokrati and Narodna Partija na Romite independently joined the race for parliamentary seats.

To tackle the risk of spreading the virus, before the start of the campaign, the Government adopted protocols to limit mass events and gatherings, so political parties were forced to use different voter outreach methods. The focus shifted from organizing mass rallies and large gatherings to a massive social media campaign.

Once the voting was completed, the website of the State Election Commission was targeted by hacker attacks, and election results release was thus briefly prolonged. At the press conference, SEC President Oliver Derkoski said that the Commission was working in accordance with the Electoral Code, that the hackers targeted the website and not the election results software, and that the attack was reported to the cybercrime department of the Ministry of Interior.⁵⁸

In these elections, as well as in the parliamentary elections in 2016, there was almost a “dead race” between the two largest parties from the Macedonian bloc, SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE, and both parties won a smaller number of parliamentary seats compared to the previous elections. The SDSM-led coalition “Mozeme”

⁵⁸ “SEC - election results, mandates, hacks, reactions and ratings”, Radio Free Europe, 16 July 2020. Accessed at: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%BA-D1%81%D0%B4%D1%81%D0%BC-%D0%B2%D0%BC%D1%80%D0%BE-%D0%B4%D0%BF%D0%BC%D0%BD%D0%B5/30731705.html> (last visit: 05 April 2024)

won the largest number of seats – 46 or 35.89% of the total number of votes. Just behind them, with 2 seats less, was the VMRO-DPMNE-led coalition, which won 44 seats in these elections or 34.57% of the total number of votes. DUI ranked third by the number of seats and won total of 15 parliamentary seats. The Coalition of Alliance for Albanians and Alternative had a significantly better result compared to the previous elections, and won 12 parliamentary seats. For the first time, the political party Levica was represented in the Assembly with two seats, while DPA had lower result than the previous elections and won only one parliamentary seat. Other parties and coalitions that run for elections failed to win enough votes to secure parliamentary seats.

The OSCE/ODIHR mission assessed that even though negative tone prevailed in the election campaign, it was competitive and contestants had the opportunity to convey their messages despite the restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. SDSM assessed the elections as dignified, free, democratic and safe. On the other hand, VMRO-DPMNE pointed out that during the elections there were serious pressures, numerous irregularities and massive bribery of voters. Alliance and Alternative shared accusations of ballot boxes being filled at several polling stations. The political party Levica, meanwhile, submitted 1,982 complaints to the SEC, 1,478 of which were rejected on the grounds that they were submitted without the signature of an authorized person, while the rest were rejected due to lack of evidence.

On 4 August 2020, the Constituent Session of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia was held, at which the mandates of 120 newly elected representatives and the new composition of the Assembly were verified. The session was chaired by the President of the previous term, Talat Xhaferi, who was re-elected during the same month with 62 votes in favor, for a new four-year term.⁵⁹ The Assembly elected the new government led by Zoran Zaev, which in addition to SDSM and the coalition included DUI and BESA.

More information on the history of parliamentary elections since independence can be found in the Handbook for Parliamentary Elections in the Republic of North Macedonia 2020.⁶⁰

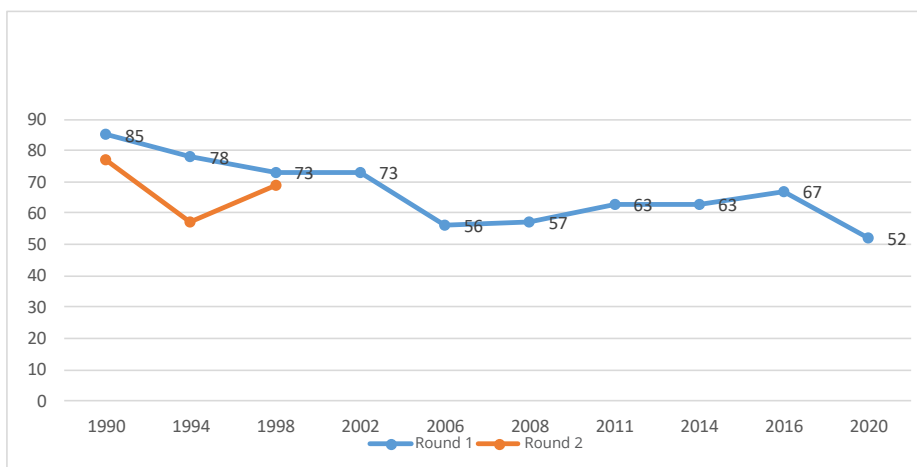
59 "Talat Xhaferi re-elected as Speaker of the Assembly", Channel 5, 22 August 2020. Accessed at: <https://kanal5.com.mk/talat-djaferi-reizbran-za-pretsedatel-na-sobranieto/a435725> last visit: 05 April 2024)

60 Handbook for presidential elections in the Republic of North Macedonia 2019, second supplemented edition. KAS and IDSCS, 2019. page 22-40. Accessed at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/priracnici/Priracnik_za_parlamentarni_izbori_2020_ENG.pdf (last visit 05 April 2024)

Voter turnout in parliamentary elections (1990 – 2020)

Considering the data on all previous parliamentary elections from 1990 to 2020, dynamic changes in voter turnout can be observed. First parliamentary elections in 1990 still hold the record for highest turnout of 85% thus far. For more than a decade, parliamentary elections in 2006 were marked with the lower limit of turnout, however, the previous 2020 parliamentary elections that were held amid the pandemic had lower turnout by 4%, setting the lowest record, i.e. 52% of the total number of registered voters.⁶¹

Turnout in parliamentary elections (1990 – 2020)



61 State Election Commission, Results Archive. Accessed at: <https://www.sec.mk/izbori-arhiva/> (last visit: 5 April 2024)



2

Macedonian Electoral System for Parliamentary Elections

2. Macedonian Electoral System for Parliamentary Elections⁶²

Members of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia are elected in general, direct and free elections by secret ballot for a 4-year term. 120-123 Members of the Assembly are elected at parliamentary elections, yet, the Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia allows for the Assembly to consist of 120 to 140 MPs.

Parliamentary elections are held according to the proportional electoral model with closed candidate lists, with 20 MPs elected in each of the six electoral districts across the territory of the country. Each political party would win parliamentary seats proportionally to the number of votes cast for its candidate list, compared to the number of votes cast for other candidate lists. Distribution of parliamentary seats is undertaken by applying the D'Hondt formula. Candidates are assigned seats in the order shown on a candidate list.

Elections for Members of the Assembly are held every four years in the last 90 days of the previous parliamentary term, or within 60 days from the day of dissolving the Assembly. In early elections, all deadlines for electoral actions are shortened by five days, except for the deadline set for the election campaign.

Individual Member of the Assembly may have his/her term cut short by resignation, criminal conviction that is punishable with at least five years imprisonment, emerging incompatibility with serving as Member of the Assembly, death or by court decision depriving the MP of the capacity to contract. When the term of office ends on one of these grounds, the "next-on-the-list" principle applies to elect an MP from the respective party list. An exception to this rule is when the term of a female MP ends. In this case, the next female candidate on the party list is elected.

The first session to constitute the new parliamentary composition is held no later than 20 days after the Election Day and is convened by the outgoing President. If the Assembly is not constituted within 20 days, MPs convene and constitute the Assembly on the twenty-first day from the Election Day at 10 o'clock and the session is chaired by the oldest elected MP.

62 Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, Law Amending the Electoral Code 58/2024

Within a period of ten days of constituting the new Assembly, the President of the Republic of North Macedonia entrusts the mandate to the candidate (designate) of the party that won majority seats to form the new Government. The Prime Minister-designate submits a program to the Assembly and proposes the composition of the Government within 20 days. The Government is then elected by a majority vote of the total number of MPs.

The State Election Commission (SEC), along with the Municipal Election Commissions (MECs), the Election Commission of the City of Skopje, the Electoral Boards (EBs) for in-country voting and out-of-country voting in diplomatic and consular missions (DCOs) of the Republic of North Macedonia serve as electoral management bodies tasked with organizing the parliamentary elections.

The State Election Commission is composed of seven members who are elected by the Assembly for a five-year term, on the proposal of political parties and by a majority vote of the total number of MPs. The State Election Commission, among other competences, publishes the Voter List and is set to open the Voter List for public inspection within 15 days from the date of the announcing the elections.⁶³ The public inspection of the Voter List lasts for 20 days. The SEC has its own secretariat, headed by a Secretary General, which carries out professional-administrative and organizational-technical work. The SEC is also responsible for voter outreach and education on the methods of voting and exercising the voting right.

All Macedonian citizens over the age of 18, who have contractual capacity and have permanent residence in the electoral district where elections are held are entitled to vote. Elections are held by secret ballot and no one can be held responsible for the vote cast, or requested to inform about the choice or reasons for not voting.

Any adult with contractual capacity has the right to stand as a candidate at parliamentary elections. Each candidate can be nominated on only one list, and any list submitter may submit only one list of candidates for Members of the Assembly. At least 40% of the candidates on the candidate list must belong to the underrepresented gender, with at least one seat in every three seats belonging to the underrepresented gender, and additionally, at least one more seat in every 10 seats.

Registered political parties, either independently or in coalitions, and group of voters can submit a list of candidates for MPs. According to the recent legislative changes of March 2024, a group of voters is required to submit, along with the

⁶³ Inspection of the Voter list. Accessed: <https://www.sec.mk/uvid-vo-izbirachki-spisok/> (Accessed on 16 April 2024)

candidate list, signatures of at least 1% of the registered voters in the extract of the Voter list for the respective electoral district.

The function of a Member of the Assembly is incompatible with serving any other elected position, such as President of the Republic, President of the Government, Minister, Judge, Public Prosecutor, Public Attorney, Ombudsman or other elected or appointed position by the Assembly and the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia. Also, it is incompatible with the position of mayor or municipal councilor, other professional and administrative activities in state administration bodies, economic or other profitable activity, as well as serving as member of governing board of public enterprises, public institutions, funds, agencies, offices and other legal entities. In addition, an MP cannot be elected to be a representative of state and social capital in commercial companies.

Election campaign refers to presenting candidates and their programs in public during the pre-election period for certain type of elections. The parliamentary elections campaign starts 20 days before the Election Day, i.e. on 18 April at 00:00 hrs. and ends on 6 May at 24:00 hrs.⁶⁴ The day before elections, i.e. 7 May, is the day of pre-election silence when candidates are not allowed to campaign, whereas media are not allowed to use any forms of electoral media presentation of electoral contestants.

Election campaign organizers need to open a separate bank account solely for the purpose of campaign finance, which cannot be used for any other purpose. Campaign finance may be secured from funds on the party's regular account, party's membership fees, donations and loans aimed for the election campaign. Election campaign participants may spend up to 110 denars per registered voter in the respective electoral district for which they submitted a candidate list.

Election campaigns cannot be financed from the budgets of municipalities and the City of Skopje, public enterprises and institutions, associations of citizens, religious communities, religious groups and foundations, foreign governments and international institutions, bodies and organizations of foreign states and other foreign citizens, enterprises with mixed and dominant foreign capital, as well as from unidentified sources. Broadcasters, print media and electronic media (Internet portals), as well as their affiliates, may not finance or donate to political parties and independent candidates, including for the election campaign.

⁶⁴ Calendar of electoral activities for administering elections for Members of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, State Election Commission. Accessed at: https://mojotizbor.mk/images/2024/Rokovnik_za_Parlamentarni_izbori_2024_godina_-_MK.pdf (Last visit on 16 April 2024)

According to the legislative changes that were introduced along with the Przino Agreement⁶⁵, as of the day of announcing elections until the end of elections, broadcasters, print media and electronic media (Internet portals) may not publish advertisements that are financed from the national Budget, budgets of the municipalities and the City of Skopje and any other entities entrusted to exercise public powers by law.

During the campaign, all media and the public broadcasting service must provide equal access to ensure that election programs and candidates are presented in equitable, impartial and balanced manner. The Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (AAVMS) monitors the electoral representation of both the parties and the candidates as well as the broadcasters' programs, and initiates misdemeanor proceedings for any failure to observe the rules.

The public broadcasting service in cooperation with the State Election Commission, informs the citizens, free of charge, about voting methods and techniques, as well as broadcasts other election-related information and provides impartial reporting. According to Electoral Code amendments under the Przino Agreement, 30% of the program should be reporting on in-country and world events, 30% on activities of ruling parties, 30% on activities of opposition parties and 10% on activities undertaken by non-parliamentary political parties and independent candidates.

During election campaign, media that report on elections may broadcast a total of nine minutes and thirty seconds of additional time for advertising per real hour of broadcasting, intended only for paid political advertising. Of these nine and a half minutes, a total of four minutes can be allocated to the two largest ruling political parties, four minutes to the two largest political parties of the opposition, one minute to the political parties in the Assembly that in the last parliamentary elections did not win enough seats to form a parliamentary group, as well as thirty seconds to the political parties not represented in the Assembly. Given that double elections are held this year, parties may be advertised for a total of 19 minutes per hour. Earlier, this was the case in the election campaign for the 2014 double election when the parties agreed on a limit of 15 minutes of promotion per hour.⁶⁶

According to the Electoral Code, disbursement of costs for paid political advertising to broadcasters, print media and electronic media (internet portals) is done by the State Election Commission based on submitted invoice.

65 Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, Law Amending the Electoral Code 196/2015

66 "Elections 2024: A party propaganda of epic proportions". Prisma, 8 February, 2024. Accessed at: <https://prizma.mk/izbori-2024-partisko-epp-od-epski-razmeri/> (last visit on 26 March 2024)

Elections can be monitored by accredited observers, based on issued authorization by the SEC. Accreditation to observe elections can be granted to domestic and foreign civil society organizations that have been registered at least one year before the elections, and have incorporated the principle of human rights protection into their statute. Representatives of foreign countries can also observe the elections. Authorized representatives of list submitters also have the right to appoint their representative who will monitor the work of the electoral management bodies.⁶⁷

More information on the Macedonian electoral system for the election of Members of the Assembly can be found in the Handbook on Parliamentary Elections in the Republic of North Macedonia 2020.⁶⁸

67 Table of accredited observers for the Parliamentary Elections in the Republic of North Macedonia, State Election Commission. Accessed at: <https://www.sec.mk/parlamentarni-izbori-2024/#tab-id-26> (Last visit on 16 April 2024)

68 Handbook on parliamentary elections in the Republic of North Macedonia 2020, second supplemented edition. KAS and IDSCS, 2020. page 42-55. Accessed at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Belegexemplar_2019_The_Republic_of_Macedonia_s_2019_Presidential_Elections_Handbook_ENG.pdf (last visit on 05 April 2024)



3

Electoral Districts

3. Electoral Districts

The regular parliamentary elections to be held on 8 May 2024 will be administered in the six electoral districts (ED) on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Shortly prior to the parliamentary elections in 2002, the Law on Electoral Districts was adopted⁶⁹, stipulating 6 electoral districts and dividing the territory of the state into electoral regions with approximately equal number of registered voters. In accordance with the Electoral Code amendments from 2016⁷⁰, the number of voters in one ED can vary – 5/+ 5 percent relative to the average number of voters, which amounts to almost 292,000 per electoral district. In each of the 6 EDs, 20 MPs are elected according to the proportional principle, i.e. 120 MPs of the total 123 MPs.

Prior to the early parliamentary elections in 2011, the Electoral Code was amended⁷¹, allowing Macedonian citizens in foreign countries to vote for the first time. Out-of-country voting was administered in three electoral districts according to the majority principle. Specifically, electoral district 7 included Europe and Africa, electoral district 8 included North and South America, and electoral district 9 included Asia and Australia. Legislative changes under the Przino Agreement stipulated only one electoral district abroad, i.e. electoral district 7 for Europe, Africa, North America, South America, Australia and Asia, where 3 MPs are elected according to the proportional model.⁷² These MPs can be elected if the number of votes cast equals the lowest number of votes to win a single in-country seat. If none of the lists wins the required number of votes, no MP is elected. Macedonian citizens abroad vote in diplomatic and consular missions (DCOs) and the consular offices of the Republic of North Macedonia.

The number of in-country polling stations for these regular elections is 3,360. In the early parliamentary elections in 2020, there were 3,478 polling stations, i.e. 46 less compared to the previous elections in 2016. No more than 1,000 voters may vote in one polling station.

69 Law on Electoral Districts for Election of Parliamentarians in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, "Official Gazette", no. 43 of 26 June 2002

70 Electoral Code (proposal consolidated text), unofficial version prepared by the Professional 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 and 42/20)

71 Electoral Code (consolidated text), "Official Gazette", No.54 of 14 April 2011

72 Electoral Code (consolidated text), unofficial version prepared by the Professional 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 and 99/16).

In February 2020, in anticipation of early parliamentary elections, additional amendments to the Electoral Code were voted, with legislative interventions concerning the electoral districts across the territory of the country. Given the new developments, new boundaries were set in two electoral districts – ED 5 and ED 6. Specifically, the Municipality of Debar with 16 polling stations and the Municipality of Mavrovo and Rostusha with 30 polling stations previously in ED5, now fell within the boundaries of ED 6.⁷³ Such delineation of electoral districts resulted from the recommendations that an electoral district may not differ from the number of voters in the neighboring electoral district by $\pm 5\%$.⁷⁴

Map of the electoral units



ED 1 is composed of part of the capital Skopje and part of the central parts of the country, i.e. Skopje municipalities of Aerodrom, Karpos, Kisela Voda, Centar, part of municipality of Chair, Saraj, Sopiste, Makedonski Brod and Studenichani. Based on voters' ethnicity, the majority of voters are ethnic Macedonians. At the last parliamentary elections in 2020, 309,210 voters were registered in this electoral district, distributed across a total of 590 polling stations. 164,287 voters exercised their voting right or 53.16%, which resulted in the following distribution of seats in the electoral district: SDSM led coalition "Mozeme" - 8 seats, VMRO-DPMNE and Coalition - 7 seats, DUI - 2 seats, Alliance for Albanians - 2 seats, while the party Levica won one seat and became part of the legislature for the first time.

73 Law Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code ("Official Gazette" no. 58 of 11 March 2024

74 "Last minute change of boundaries of two electoral districts" 360 degrees, February 15, 2020 <https://360stepeni.mk/vo-posleden-moment-ke-se-menuvaat-granitsite-na-dve-izborni-edinitsi/> (last visit: April 9, 2024)

ED 2 also includes part of the capital Skopje and part of the northern parts of the country with an equal population composition, i.e. ethnic Macedonians, Albanians, but Serbs and Roma are also represented. This ED includes the Skopje municipalities of Butel, Gazi Baba, Gjorce Petrov, part of the municipality of Chair, Shuto Orizari, Aracinovo, part of Kumanovo, Lipkovo, part of Staro Nagorichane and Chucher Sandevo. In ED 2 in 2020, according to the State Election Commission, there were 319,820 voters, of which 158,804 (49.65%) went to the polls in a total of 433 polling stations on the territory of the electoral district. At the 2020 elections, VMRO-DPMNE and the Coalition won 7 seats, the Coalition “Mozeme” won 7 seats, DUI won 3 seats, while the Alliance for Albanians also won 3 seats.

ED 3 includes parts of the central, eastern and northeastern parts of the country. This ED covers the municipalities of Berovo, Veles, Vinica, Gradsko, Delchevo, Zelenikovo, Zrnovci, Ilinden, Karbinci, Kocani, Kratovo, Kriva Palanka, part of Kumanovo, Lozovo, Makedonska Kamenica, Petrovec, Pehcevo, Probitip, Rankovce, Sveti Nikole, part of Staro Nagorichane, Caska, Cheshinovo – Obleshevo and Stip. The dominant population is of Macedonian ethnicity. According to the official data of the State Election Commission, 278,511 voters who exercise their voting right at 668 polling stations are registered in this electoral district. In 2020, voter turnout in ED 3 was 58.4%, that is, 162,648 voters, with VMRO-DPMNE and the Coalition winning 10 seats, followed by the Coalition ‘Mozeme” with 9 seats, and the party Levica won the second out of two seats in this electoral district in these elections.

ED 4 covers the territory of the southeastern region of the country. This ED includes part of the city of Bitola, Bogdanci, Bosilevo, Valandovo, Vasilevo, Gevgelija, Demir Kapija, Dojran, Kavadarci, Konce, part of Krivogastani, Mogila, Negotino, Novaci, Novo Selo, Prilep, Radovish, Rosoman and Strumica. This part is dominated by population of Macedonian ethnicity. There are a total of 615 polling stations in ED4 where a total of 282,506 people exercised their voting right in 2020, or 60.77% of the total registered voters. In this ED, VMRO-DPMNE and the Coalition and the Coalition “Mozeme” won 10 seats each in the 2020 elections.

ED 5 covers the territory of the southwestern part of the country. It includes part of the city of Bitola, Vecvani, part of Debar, Debarca, Demir Hisar, Dolneni, part of Kicevo, part of Krivogastani, Krusevo, Ohrid, Plasnica, Resen, Struga and Center Zupa. The majority of the population is of Macedonian ethnicity, but voters from the Albanian ethnic community also represent a significant part. In the last parliamentary elections in 2020, total of 314,489 voters were registered to vote in 776 polling stations in ED 5. At the 2020 parliamentary elections, voter turnout was 50.92%, i.e. a total of 160,146 voters cast their vote. VMRO-DPMNE and the Coalition won 8 seats, the Coalition

“Mozeme” – 8 seats, DUI – 3 seats and the Alliance for Albanians – 1 seat.

ED 6 covers the territory of the northwest of the country. It includes Bogovinje, Brvenica, Vrapciste, Gostivar, part of Debar, Zelino, Jegunovce, part of Kicevo, Mavrovo and Rostusha, Tearce and Tetovo. This part of the country is dominated by population of Albanian ethnicity. At the last parliamentary elections in 2020, 309,727 voters were registered to vote at 396 polling stations in ED 6, and the voter turnout was 40.74% or 126,175 voters. At the 2020 parliamentary elections, in this electoral district, DUI won biggest number of seats – 7, followed by the Alliance for Albanians with 6 seats, then the Coalition “Mozeme” – 4 seats, VMRO-DPMNE and the Coalition – 2 seats, and DPA won 1 seat.

ED 7 includes all Macedonian citizens living or temporarily residing abroad, i.e. in the countries of Europe, Africa, North America, South America, Australia and Asia. In this electoral district, Macedonian citizens abroad can elect 3 MPs according to the proportional model. The parliamentary seats are distributed according to the D’Hondt formula. To be able to vote abroad, citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia who temporarily work or stay abroad and have registered their last residence in the country before the elections should apply for voting at the appropriate DCO/consular office. Thus, they are registered in the special extracts of the Voters List. They can apply by submitting a signed application or send an application by e-mail. The number of polling stations abroad is subject to change, and any DCO/consular office where less than 10 voters applied to vote will not be a designated polling station.

At the last parliamentary elections in 2020, voting was not administered in the diplomatic and consular missions and offices, after the lists of candidates for MPs were submitted to the Assembly.⁷⁵ According to the Electoral Code⁷⁶, out-of-country voting is administered if the number of voters is equal to or greater than the lowest number of voters by which an in-country seat was elected at the last elections. At the 2016 parliamentary elections, according to D’Hondt model to calculate seats, in ED 6 that had the lowest turnout, the last MP was elected with 6,500 votes.⁷⁷ For the 2020 parliamentary elections, 6,096 voter applications in ED 7 were accepted, while 1,439 applications were rejected on the grounds of not being submitted orderly. The number of applicant voters did not exceed the number of votes by which the

75 Decision not to administer out-of-country voting in the DCO, 17 March 2020, Accessed at: <https://www.sec.mk/parlamentarni-izbori-2020/#tab-id-18> (last visit: 26 March 2024)

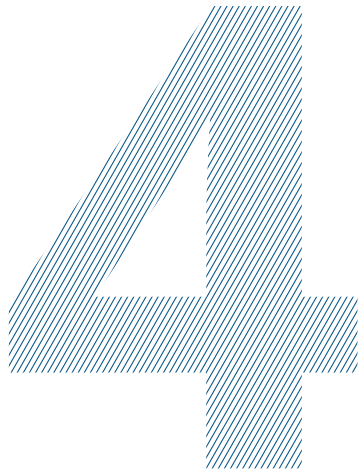
76 Law Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code (“Official Gazette” no. 58 of 11 March 2024)

77 “It is uncertain whether the diaspora will vote” 360 Degrees, 20 March 2020, Accessed at: <https://360stepeni.mk/neizvesno-e-dali-ke-glasa-dijasporata/> (last visit: 26 March 2024)

MP from ED 6 was elected in 2016. Based on these figures, the parliamentary composition elected in the 2020 elections did not have MPs from ED 7.

At the parliamentary elections in 2024, out-of-voting will not be administered again in the diplomatic and consular missions and offices as the number of citizens who applied to vote does not suffice.⁷⁸

78 Radio Free Europe. (2024, 27 March), "A total of 2,571 citizens abroad will be able to vote in the presidential election". <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/32880067.html> (accessed on 29 March 2024)



4

Overview of participants in 2024 Parliamentary Elections

4. Overview of participants in 2024 Parliamentary Elections

According to the Calendar of electoral activities to administer parliamentary elections, adopted by the SEC, a total of 17 political entities submitted candidate lists for election of MPs by the prescribed deadline, 2 April 2024. After reviewing the applications, SEC made a decision to accept 17 applications. In these elections, 1,815,350 eligible citizens will have the opportunity to vote for 17 political entities, or 11 political parties, 5 coalitions and one independent list of a group of voters, with 84 candidate lists, which is a sixfold increase compared to 78 candidate lists submitted for 2020 parliamentary elections.

Summary of submitted candidate lists for the six electoral districts

Ord. No.	Party/Coalition	ED 1	ED 2	ED 3	ED 4	ED 5	ED 6
1	Coalition "Za Evropska idnina" – SDSM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Coalition "Tvoja Makedonija" - VMRO-DPMNE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Coalition "Evropski front" - DUI	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Coalition "Vredi"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Levica	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Avaja – Dosta e	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Political party Demokrati	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Political party Desna	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
9	Political party Edinstvena Makedonija	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
10	Dvizenje ZNAM – Za nasa Makedonija	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Makedonska era Treta- Suverenisti	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	Makedonska obnovitelna reformska opcija – Rabotnicka partija	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
13	Political party Nova Alternativa	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
14	Political party Rodina Makedonija	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	Tvoja partija	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
16	Coalition "Hrabro za Makedonija" – GROM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
17	Group of voters Djula Celiku	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓

All political parties, coalitions, as well as leaders of candidate lists who take part in parliamentary elections are presented in this Handbook. Parliamentary parties, that is, SDSM and the coalition, VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition, DUI and the coalition, coalition “Vredi” and Levica⁷⁹, will be presented in more detail.

Political parties, coalitions and leaders of candidate lists⁸⁰

Social Democratic Union of Macedonia⁸¹ and “Za Evropska idnina” coalition



Socijaldemokratski sojuz na Makedonija (Social Democratic Union of Macedonia) declares itself as party to the left of the center, with a social democratic ideological provenience. It was founded at the Congress held on 21 April 1991, as the legal successor of the Union of Communists of Macedonia – Party for Democratic Transformation (SKM PDP). During that year, the party changed its name to SDSM and its ideology from communist to social democratic. The party run in all parliamentary and local elections since the country's independence. In 1992, after the dissolution of the first expert government, even though SDSM had no majority in the Assembly, it was granted a mandate and formed the first political government of the Republic of Macedonia. In the period from 1994 to 1998, the party once again had a majority in the Assembly, as it won 85 parliamentary seats together with its coalition partners in the 1994 elections that were boycotted by the opposition in the second round. In the 1998 parliamentary elections, SDSM lost the elections by winning only 27 parliamentary seats. SDSM was the largest opposition party until 2002, when it won the elections with 60 seats together with its coalition partners and remained in power until the next parliamentary elections in 2006. In the 2006 parliamentary elections, the SDSM coalition won 32 seats. Until 2016, SDSM remained in opposition, after losing four election cycles, i.e., in 2008, 2011, 2014 and 2016. In the early parliamentary elections in 2008, together with the coalition, the party won 27 parliamentary seats, and in the early parliamentary

79 The order of political parties represented in the Assembly is based on the number of seats won in the 2020 parliamentary elections. Other political parties and coalitions are alphabetically ordered.

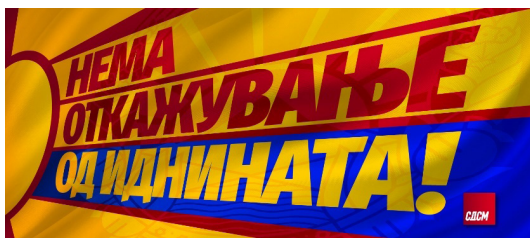
80 Logos of political parties, biographies and photos of leaders of candidate lists are downloaded from party websites, public institutions' websites and official Facebook profiles of candidates.

81 Handbook on 2020 parliamentary elections in the Republic of North Macedonia (second supplemented edition), Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Institute for Democracy “Societas Civilis” – Skopje. Accessed at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/priracnici/Priracnik_za_parlamentarni_izbori_2020_ENG.pdf (last visit on 4 April 2024)

elections in 2011, SDSM won 42 parliamentary seats with the coalition. In the 2014 parliamentary elections, SDSM won 27 seats and the coalition won a total of 34 seats. In the 2016 parliamentary elections, SDSM and the coalition won a total of 49 seats, which was two parliamentary seats less than VMRO-DPMNE, but secured a parliamentary majority together with DUI. In the last parliamentary elections in 2020, SDSM and the coalition “Mozeme” won a total of 46 mandates and secured a parliamentary majority to form a government.⁸²

Since the country's independence and the party transformed from SKM-PDP to SDSM in 1991, Branko Crvenkovski was party leader until 2004. He stepped down as party leader when he won at the extraordinary presidential elections in 2004 and became the President of the country. At an extraordinary SDSM Congress in November 2004, Vlado Buckovski was elected president, leading the party to defeat in the 2006 elections. After the elections, Buckovski was voted no confidence and an extraordinary Congress in November 2006 elected Radmila Sekerinska as party leader. Radmila Sekerinska held the position of SDSM President until June 2008, when she handed in her irrevocable resignation as result of losing the early parliamentary elections. In September 2008, at the 8th party Congress, Zoran Zaev was elected as acting president. In 2009, after his term as president expired, the party Congress restored Branko Crvenkovski as president of SDSM. He held the position of party leader until 2013, when he stepped down and Zoran Zaev was re-elected in his place. In 2021, in the extraordinary intra-party elections, the incumbent president Dimitar Kovachevski was elected.⁸³

After the last local elections in 2021, SDSM is in power in 16 out of 80 municipalities.⁸⁴



In the 2024 parliamentary elections, SDSM leads the coalition “Za Evropska idnina”, along with: Liberalno demokratska partija, Nova socijaldemokratska partija, VMRO Narodna partija, Partija za dvizenje na Turcite, Demokratski

82 State Election Commission, Elections 2020. Accessed: <https://izbornaarhiva.mk/> (last visit on 4 April 2024)

83 Dimitar Kovacevski is the new president of SDSM with 37,649 votes. Accessed at: <https://sdsd.org.mk/pres-konferencii/38964/> (last visit on 4 April 2024)

84 State Election Commission, Elections 2021. Accessed at: <https://izbornaarhiva.mk/> (last visit on 4 April 2024)

sojuz na Vlasite, Sojuz na Romite od Makedonija, Stranka na demokratska akcija na Makedonija, Demokratska obnova na Makedonija, Desnica, Partija na penzionerite, Partija za demokratski prosperitet na Romite, Partija za opshtestven i ekonomski napredok i Srpska stranka vo Makedonija.

“Za Evropska idnina” coalition will run in 2024 elections with candidate lists in six electoral districts.

SDSM – Socijaldemokratski sojuz na Makedonija (Social Democratic Union of Macedonia)

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1000 Skopje

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Leaders of candidate lists of SDSM and “Za Evropska idnina” coalition ⁸⁵



ED 1 – Dimitar Kovacevski is the president of SDSM, a former Prime Minister and Assistant professor at the University American College Skopje. He graduated from the Faculty of Economy at the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” in Skopje. He completed his doctoral studies at the Faculty of Economy in Montenegro. Kovacevski was a former deputy finance minister in 2020. He was born in 1974 in Kumanovo.

⁸⁵ State Election Commission: Candidate lists by electoral districts - April 2024. Accessed: Листа на кандидати по политичка партија (sec.mk) (last visit on 15 April 2024)



ED 2 – Oliver Spasovski is a former Minister of Interior and Prime Minister in the caretaker government tasked to organize the early parliamentary elections in July 2020. Previously, he held the post of Minister of Interior on four occasions, from 11 November 2015 to 18 May 2016, from 2 September 2016 to 29 December 2016, from 31 May 2017 until he was given the mandate to form a caretaker government on 3 January 2020, and from 1 September 2020 to 29 January 2024. Spasovski was elected Member of the Assembly in two parliamentary terms (2006-2008 and 2011-2014). He graduated

from the Faculty of Economy at the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” in Skopje. He was born in 1974 in Kumanovo.



ED 3 – Sanja Lukarevska serves as Director of the Public Revenue Office and Vice President of SDSM. She graduated from the Faculty of Law at the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” in Skopje. She was born in 1982 in Skopje.



ED 4 – Venko Filipche is a former Minister of Health. Prior to taking office, he was a health advisor to Prime Minister Zoran Zaev and Associate professor at the Faculty of Medicine in Skopje. Filipche is also Secretary of the Macedonian Neurosurgical Association as well as a member of the executive committee of the Association of Neurosurgeons of Southeast Europe. He graduated and completed master and doctorate studies from the Medical Faculty in Skopje. He was born in 1977 in Skopje.



ED 5 - Jovan Mitreski is the current President of the Assembly, former coordinator of the SDSM parliamentary group who serves his second term as Member of the Assembly in the current parliamentary term. Previously, he was a Member of the Assembly from 2016 to 2020. He graduated from the Faculty of Economy at the University "Ss. Clement of Ohrid" University - Bitola. He was born in 1980 in Struga.



ED 6 - Slavjanka Petrovska is Minister of Defence. In the period from 2020 until taking up the post of Minister of Defense, she was a Member of the Assembly. In the period from January to July 2020, Petrovska was an additional Deputy Minister of Interior in the caretaker government tasked to organize the early parliamentary elections in July 2020. She graduated from the Faculty of Law at the University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" in Skopje. She was born in 1982 in Skopje.

VMRO-DPMNE and “Tvoja Makedonija” coalition



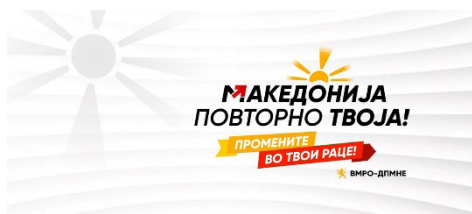
VMRO-DPMNE is a party that declares itself as people's party to the right of the center, with an ideological Christian democrat provenience. Since independence, VMRO-DPMNE has been one of the two largest parties in the country. The party run in almost all parliamentary and local elections, with the exception of the 1994 parliamentary elections when it boycotted the second round. After the third parliamentary elections held in 1998, VMRO-DPMNE formed a government for the first time with 49 seats won, and in coalition with Demokratska Alternativa that won 13 seats, the PD-PA-NDP (later DPA) with 11 seats, and several other small parties. VMRO-DPMNE remained in power until 2002, however, a government of a broad coalition was formed during the conflict from May to November 2001, which also included ministers from the SDSM and the LDP. In 2002, VMRO-DPMNE together with its coalition partners won 33 parliamentary seats, lost the elections and stayed in opposition until 2006. In 2006, together with “Za podobra Makedonija” coalition, the party won the parliamentary elections, with a total of 45 parliamentary seats and formed the government. Since then, VMRO-DPMNE won in four other consecutive election cycles, in the early parliamentary elections in 2008, 2011, 2014 and 2016. In the early parliamentary elections in 2008, together with “Za podobra Makedonija” coalition, the party won a record 63 seats. In the early parliamentary elections in 2011, together with the coalition, this party won a total of 56 parliamentary seats. In the early parliamentary elections in 2014, VMRO-DPMNE had 52 MPs in the Assembly, and together with the coalition partners they held 61 parliamentarian seats out of a total of 123 seats in the Assembly. In the early parliamentary elections in 2016, VMRO-DPMNE won 51 parliamentary seats. Even though VMRO-DPMNE won the largest number of parliamentary seats, meaning that the party president, Nikola Gruevski, would receive the mandate from the President of the country, Ivanov, to form a government, the party failed to secure the required majority of 61 MPs within the deadline, thus failed to form a government. The mandate to form a government was then given to SDSM President, Zoran Zaev, whose party won 49 seats in the elections. Zoran Zaev's government was voted in May 2017, with 62 votes in favor.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Handbook on 2020 parliamentary elections in the Republic of North Macedonia (second supplemented edition), Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Institute for Democracy “Societas Civilis” – Skopje. Accessed at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/priracnici/Priracnik_za_parlamentarni_izbori_2020_ENG.pdf (last visit on 3 April 2024)

In the last parliamentary elections in 2020, VMRO-DPMNE won 44 parliamentary seats, two seats less than SDSM and “Mozeme” coalition, which won 46 seats and secured a parliamentary majority to form a government.⁸⁷

In the last local elections in 2021, VMRO-DPMNE’s candidates won 42 mayoral posts, out of 80 municipalities and the City of Skopje.⁸⁸ Compared to the previous 2017 local elections when VMRO-DPMNE won only 5 mayoral posts, the party managed to win 37 more mayoral posts.

Since its establishment until 2003, Ljubcho Georgievski was the president of VMRO-DPMNE. At the party Congress in May 2003, Georgievski resigned, and Nikola Gruevski was elected in his place. Gruevski led the party until December 2017, when he handed in his resignation that was accepted by the Central Committee. At the 16th extraordinary Congress, held in December 2017, Hristijan Mickovski was elected party president.⁸⁹ In 2021, the 17th Congress was held, when the incumbent Hristijan Mickovski was re-elected.⁹⁰



In the parliamentary elections in 2024, VMRO-DPMNE leads the coalition “Твоја Македонија”, along with Socijalistichka partija na Makedonija, Demokratska partija na Srbite vo Makedonija, Demokratski sojuz, Makedonska akcija, Dvizenje za nacionalno edinstvo

na Turcite, Srpska napredna stranka vo Makedonija, Boshnjachka narodna partija, Demokratski sili na Romite, Partija na obedineta demokrati na Makedonija, Partija na Vlasite od Makedonija, GLAS za Makedonija, Nova Liberalna Partija, Socijaldemokratska unija, Romi obedineta za Makedonija, Demokratska partija na Romite, Rabotnichko zemjodelska partija na Republika Makedonija, Obedineta partija za ednakvost na Romite, Dostoinstvo, Trajno makedonsko radikalno obedinuvanje, Obedineta za Makedonija, Makedonski koncept.

87 State Election Commission, Elections 2020. Accessed at: <https://izbornaarhiva.mk/> (last visit on 3 April 2024)

88 State Election Commission, Elections 2021. Accessed at: <https://izbornaarhiva.mk/> (last visit on 3 April 2024)

89 Handbook on 2020 parliamentary elections in the Republic of North Macedonia (second supplemented edition), Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Institute for Democracy “Societas Civilis” – Skopje. Accessed at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/priracnici/Priracnik_za_parlamentarni_izbori_2020_ENG.pdf (last visit 04 April 2024)

90 With 489 votes in favor and 3 invalid ballots, Mickovski was re-elected as leader of VMRO-DPMNE, 360 stepeni, December 12, 2021. Accessed at: <https://360stepeni.mk/so-489-glasa-za-i-3-nevazhechki-livchina-mitskoski-reizbran-za-lider-na-vmro-dpmne/> (last visit on 4 April 2024)

In these elections, VMRO-DPMNE led coalition “Tvoja Makedonija” will run the elections with candidate lists in all six electoral districts.

VMRO-DPMNE

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Leaders of candidate lists of VMRO-DPMNE and “Tvoja Makedonija” coalition



ED1 – Hristijan Mickoski is president of VMRO-DPMNE and a full-time professor at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering in Skopje. In the period 2015-2017, he served as Energy Advisor to Prime Ministers Nikola Gruevski and Emil Dimitriev, and in the period from 2016-2017 he was Director General of JSC “Elektrani na Makedonija”. In 2017, he was elected leader of VMRO-DPMNE, and in 2021 he was re-elected to the post. He received his master’s degree and doctorate from the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering in Skopje. He was born in 1977 in Skopje.



ED2 – Vlado Misajlovski is Vice President of VMRO-DPMNE and current Member of the Assembly. He graduated from the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations at the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, at the Department of Diplomacy and International Politics, where he completed a master’s degree. Misajlovski was Minister of Transport and Communications from 13 May 2015 to 1 June 2017. He previously held several other positions. He was born in 1985 in Skopje.



ED3 – Dragan Kovachki is Member of the Assembly in the current parliamentary term, has a military rank and is a colonel in the Army. He was commander of the 1st Mechanized Infantry Brigade, and head of the section for operations and combat readiness in the 1st Mechanized Infantry Brigade. Kovachki was also the head of the Sector (Military Security and Intelligence Service in the Ministry of Defense). He was head of the counterintelligence department in the military security and intelligence service. He was born in 1977 in Delchevo.



ED4 – Aleksandar Nikolovski is Vice President of VMRO-DPMNE and Member of the Assembly. Nikolovski graduated from the Faculty of Law “Iustinianus Primus” in Skopje as political scientist. Nikolovski is member of VMRO-DPMNE for many years and served as Member of the Assembly in several parliamentary terms. From 2009 to 2017, Nikolovski was a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and was again appointed to this post in 2021. In 2022, he was elected Vice-President of the Group of the European People’s Party in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. He was born in 1984 in Ohrid.



ED5 – Gjorgija Sajkoski is a Member of the Assembly, Secretary General of VMRO-DPMNE and Doctor of historical sciences. Sajkoski has held several positions, including President of the Council of the Municipality of Kicevo (2009 - 2013), Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Local Self-Government, Member of the Commission for Local Self-Government (2010 - 2014), President of the Municipal committee of VMRO-DPMNE in Kicevo (2010 - 2020) and Director of PE Studencica. He was born in 1972 in Kicevo.



ED6 – Dafina Stojanovska is a current Member of the Assembly and a member of the Executive Committee of the party. She also served as Member of the Assembly in the previous two terms (2016-2020 and 2014-2016). Stojanoska is a dentist and had dental practice in Gostivar in the period 2001 - 2008. In the period 2008 – 2016, she was employed at the Health Insurance Fund in Gostivar. She was born in 1974 in Gostivar.

Democratic Union for Integration⁹¹ and “Evropski Front” coalition



The Democratic Union for Integration was created by the members of the former Albanian National Liberation Army (NLA), which started the armed conflict in 2001. Ideologically, DUI declares itself to be a left-centrist party that advocates greater rights for Albanians and the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. The party was established in 2002 and ran for the first time in the parliamentary elections that year and won the largest number of votes among the ethnic Albanian electorate, securing a total of 16 parliamentary seats and becoming part of the SDSM-led government. DUI was part of the Government from 2002 to 2006, when it was represented by the largest number of ministers of an Albanian party thus far. In 2006 parliamentary elections, DUI again won the highest number of votes among the Albanian electorate (12.2%) and 17 parliamentary seats, but after unsuccessful negotiations with VMRO-DPMNE was not included in the then government coalition. As a result, DUI boycotted the work of the Assembly for a long period from 2006 to 2008, when early parliamentary elections were called. In the 2008 parliamentary elections, DUI won 12.8% of the votes and 18 seats, and as the largest political party representing ethnic Albanians entered the government headed by Nikola Gruevski. In the next parliamentary elections in 2011, DUI was again the third largest party in the country, winning 14 seats. In the 2014 parliamentary elections, DUI won 19 seats and formed a government together with VMRO-DPMNE.

In the last parliamentary elections held in 2020, DUI noted an increased result, winning 15 parliamentary seats, which is 5 more than in 2016 parliamentary elections.⁹² In coalition with SDSM, DUI once again participated in the Government. Ali Ahmeti has been the leader of the party since it was established.

After the last local elections in 2021, DUI have 11 mayors from a total of 80 municipalities and the City of Skopje, while in the local elections in 2017 there were only 10 mayors.⁹³

91 Handbook on 2020 parliamentary elections in the Republic of North Macedonia (second supplemented edition), Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Institute for Democracy “Societas Civilis” – Skopje. Accessed at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/priracnici/Priracnik_za_parlamentarni_izbori_2020_ENG.pdf (last visit on 04 April 2024)

92 State Election Commission, Elections 2020. Accessed: <https://izbornaarhiva.mk/> (last visit on 5 April 2024)

93 State Election Commission, Elections 2021. Accessed: <https://izbornaarhiva.mk/> (last visit on 3 April 2024)

In the 2024 parliamentary elections, DUI leads the “Evropski front” coalition, along with Demokratska partija na Albancite, Evropska demokratska partija, Narodno dvizenje, Alijansa za Albancite (Zijadin Sela)⁹⁴, Dvizenje na Turcite na Makedonija za pravda I demokratija, Demokratska partija na Turcite i Unija na Romite.

In these elections, DUI-led coalition “Evropski front” will run the elections with candidate lists in all six electoral districts.

Democratic Union for Integration – DUI

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94 The wing of the Alliance of Albanians led by Zijadin Sela decided in the upcoming elections to join the “European Front” led by DUI. After the last decision taken by the Basic Court in Tetovo, Sela received the seals of the Alliance of Albanians, thus officially he is the president of AA. “Zijadin Sela received the seals of the Alliance for Albanians, Taravari announces an appeal” 360 stepeni, 2 April, Accessed at: <https://360stepeni.mk/zijadin-sela-sudski-gi-dobi-pechatite-na-alijansa-za-albantsite-taravari-najavuva-zhalba/> (last visit on 16 April 2024)

Leaders of candidate lists of “Evropski front” coalition



ED 1 – Blerim Bexheti has a law degree and is an attorney by profession. From 2006 to 2009 he was a Member of the Assembly. In the period 2009-2011, he was Mayor of the municipality of Saraj. From 28 July 2011 to 19 June 2014 he was Minister of Justice. Bexheti now serves as mayor of the municipality of Saraj after he won the 2021 elections.



ED 2 – Sadula Duraku was born in 1960 in Lipkovo, Kumanovo. He graduated from the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering in Pristina. In 2004, he was appointed Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy and held that function until 2006. In 2006, he was a Member of the Assembly from the DUI parliamentary group. He was mayor of the municipality of Lipkovo in the period 2009-2017. In 2017, he was appointed Minister of Environment and Physical Planning, and in 2019 Deputy Prime Minister for the implementation of the Framework Agreement and political system. He remained in office until 2020.



ED 3 – Sulejman Baki was born in Skopje in 1975. He completed his bachelor's and master's studies at the University of Bursa - Uludag, and received his doctorate from the Institute of National History at UKIM in the field of Ottoman history. Since 2011, he has been a professor at the State University of Tetovo, where he is also the Head of the Department of Turkish language and literature. He is a representative of the Movement of Turks of Macedonia for Justice and Democracy. (Dvizenje na Turcite na Makedonija za pravda i demokratija).



ED 4 – Enver Hussain was born in 1971 in the village of Topolnica, Radovish. He is a university professor of 1-4 grade teaching at the Goce Delchev University in Stip, and holds a master's degree in law from the International University of Struga. From 2008 to 2012, he was Vice president of the Democratic Party of Turks of Macedonia. From 2014 to 2017, he was State Secretary at the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, and from 2018 to 2020 he served as State Secretary at the Ministry of Education and Science. He is currently serving as Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Policy.



ED 5 – Zijadin Sela is President of the Alliance for Albanians.⁹⁵ He was elected a Member of the Assembly in the 2020 and earlier in 2016 elections. He also held the post of Member of the Assembly in the period from 2011 to 2013, before being elected mayor of Struga (2013-2016). He graduated from the Medical Faculty at the University of Tirana. He was born in 1972 in Struga.



ED 6 – Ali Ahmeti, since 2002 serves as Member of the Assembly and DUI leader. He is party leader since the party was founded in 2002. In the 2001 conflict, he was the supreme commander and political leader of the National Liberation Army (NLA). In 1983, he received a degree in philosophy from the University of Pristina, Kosovo. He was born in 1959 in the village of Zajas, Kicevo. For the eighth time, Ahmeti is a leader of the candidate list in ED 6.

⁹⁵ Sela: The court ruled I am the president of AA, and the seal of the party are its members", mkd.mk, 03 April 2024. Accessed at: <https://mkd.mk/sela-sudot-presudi-jas-sum-pretседatel-na-aa-a-pechat-na-partijata-se-chlenovite/> (last visit on 22 April 2024)

Coalition “Vredi”



The coalition “Worth” includes the political parties Alternativa, Dvizenje Besa, Alijansa za Albancite (Arben Taravari) and Demokratsko dvizenje.

Alternativa is a political party that declares to be a center-right entity in the ideological spectrum. The party was established in 2019. The Central Assembly appointed Afrim Gashi as the first President. The party originated from former members of Dvizenje Besa, who formed the party after the outcome of 2017 local elections. The political program relies on four main pillars: Development, Integration, Open Dialogue and Justice.

Dvizenje Besa is a political party founded in 2014. Biljal Kasami is president of the party. In the 2016 parliamentary elections, Besa won five parliamentary seats, making it the second largest Albanian party in the Assembly.⁹⁶ In the 2020 parliamentary elections, the party participated in the SDSM-led coalition and won 4 parliamentary seats.

Alliance for Albanians is a political party that emerged from Dvizenje za reformi (Movement for Reform) in the DPA, and was registered as political party shortly before the local elections in 2017 under the name Alliance of Albanians, which was challenged by the leadership of Uniteti and the NDP. In the previous parliamentary elections in 2020, the party was in coalition with the party Alternativa. In those elections, the coalition won 12 seats. Prior to the 2024 elections, the party was divided into two wings, one led by Zijadin Sela and the other by Arben Taravari. After the split, Arben Taravari and the Albanian opposition parties confirmed the coalition and signed a declaration of unity in the upcoming elections. Taravari is also a presidential candidate of the coalition “Vredi”.⁹⁷

Demokratsko dvizenje is a political party formed by supporters of Izet Mexhiti from the so-called “Ognena grupa” of DUI. Due to internal disagreements and

96 State Election Commission, Elections 2020. Accessed at: <https://izbornaarhiva.mk/> (last visit on 5 April 2024)

97 Zijadin Sela received the seals of the Alliance for Albanians, Taravari announces an appeal” 360 stepeni, 2 April Accessed at: <https://360stepeni.mk/zijadin-sela-sudski-gi-dobi-pechatite-na-alijansa-za-albantsite-taravari-najavuva-zhalba/> (last visit on 16 April 2024)

revolting against the party, Demokratsko dvizenje split off and began to act independently since 2023.⁹⁸ Demokratsko dvizenje stands for respect for human rights, rule of law, promotion of the rights and status of Albanians and achievement of economic well-being, to name just a few of its fundamental values.

In these elections, the coalition “Vredi” will run the elections with candidate lists in all six electoral districts.

Coalition “Vredi”

vlen.mk

Leaders of the candidate lists of “Vredi” coalition



ED 1 – **Izet Mexhiti** is the leader of Demokratsko dvizenje and Member of the Assembly. He was born in 1977 in Skopje. He graduated from the Faculty of Economy at the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” in Skopje. In the period 2001-2003, he was a professor of economics at the secondary school “Arseni Jovkov”. From 2005 to 2017, Medziti was mayor of the municipality of Chair, and in 2019 he became president of the party branch of DUI in that municipality. In 2023, from the factional “Ognena grupa” in DUI, Mexhiti founded the new party – Demokratsko dvizenje.



ED 2 – **Afrim Gashi** is the leader of Alternativa and Member of the Assembly in the last parliamentary term (2020-2024). He also served as Member of the Assembly in the previous term (2016 - 2020). In 2011, he founded the magazine “Shenja” and until 2014 was its editor-in-chief. He has been active in politics since 2014 and founded Dvizenje Besa, where he served for some time as Secretary General. At the Central Assembly after the split from Dvizenje Besa, Gashi was elected the first president of the new party Alternativa. He graduated from the Faculty of Law at the University of Tetovo. He was born in 1977 in Skopje.

98 “Ognenite” became Demokratsko dvizenje, DW, 2 August 2023. Accessed at: „Ognenite” станаа Демократско движење – DW – 2.08.2023 (last visit on 15 April).



ED 3 – Shener Bilali is a professor at the Faculty of Communications at the International Balkan University. In the period from 2013-2017, he was an associate professor, while in 2017 he became full-time professor at the same faculty. In 2023, he joined Dvizenje Besa. He received his doctorate from the Institute of National History at the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” in Skopje.



ED 4 – Mendurim Zekmani is a leader of the candidate list in electoral district 4. He studied at the Faculty of Security at the FON University in Skopje.⁹⁹



ED 5 – Salim Soleimani is a former Mufti and holds a master degree in theology and Islamic philosophy. He studied and received his master’s degree in Jordan, while for 12 years he headed the Mufti of the Islamic religious community in Struga, where he contributed to the development of religious life, working on the preservation of cultural and spiritual heritage.

99 No more biographical data was found for the leader of the candidate list of coalition “Vredi” in ED4.



ED 6 – Biljal Kasami is the leader of Dvizenje Besa since it was established in 2014. In the 2016 parliamentary elections, he was elected Member of the Assembly, a post he held until 2017 when he resigned to run the local elections. At the early elections in 2020, he was re-elected as Member of the Assembly, and he held the post until 2021, when he became mayor of the municipality of Tetovo. He received his doctorate from the Faculty of Economy at the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” in Skopje. He was born in 1975 in Tetovo.

Political party Levica ¹⁰⁰



The political party Levica was founded at the end of 2015. The party has a pronounced left-wing ideology and advocates left-wing values, including anti-capitalism, anti-nationalism, anti-militarism and anti-clericalism and anti-conservatism. The focus of the party is on workers' and fundamental human rights, and the party advocates mainly for the poor, underprivileged, marginalized and disadvantaged population. In the 2016 elections, the party run independently, winning 12,120 votes (1.02%) in the 2017 local elections and 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 Karposh and Rosoman, while in the last local elections in 2021, the party won council seats in eight municipalities.¹⁰¹ In the 2020 parliamentary elections, Levica won two parliamentary seats.¹⁰²

The initiative to establish Levica originated from members of the Movement for social justice "Lenka", members of the leftist movement "Solidarity", members of the Communist Party of Macedonia, trade union members, activists and other leftists. Until 2019, Levica held a collective presidency, the Presidium, composed of seven members with an imperative mandate. At a regular session of the Plenum of the political party Levica, a new party statute was adopted that changed the organizational structure, where in addition to the main governing bodies Plenum, Central Committee, Presidium and Tribunat, a position of president with a four-year term was introduced. Dimitar Apasiev is the current leader of Levica.

Levica submitted its candidate lists in all six electoral districts.

Political party Levica

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100 Handbook on 2020 parliamentary elections in the Republic of North Macedonia (second supplemented edition), Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" – Skopje. Accessed at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/dokumentacija/priracnici/Priracnik_za_parlamentarni_izbori_2020_ENG.pdf (last visit on 05 April 2024)

101 State Election Commission, Elections 2021. Accessed at: <https://izbornaarhiva.mk/> (last visit on 5 April 2024)

102 State Election Commission, Elections 2020. Accessed at: <https://izbornaarhiva.mk/> (last visit on 5 April 2024)

Leaders of candidate lists of Levica



ED 1 – Dimitar Apasiev is the President of Levica, a Member of Assembly in the last parliamentary term (2020 - 2024) and an associate professor at the Faculty of Law at the University “Goce Delchev” - Stip. He is a longtime activist of the Movement for social justice “Lenka”, has participated in a number of domestic and international scientific symposia and is the author of several law books and monographs, as well as over 50 articles and academic papers. He graduated and received his master and doctoral degree from the Faculty of Law at the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” in Skopje. He was born in 1983 in Veles.



ED 2 – Amar Mecinovic is a political scientist, activist, columnist. In 2021, he was appointed a spokesperson of the party and in 2022 he was elected councilor in the Council of the City of Skopje. He was born in 1996 in Skopje.



ED 3 – Borislav Krmov is an art historian. He studied history of art with archaeology. He has worked as art critic and theoretician, as well as construction worker. In 2020, he was elected a Member of the Assembly. He was born in 1981 in Shtip.



ED 4 – Sashko Janchev has degree in law and holds a master degree in criminal Law from the Faculty of Law at the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius”-Skopje. He is a member of the Central Committee and councilor of Levica in the council of the Municipality of Gevgelija. He has been fighting for environmental protection for many years, with a focus on the southern part of the country and mountain Kozhuv to become a national park.

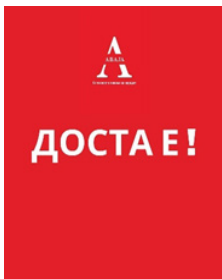


ED 5 – Jovana Mojsoska is Secretary General of Levica. She graduated from the Faculty of Security and Financial Control. She initiated and supported several initiatives for the protection of animals and the environment. She was born in 1992 in Struga.



ED 6 – Igor Dimeski is Head of the energetics department and councilor of Levica in the municipality of Centar.

Avaja – Dosta e!



The political party **Avaja**, translated as “Here we come” is the newest party on the Macedonian political scene, established in 2024. Prior to becoming a party, it was a civil movement AVAJA, which began functioning in 2019, led by three organizations: Institute for Research and Policy Analysis Romalitico, Association for Citizens – Romaversitas and Association for Strengthening and Organizing the Roma Community “Romano Avazi”. Akif Kariman was elected the party’s first president. In 2024 parliamentary elections, under the slogan “It is enough”, Avaja will independently run in four electoral districts, ED 3, ED 4, ED 5, ED 6.

Avaja

Street Franjo Kluz 6/14
1000 Skopje
www.avaja.mk

Leaders of candidate lists of Avaja

ED 3 - Idris Zejnelov

ED 4 - Qemal Sulejmanov

ED 5 - Remzi Medic

ED 6 - Deniz Ismaili

Political Party Demokrati



Demokrati is a Macedonian political party that was founded in 2018, and Jorgo Ognenovski was elected president of the party at the Founding Assembly. The party stands for democratic values and respect for fundamental human rights, including voting at elections and referendums, and respecting the will of the citizens. Demokrati will run with candidate lists in all six electoral districts.

Political party Demokrati

St. Boris Trajkovski 24-1/2
1000 Skopje
www.demokrati.mk

Leaders of candidate lists of Demokrati

ED 1 - Jorgo Ognenovski

ED 2 - Dimitar Spasov

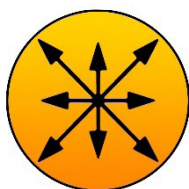
ED 3 - Violeta Spasova

ED 4 - Gabriela Todorovska

ED 5 - Gjorgji Veljanov

ED 6 - Hirmet Eljezi

Political Party Desna



The party was founded in 2022, and Ljupco Palevski - Palcho was elected its first president. Desna emerged as a result of the merging of several citizen associations. Toni Aleksovski is currently the acting president.¹⁰³ The party Desna in the parliamentary elections runs with candidate lists in all electoral districts, with the exception of ED 5 and ED 6.

Political party Desna

St. Dimo Hadzi Dimov 8

1000 Skopje

www.desna.org.mk

Leaders of candidate lists of Desna

ED 1 - Toni Aleksovski

ED 2 - Angjela Mitkovska

ED 3 - Zorica Cvetkovska

ED 4 - Gjoshko Bojadziev

¹⁰³ Toni Aleksovski was appointed acting President of the party, after the kidnapping and murder of Vanja Gjorcevska and Pance Zhezovski, for which the former President of Desna, Ljupco Palevski – Palco, is the prime suspect. He is currently awaiting extradition from the Republic of Turkey.

Political Party Edinstvena Makedonija



Edinstvena Makedonija is a political party founded in 2002 under the name “Narodno dvizenje za Makedonija”. In 2018, the party’s Central Committee decided to change the name to “Edinstvena Makedonija” as well as to completely change party’s policies regarding the Euro-integration process. The party acts with open Euro-Atlantic skepticism, and in accordance with its Statute, it advocates membership in the Eurasian Economic Union and strategic partnership with Russia. Its co-founder and president is Janko Bachev. The party Edinstvena Makedonija runs the parliamentary elections with candidate lists in ED 1, ED 2, ED 3, ED 4 and ED 5.

Edinstvena Makedonija

St. Dame Gruev 10

1000 Skopje

www.edinstvenamakedonija.mk

Leaders of candidate lists of Edinstvena Makedonija

ED 1 - Emilija Geleva

ED 2 - Toma Dimiskovski

ED 3 - Dragan Ugrinovski

ED 4 - Janko Bachev

ED 5 - Mirjana Mircevski

Dvizenje ZNAM – Za nasa Makedonija



Dvizenje ZNAM – Za nasa Makedonija is a political party with a left-wing ideology. The party emerged from the movement created by SDSM’s dissatisfied membership, led by then MP Dimitrievski, who independently ran for 2021 local elections under the motto “Za nase Kumanovo”. With the victory of the mayoral candidate, Maksim Dimitrievski, the civic movement grew into a political party. On 9 October 2023, a founding congress was held, where the incumbent mayor of Kumanovo and candidate for president in 2024 presidential elections, Maksim Dimitrievski, was appointed president of the party.

Political party Dvizenje ZNAM – Za nasa Makedonija

St. Kiril i Metodij no. 50/1-1, Centar

1000 Skopje

www.dvizenjeznam.org.mk

Leaders of candidate lists of Dvizenje ZNAM- Za nasa Makedonija

ED 1 – Boban Karapejovski

ED 2 – Daniel Stojcevski

ED 3 – Pavle Arsovski

ED 4 – Mile Cekov

ED 5 – Vesna Bendevska

ED 6 – Nebojsa Zaharievski

Makedonska era Treta/ Makedonski nezavisni listi – Suverenisti



Makedonska era Treta is a political party based in Bitola, which in 2020 emerged from the so-called movement. Its founder is a former Macedonian Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, Goran Taskovski.

Makedonska era Treta submitted candidate lists in all six electoral districts.

Makedonska era Treta/ Makedonski nezavisni listi – Suverenisti

Shirok Sokak, Bitola

www.makedonskae3.mk

Leaders of candidate lists of Makedonska era Treta/ Makedonski nezavisni listi – Suverenisti

ED 1 – Vladimir Trajkovski

ED 2 – Marjan Kamilovski

ED 3 – Vlado Pavlov

ED 4 – Vladimir Gjorgjioski

ED 5 – Goran Taskovski

ED 6 – Sonja Jovanovska

Makedonska obnovitelna reformska opcija – Rabotnichka partija



Makedonska obnovitelna reformska opcija – Rabotnichka partija (MORO-RP) was founded in 2014 as Makedonska obnovitelna reformska opcija – Centralno demokratska unija (MORO-CDU). The party participated in two parliamentary election cycles in 2014 and 2016. In both elections, MORO-RP participated as part of coalitions. In the 2014 parliamentary elections, MORO-RP joined the coalition “Dostoinstvo za Makedonija” together with the party Dostoinstvo, winning 9,265 votes or 0.8% of the total number of votes. In the 2016 parliamentary elections, the party was part of the coalition “Koalicija za promeni I pravda – Tret blok” together with Demokratski sojuz, DEMOS and FRODEM. This coalition won 10,028 votes or 0.8% of the total number of votes. The party did not win parliamentary seats in the elections. Goran Zafirovski is the party president. Rabotnichka partija runs the elections with candidate lists in ED 1 and ED 5.

MORO- Rabotnichka partija

St. Anton Popov 103-b
1000 Skopje

Leaders of candidate lists of Rabotnichka partija

ED 1 - Ana Bobinkova Mijakovska

ED 5 - Ljube Petrevski

Political party Nova Alternativa



Founded in 2007 by Gjorgji Orovcanec after he left VMRO-NP. From 2008 until the 2024 elections, Nova Alternativa is part of SDSM-led coalitions. In January 2024, the current mayor of the City of Skopje, Danela Arsovska, took over the party. In these parliamentary elections, Nova Alternativa will run the elections with candidate lists in the first four electoral districts.

Nova Alternativa

bul. Partizanski odredi 37/014
1000 Skopje
www.novaalternativa.mk

Leaders of candidate lists of Nova Alternativa

ED 1 - Danela Arsovska

ED 2 - Dragan Mitkovski

ED 3 - Irena Vitina

ED 4 - Ana Cumbuleva

Political party Rodina Makedonija



The party “Rodina Makedonija” was founded in 2020 and is led by the Presidency as a collective governing body. By its statute, the party is against the country’s membership in the European Union, and also advocates withdrawal from the NATO alliance and accession to the Eurasian Economic Union and BRICS, as well as strategic partnership with Russia. Chairman of the Presidency is Zoran Jovanchev.

The party Rodina will run the parliamentary elections with candidate lists in all six electoral districts.

Rodina Makedonija

St. 27mi mart 10/1-2

1000 Skopje

www.rodina.org.mk

Leaders of candidate lists of Rodina Makedonija

ED 1 - Tomche Shirkov

ED 2 - Zoran Jovanchev

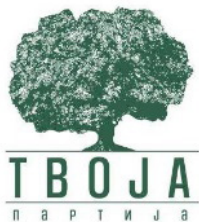
ED 3 - Aleksandar Stefanoski

ED 4 - Ilija Jankovski

ED 5 - Marijan Gacevski

ED 6 - Darko Janceski

Tvoja partija



“Tvoja” was founded in 2020, and its founders are Aleksandar Torteovski, lawyer, and Mirjana Najcevska, professor. In accordance with the party’s statute, “Tvoja” is a democratic party, acting by combining social change policies with policies to tackle environmental problems, both nationally and internationally, and seeking to create a just, fair and sustainable society. In these elections, “Tvoja” party submitted candidate lists in four electoral districts, i.e. in ED 1, ED 2,

ED 3 and ED 4.

Tvoja partija

Str. Makedonija no. 25-1/6

1000 Skopje

www.tvoja.org.mk

Leaders of candidate lists of Tvoja partija

ED 1 - Mirjana Najcevska

ED 2 - Aleksandar Torteovski

ED 3 - Trajko Ajtov

ED 4 - Risto Stavrov

Gragjanska opcija za Makedonija and “Hrabro za Makedonija” coalition



Gragjanska opcija za Makedonija (GROM) is a political party that was founded in 2013. Stevcho Jakimovski is the party president. The principles of GROM are based on the genuine principles of democratic life: freedom of personal choice and creation of a more just society for every citizen. In the 2014 parliamentary elections, the party ran independently and won one parliamentary seat. In the 2016 parliamentary elections, the party participated in the VMRO-DPMNE-led coalition and won two seats, while in 2020 parliamentary elections it won one seat, also in coalition with VMRO-DPMNE.

In the 2024 parliamentary elections, Gragjanska opcija za Makedonija leads the coalition “Hrabro za Makedonija”, which also includes: Integra – Makedonska konzervativna partija and Partija za celosna emancipacija na Romite od Republika Severna Makedonija.

Gragjanska opcija za Makedonija

St. Prashka no. 21 entrance 1, room 2 and 3

1000 Skopje

grom.mk

Leaders of candidate lists of coalition “Hrabro za Makedonija”

ED 1 – Dobrila Andonovska

ED 2 – Ljupco Ristovski

ED 3 – Jordan Nikolov

ED 4 – Ruzhica Nikolova

ED 5 – Samka Ibraimoski

ED 6 – Zoran Sofreski

Group of voters Djula Celiku

A group of voters, Djula Celiku, will take part in the upcoming parliamentary elections for the first time. The group will run independently only in ED 6.¹⁰⁴

Leaders of candidate lists of the Group of voters Djula Celiku

IE 6 - Djula Celiku

¹⁰⁴ No more biographical data for the group of voters Djula Celiku could be found, except for the ones listed here.

