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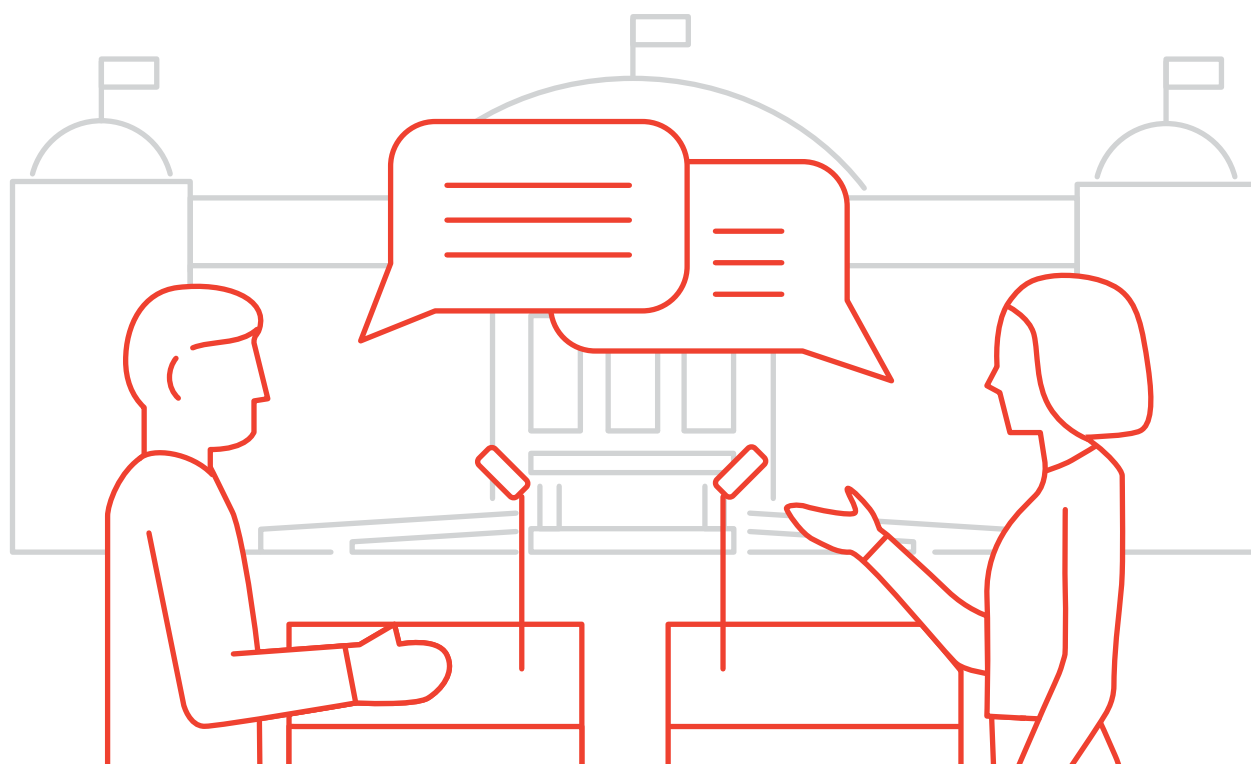
Monitoring Report No. 8/2025

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PARLIAMENT WATCH: MONITORING REPORT ON THE DEBATE QUALITY IN THE PARLIAMENT (JANUARY – JUNE 2025)

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AUGUST 2025



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IMPRESSUM

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I. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The debate quality in the Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia (or “the Parliament”) is analyzed using “the Discourse Quality Index”(DQI). This Index is an instrument that allows each specific speech act during a monitored session to be coded according to several characteristics, such as the:

- Degree of speech argumentation (how many arguments there are in each discussion);
- Degree of respect the speaker has shown towards other members of parliament (MPs) and their arguments;
- Openness to acknowledge arguments of other participants and changing one’s own views because of better arguments presented in the discussion;
- Opportunity for the MPs to freely express their views.

The semi-annual reports from the monitoring of debate quality in the Parliament **also include general assessment of the debate quality in terms of Discourse Quality Index**. This Index gives an average assessment from one to ten of the debate quality in the Parliament.

This Index includes the following indicators: level of argumentation (20% of the score), scope of explanation (5%), accountability (20%), power of better argument (20%), attitude towards participants from other political parties (10%), attitude towards arguments presented by speakers from other political parties (10%), attitude towards external participants (2.5%), attitude towards arguments of external participants (2.5%), interruptions (5%), and limitations (5%).

One (1), being the lowest score, means that MPs fail to use arguments or invoke any principles in their speech, twist the arguments, fail to change their position and acknowledge arguments, make no reference to the arguments of others, or change their views but not as a result of arguments presented by others. Score one (1) also means that MPs show disrespect towards other participants (either MPs or external participants) and their arguments, the discussion gets interrupted and speakers are physically disrupted at certain points. On the other hand, score ten (10), that is, excellent discourse quality, means that MPs use more than two arguments in the discussion, or a minimum one argument in their address, invoke political, legal, and ethical principles, properly address the arguments, change their views as result of better arguments, treat the personality and arguments of other discussion participants with respect (either MPs or external participants), the discussion is not interrupted and the right to speech is not limited.

See Annex 1 for more details on the assessment methodology.

II. INTRODUCTION

According to its constitution, the Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia holds the legislative power and is currently composed of 120 MPs. The MPs are elected in direct elections through proportional electoral lists for a four-year term. The current parliamentary composition, which is the subject of this Monitoring Report, was elected in the eleventh parliamentary elections held on May 8, 2024. The elections were conducted in a fair and democratic atmosphere, with no significant irregularities. Seventeen political entities participated in the elections, and VMRO-DPMNE¹ and the “Your Macedonia” coalition achieved a convincing victory with 58 mandates. The coalition “For a European Future,” led by SDSM², won 18 seats; the coalition “European Front,” led by DUI³, also won 18; the coalition “Vlen” – 14 seats; Levica – six seats; and the newly established political party Movement I KNOW for Our Macedonia – six seats. The new parliamentary majority was formed with 78 MPs (VMRO-DPMNE, “Vredi” and ZNAM), while the opposition had 42 (SDSM, DUI and Levica).

Almost one year after the constitution of the new parliamentary composition, Arben Taravari, the leader of one wing of the Alliance for Albanians (AA), announced that the party will run independently, outside the “Vlen” coalition, in upcoming local elections scheduled for autumn 2025. Shortly after the decision was made, other leaders of «Vredi» announced the unification of all members of the coalition into a single political structure, with the formation of joint bodies and a united campaign in the local elections.⁴ The sudden changes within the Albanian political bloc have raised questions regarding the new composition of the parliamentary majority. On May 12, Taravari officially announced the party’s withdrawal from the government and the «Vredi» coalition, citing unfulfilled promises to their voters.⁵ The party’s decisions led to a restructuring of the parliamentary group of “It’s Worth” (Vlen), where three MPs, members of Arben Taravari’s wing of AA, left the ruling coalition, thereby reducing the parliamentary majority to 75 MPs. With the withdrawal of three Albanian MPs from the majority, the question was raised about the potential challenges in passing laws through the Badinter majority. The lack of MPs from non-majority ethnic communities within the government coalition has already resulted in a failure to adopt certain laws that affect ethnic communities. These laws include amendments to the Electoral Code, the election of members of the MRTV.⁶ Program Council and other similar decisions.

The political and social situation in the country was further destabilized on March 16, following a catastrophic fire in a discotheque in the town of Kochani, which tragically killed 62 young people and injured over 190.⁷ The tragedy, which occurred as a result of serious legal violations and disregard for security regulations at the local and state levels, has heightened public concern about the prevalence of corruption and the effectiveness of institutional security mechanisms. As an initial response to the tragedy, the Parliament canceled all sessions for the two weeks so as not to further fuel the already tense and mournful atmosphere.⁸ The decision by the Parliament to suspend work during a time of crisis has been met with criticism from the public, with a former

¹ Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity

² Social Democratic Union of Macedonia

³ Democratic Union for Integration

⁴ “The “Vlen” coalition is transforming into a new party,” Vecer Press, April 21, 2025,

⁵ “Taravari’s Alliance for Albanians Goes into Opposition,” Radio Free Europe, May 12, 2025

⁶ Macedonian Radio and Television

⁷ “Collective grief and trauma after the tragedy in Kocani,” Radio Free Europe, March 18, 2025,

⁸ “The Parliament has canceled all activities this week as well,” Sitel Television, March 25, 2025,

parliamentary speaker describing it as an admission of the institution's dysfunctionality.⁹ On the other hand, local MP offices in that region were activated shortly after the tragedy, where citizens were able to address some of the MPs from constituency No. 3. After the two-week recess, the Parliament took concrete legal measures including banning pyrotechnics in public closed spaces and regulating. While these legal measures were taken, MPs otherwise failed to exercise their oversight role regarding the tragedy. On June 4, the second attempt by the parliamentary group of Levica party to convene an oversight discourse failed, as that proposal did not find support from the ruling majority. The MP and president of Levica, Dimitar Apasiev, filed a lawsuit in the Administrative Court against the Parliament and the President of the Parliament for the untimely and illegal cancellation of the duly scheduled supervisory hearing.¹⁰

During this period, public focus also shifted to the Reform Agenda announced by the Government as part of a new phase of the European integration process known as the "Growth Plan" of the European Union. Given that these reforms require strong democratic capacity, transparent communication, and constructive parliamentary discourse, there is an increased need for Parliament to play a more active and responsible role in oversight, policy-making, and public involvement. At the recent EU summit, Enlargement Commissioner Marta Koss reiterated Bulgaria's precondition for North Macedonia's European integration, emphasizing that the two countries must continue their cooperation and that North Macedonia must implement the constitutional amendments to take advantage of the recently opened window for the Union's enlargement.¹¹

This report monitors the quality of parliamentary debates from January 2025 to June 2025, focusing on agenda items related to the rule of law, human rights, and democracy. During this period, the Institute for Democracy monitored both plenary sessions and the work of parliamentary working bodies.

⁹ "Petkovski: The Parliament should dissolve itself, it abandoned the citizens at the most difficult moment," Sloboden Pечат, March 25, 2025,

¹⁰ "Apasiev will sue Gashi and the Parliament over the oversight hearing on Kochani," Sloboden Pечат, July 28, 2025

¹¹ "Skopje Summit – Enlargement can unite Europe", July 1, 2025

III. SUMMARY

The report indicates a relatively low level of debate quality in the Parliament for the current mandate, and confirming that there is significant room for improvement. The average debate quality score for **the first half of 2025 is 5.7 on a scale of 1-10. This represents a slight improvement (+.2) compared to the previous monitoring period (July - December 2024) of 5.5.**

The activity of MPs was monitored by measuring how often they spoke and the duration of their speeches. **The most active speakers included seven MPs from the opposition and three from the majority.** The same ratio of seven opposition and three majority MPs is also observed when measuring the length of speeches. **The three most active MPs in both parameters are Sali Murati, Jovanka Trencheska and Bojan Stojanoski.** Although women's participation in discussions has increased by 3% to 37%, it is still below the levels of 2022 and 2023, when it exceeded 40%.

In 27% of all analyzed discussions, participants made no arguments, while in 54% of the analyzed discussions they had poor arguments, that is, the speakers offered an explanation of their positions that was insufficient to be considered a full argument. The level of argumentation has slightly improved compared to the second half of 2023 and 2024, which corresponded with the previous parliamentary composition. **During the monitoring period, five regular and three additional parliamentary questions sessions** of parliamentary questions were held for the opposition. The session scheduled for March 2025 was not held as a result of national mourning following the tragedy in Kochani.

In terms of how MPs respond to arguments presented by their colleagues, the monitoring found that in 14% of speeches, MPs addressed the arguments appropriately by directly responding to arguments previously made by another participant. In this reporting period, no change of attitude was observed among the MPs in response to better arguments from their interlocutors, which is at the same level as the discussions monitored during the previous parliamentary composition.

From January to June 2025, monitoring also focused on the review of 15 reports submitted to the Parliament by independent and regulatory bodies. Of the 15 reports, **nine reports were not discussed in plenary and committee sessions, two reports garnered considerably short discussions, and the remaining four reports were discussed in both committee and plenary sessions and they underwent a certain level of control.**

During this monitoring period, MPs in over three-quarters of their speeches did not engage with either the arguments of the interlocutor from another political option¹² (76%) or towards their personality (80%).¹³ This relationship differs from the previous monitoring period, which was during the previous parliamentary composition, when there was a higher percentage (79%) of interlocutor arguments not being addressed. In addition, it can be concluded that, in the rest of their speeches, the MPs refer **less to the personal characteristics of the interlocutors and more to the essential consideration of their arguments.**

The report also confirms a consistently low level of MP attention towards the rights of marginalized groups, a trend consistent across all periods of monitoring. **In 86% of their discussions, MPs do not refer to the rights of marginalized groups, unless a specific law or agenda topic is directly related to their rights.** Although MPs rarely refer to the rights of marginalized groups and communities, **female MPs refer to these communities more often than their fellow male MPs.**

¹² The term “political option” refers to a political group or bloc, specifically distinguished as either the majority or the opposition. The majority represents MPs whose party or coalition forms the government and holds the parliamentary majority, while the opposition represents MPs whose party or coalition is not in power.

¹³ The term “personality” refers to personal characteristics of the speaker, such as their character, motives, or background, rather than the content of their arguments.

IV.

QUALITY OF DEBATE



IV. QUALITY OF DEBATE

■ DISCOURSE QUALITY SCORE

The score for the discourse quality of the new parliamentary composition for the period January – June 2025 is 5.7 on a scale of 1 to 10. Considering that the quality of the debate in the previous monitored period (June - December 2024) was scored with 5.5, it can be concluded that the new parliamentary composition began its mandate with a slight improvement of the debate quality. However, the difference is relatively modest and indicates that structural and substantive challenges in parliamentary discourse are still present.

The quality of the debate was rated 5.7 (from 1 to 10), which is a slight improvement compared to the previous period when the rating was 5.5.

With a score of 5.7, parliamentary discussion does not reach the threshold of a healthy debate. This is mainly due to MPs showing little openness to accept or adjust to stronger arguments and providing only limited support for their own standpoints. Overall, the discourse quality is at a low level, as was the case in the previous periods, with significant room for improvement.

**THE SCORE FOR DISCOURSE QUALITY
FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY – JUNE
2025, ON A SCALE FROM 1 TO 10**



■ TYPE OF DISCUSSIONS

During this period (January – June 2025), 40% of the monitored discussions were part of plenary sessions, 25% were committee hearings¹⁴, 22% were part of MP questions and 5.5% were public discussions. **In total, 1,353 individual discussions or speeches by MPs and external participants were monitored.**¹⁵ In the first half of 2025, a total of five regular parliamentary question sessions were held with three additional sessions organized at the request of the opposition. The parliamentary questions session for March 2025 was not held, as a result of the national mourning following the tragedy in Kochani, i.e. all parliamentary sessions in the second half of the month were cancelled. **In terms of monitored acts, 80% were implemented with a regular procedure, 17% with a fast-track procedure, while 3% of the monitored acts in the Parliament were reviewed with a European flag.**

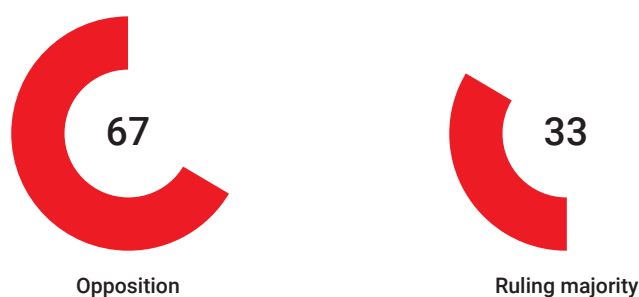
The most prevalent topics in this monitoring period were the problems arising from air pollution, the public discourse on the appointment of new members to the MRTV Program Council, the EU reform agenda, the annual country report by the European Commission, the appointment of the new Governor of the National Bank, the interpellations of public officials Pance Toshkovski and Izet Medziti, MP Ilire Dauti and member of the Judicial Council Vesna Daneva, while the most discussed law proposals were the Draft Law on Ratification of the Agreement on Infrastructure Projects between the Governments of North Macedonia and the United Kingdom, the Draft Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law on Child Protection, the Draft Law on Amending and Supplementing the Draft Law on Local Self-Government, the Draft Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law on Secondary Education, and the Draft Law on Amending the Law on the Inspectorate for the Use of Languages.

¹⁴ Observed Committees: Committee on the Political System and Inter-Community Relations, Committee on European Affairs, Committee on Financing and Budget, Committee on Rules of Procedure and Mandate-Immunity Issues, Committee on Economic Affairs, Labor and Energy Policy, Committee on Health, Committee on Local Self-Government, Committee on Foreign Policy and Foreign Trade, Committee for Oversight of the Implementation of the Measures for the Interception of Communications, Committee on Education, Science and Sports, Committee on Defense and Security, Committee on Election and Appointment Issues, Committee on Social Policy, Demography and Youth, Committee on Transport, Digital Transformation, Environment and Spatial Planning, Standing Inquiry Committee for Protection of Civil Freedoms and Rights, National Council for European Integration.

¹⁵ External participants in the discussion in the Parliament are all the speakers in the plenary and committee sessions who do not hold the status of MP, but have the right to participate in the parliamentary debate, such as the Prime Minister, Ministers, representatives of regulatory bodies and agencies, etc.

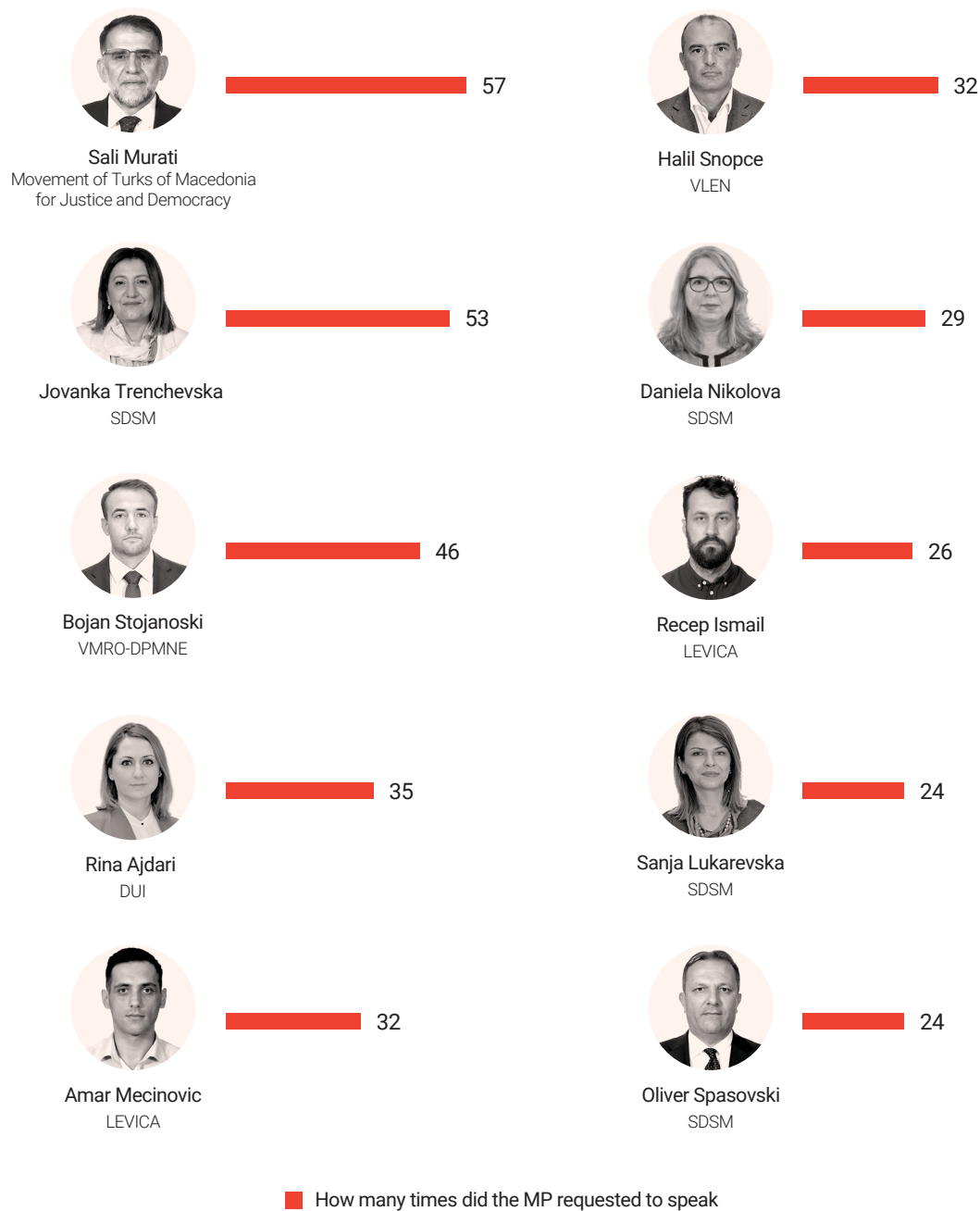
Regarding the political affiliation of the speakers during the monitoring period, MPs from the government consisting of the “Your Macedonia” coalition led by VRMO - DPMNE, “Vredi” coalition and the ZNAM movement participated in 33% of the monitored discussions, while the opposition including the “For a European Future” coalition led by SDSM, the “European Front” coalition led by DUI and the Levica party participated in 67% of the monitored discussions.

Chart 1. Political affiliation of the MPs (%)

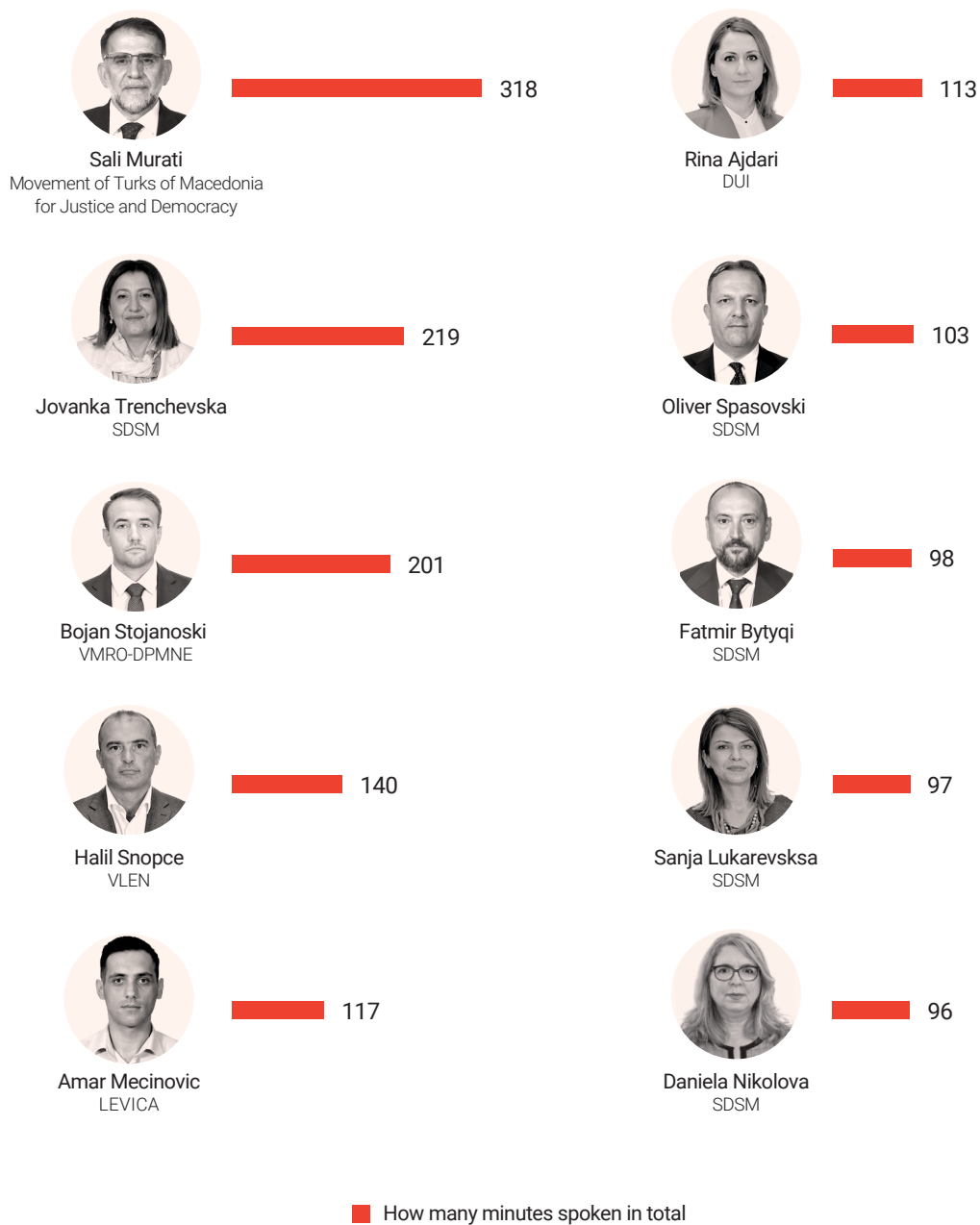


The 10 most active MPs include seven MPs from the opposition and three MPs from the parliamentary majority. The same ratio of opposition – majority is also ascertained when measuring the duration of the speeches, i.e. seven MPs from the opposition were those who stayed the longest at the rostrum, compared to three from the government. The three MPs who stayed the longest on the rostrum and spoke the most were Sali Murati, who spoke for 318 minutes and 57 times, Jovanka Trenchevska, who spoke for 219 minutes and 53 times, and Bojan Stojanoski, who spoke for 201 minutes and 46 times. Among the 10 MPs who spoke the most and stayed on the rostrum the longest during this monitoring period, there were four female MPs: Jovanka Trenchevska, Rina Ajdari, Daniela Nikolova, and Sanja Lukarevska. ►

► Chart 2¹⁶. MPs who addressed most frequently during the period January – June 2025.



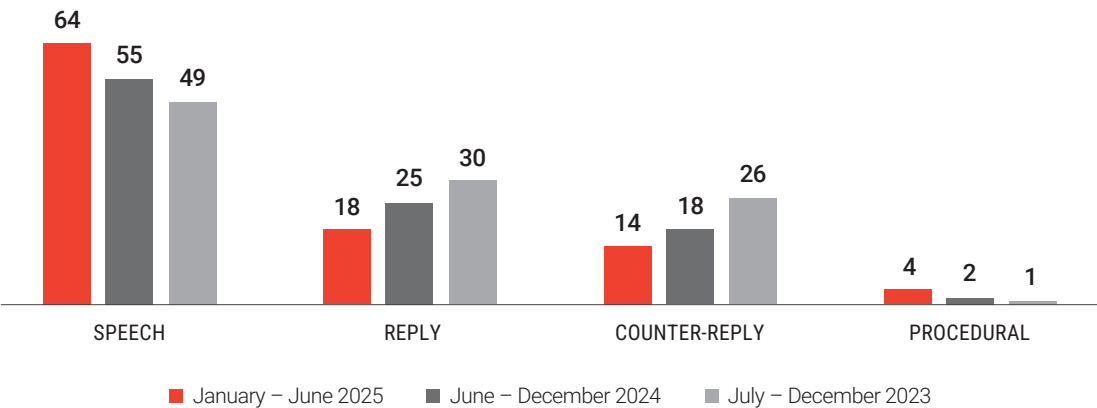
¹⁶ The Chart shows which MPs were the most active out of a total of 1,353 individual discussions or speeches of MPs observed in the period January – June 2025.

Chart 3. MPs who spent the longest time at the rostrum during the period January – June 2025.

The types of discussions that were monitored during this period included speeches (64%), replies (18%), 14% counter-replies (14%), and procedural remarks (2%). Compared to the previous two monitoring periods, an increase in speeches (from 49% in 2023 to 64% in 2025) and a decrease in the percentage of replies and counter-replies was observed. This situation indicates a decline in the level of interaction between MPs, and for the most part the debate focuses on a one-way transmission of views that most often are met without a reply and without particular support or dispute from the other MPs. This trend has been observed following the change in parliamentary composition after the parliamentary elections.

In 2025, speeches dominate 64% of the debate, which represents a constant increase since 2023, and indicates reduced interaction between MPs and more one-way presentation of views without replies or counter-replies.

Chart 4. Type of discussion (%)

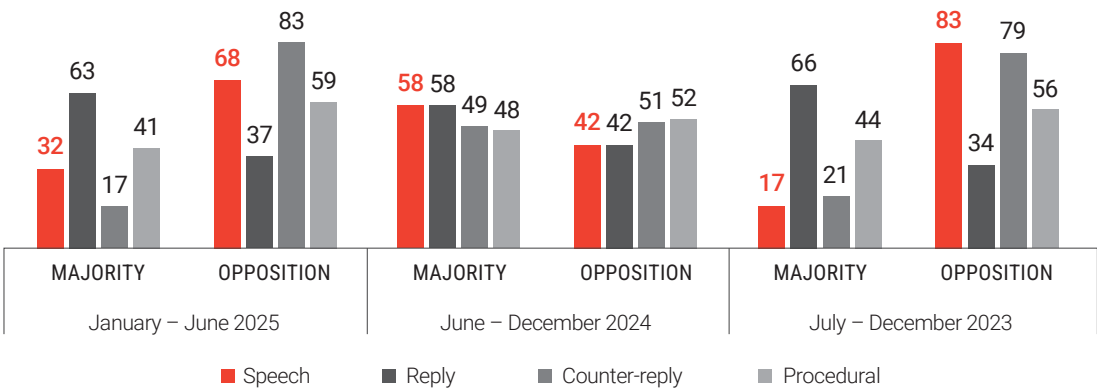


If we observe the discussion according to the political affiliation of the speakers, **it can be seen that most of the discussions were presented by the opposition through speeches (68%) on agenda items, and counter-replies (83%).** Unlike the previous monitoring period when the share of the majority and the opposition in the parliamentary discourse was almost equal, in this monitoring period the opposition is visibly more present on the parliamentary rostrum (63%). (Chart 4.1).

Interaction between government and opposition MPs is at a relatively low level.

Although the discourse appeared more balanced in 2024, data from the first half of 2025 shows that the distribution of speeches, replies, and counter-replies has become markedly uneven again—similar to 2023 under the previous parliamentary composition. This suggests that the temporary improvement in 2024 was not sustained, and the change in parliamentary composition has not produced a consistent positive impact on the balance of participation in debates.

Chart 4.1 Type of discussion per political affiliation (%)

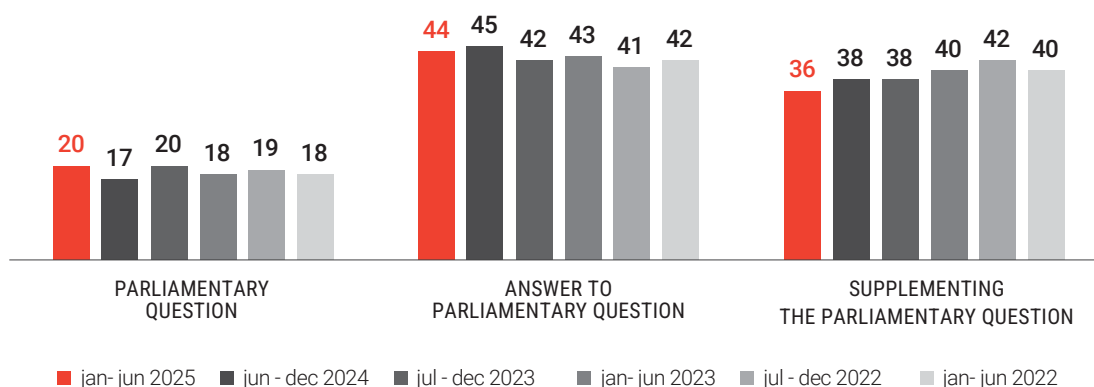


On November 20, 2023, the Parliament adopted the new Rules of Procedure which have been applied by the new parliamentary composition, established after the May 2024 parliamentary elections. These new Rules of Procedure also provide for additional parliamentary questions, in addition to the regular sessions that are held every last Thursday of the month. During additional sessions, the opposition have the opportunity to exercise these rights for two hours during the month.¹⁷ During the monitoring period of January – June 2025, eight parliamentary question sessions were held, of which five were regular and three were additional parliamentary sessions for the opposition. Parliamentary questions are an important tool for overseeing the work of the Government, but also for holding it accountable. In that regard, it is crucial for the Parliament to continuously organize these sessions.

During organized sessions, 56% of discussions were dedicated to asking and supplementing questions, while the rest of the discussions were dedicated to the answers to those parliamentary questions (44%) given by government representatives. When comparing the parliamentary question sessions of the new composition with those of the previous one, it can be observed that the ratio remains similar to the practice of their predecessors.

¹⁷ Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia, Accessed via: <https://shorturl.at/ht0cU>

Chart 5. Parliamentary question sessions (%)

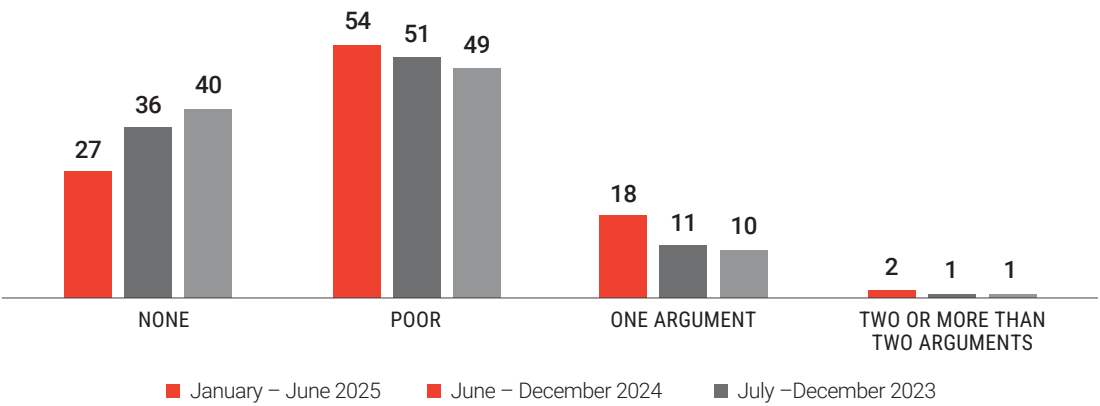


■ LEVEL OF ARGUMENTATION

According to the methodology, developed by the Institute for Democracy, that is used to monitor the debate quality in the Parliament, arguments are defined as a reasonable (elaborated) attempts to convince the audience of a point of view on a debatable thesis. Thus, an argument is perceived as a reason why the MPs support or attack certain ideas or arguments. Argumentative speech is considered to be a presentation that contains an assertion – the title of the argument, a sentence with which something is asserted; explanation – clarifying and connecting the claim and its essence, that is, breaking down and probing into the essence of the argument and the case; and evidence – in that the argument would be just an empty phrase if there was no valid and strong supporting evidence. Based on these criteria, **in 27% of the analyzed discussions, participants did not provide arguments for their statements, while in 54% of discussions they had poor arguments, that is, the speakers offered a rationale for their positions which does not suffice to be considered a full argument.** In 20% of the monitored discussions the speakers used one argument to explain their position. The level of argumentation in the new parliamentary composition has improved compared to the first half of its mandate, and is visibly better than the second half of 2023, when we had the previous parliamentary composition. The percentage of discussions without argumentation decreased from 40% in 2023 to 27% in 2025.

In the first half of 2025, an improvement was observed in the argumentation of MPs, with a reduction in discussions without argumentation to 27% (36% in the second half of 2024 and 40% in July–December 2023), and an increased presence of presentations with at least one argument.

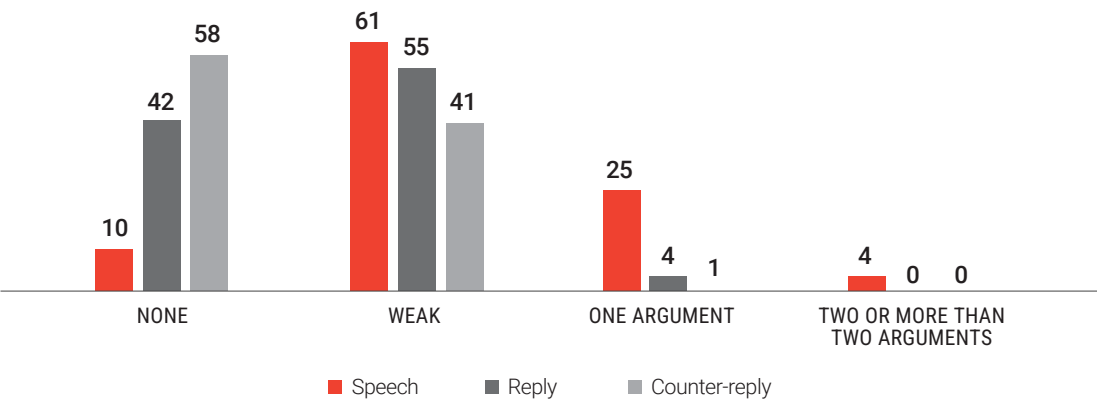
Chart 6. Level of argumentation of discussions (%)



An analysis of the degree of argumentation in speeches leads to a conclusion that argumentation is significantly lower in replies and counter-replies, compared to speeches. Only 10% of speeches are observed as having no argumentation, as opposed to 42% of replies and 58% of counter-replies. Such a low level of argumentation in this type of presentation significantly contributes to the low average score of the discourse quality in the Parliament. On the other hand, 25% of speeches are explained with at least one argument, as opposed to 3% of replies and less than 1% of counter-replies (Chart 6.1).

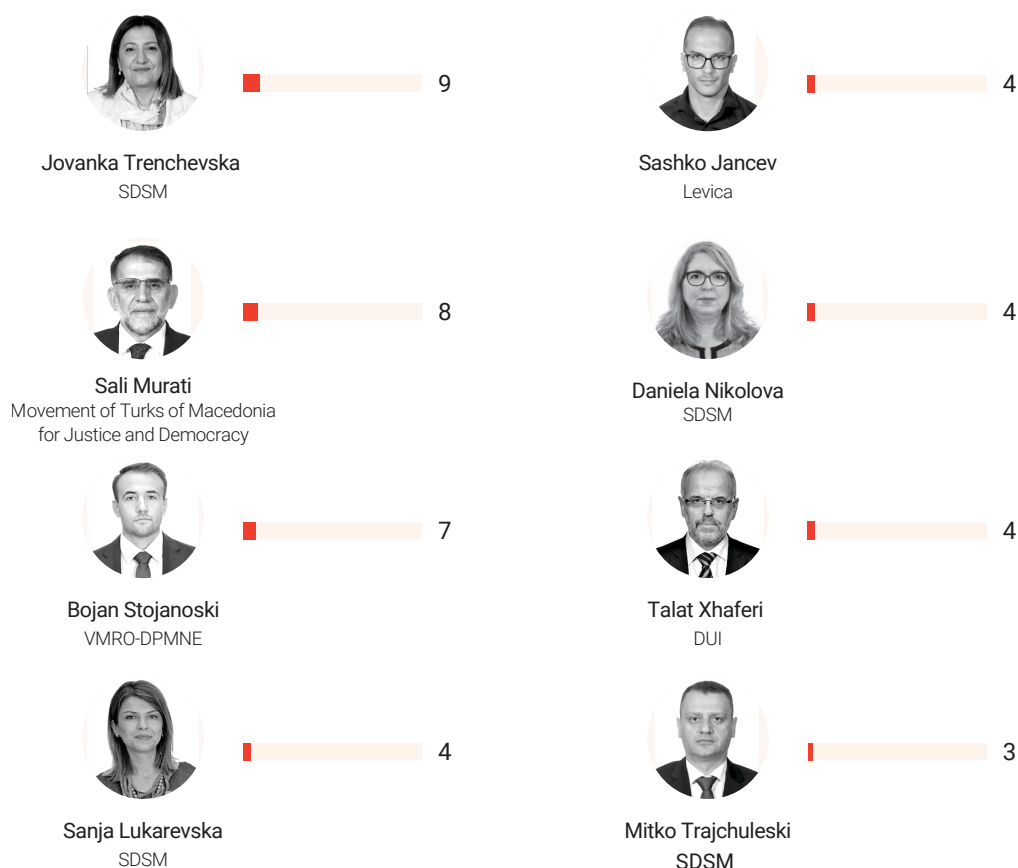
The low level of argumentation in replies and counter-replies significantly contributes to the low average quality score of debate in the Parliament.

Chart 6.1 Level of argumentation of discussions by type of speech (%)



A more detailed analysis (Chart 6.2) of MP speeches supported by at least one argument shows that almost 43% were delivered by eight MPs. Thus, 9% of the total number of monitored speeches delivered by MPs supported by at least one can be attributed to Jovanka Trenchevska, 8% to Sali Murati, 7% to Bojan Stojanoski, 4% each to Sanja Lukareska, Sashko Jancev, Daniela Nikolova and Talat Xhaferi, and 3% to Mitko Trajchuleski.

Chart 6.2 MPs with highest share in the total number of speeches corroborated by at least one argument (%)

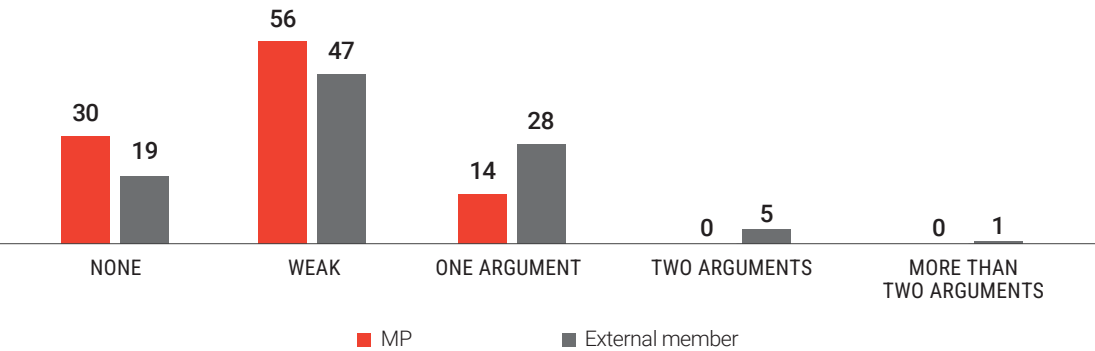


Of the total number of monitored speeches by MPs and external participants in the discussion, 72% belong to MPs, while 28% belong to external participants. External participants consist of speakers in plenary and committee sessions who do not hold the status of MP, but have the right to participate in the parliamentary discourse, such as the Prime Minister, ministers, representatives of regulatory bodies and agencies, representatives of civil society organizations, etc. An analysis of the degree of argumentation by type of speaker

External participants use arguments more often in the discussion, compared to MPs.

indicates that external participants use arguments in discussions more often than MPs, as evidenced by the fact that 28% of their speeches are supported by at least one argument, compared to 14% of MP speeches.

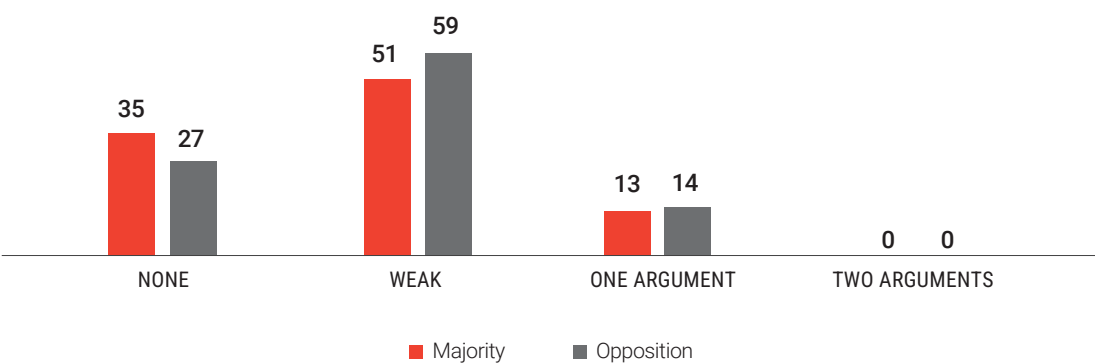
Chart 6.3 Degree of argumentation of discussions by type of participants in the discussion (%)



Analyzing the political affiliation of MPs, 51% of the discussions led by MPs from the parliamentary majority are poorly argued, while in 35% of instances there is no clear connection to the topic of the session. One argument was identified in 13% of discussions of the parliamentary majority. Regarding the opposition MPs, 59% of their speeches are characterized by poor argumentation, while 27% of their discussions did not use any arguments. In 14% of the opposition discussions, at least one argument was identified. Unlike the second half of 2024, in this monitoring period a greater presence of elaborated presentations is observed among the opposition. The percentage of their presentations with a certain level of argumentation is higher by 9% than that of the majority MPs, while in the previous period the situation was the opposite.

Argumentation in presentations is more visible among the opposition as opposed to the majority during this observation period.

Chart 7. Level of argumentation of the discussions per political affiliation (%)



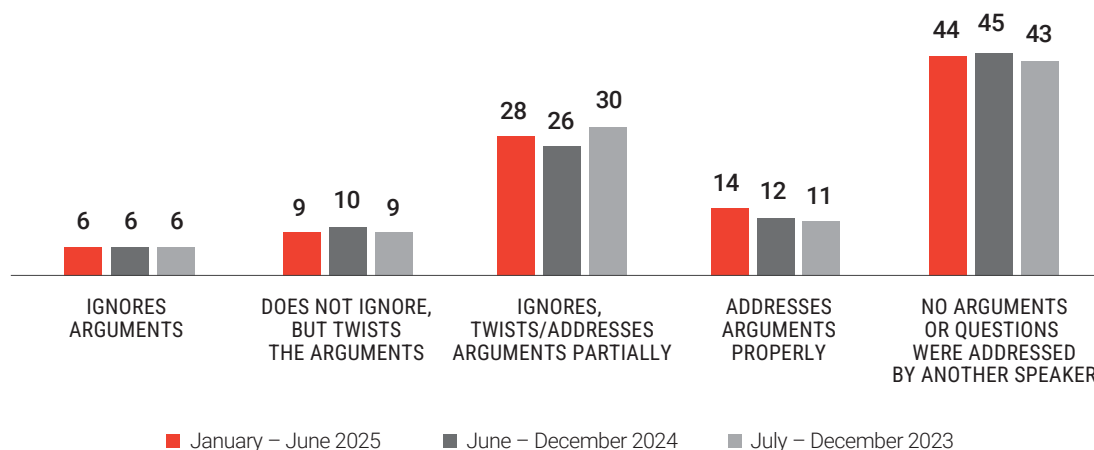
■ ACCOUNTABILITY

In terms of how MPs respond to arguments presented by other MPs, the monitoring observes that in 14% of speeches, MPs addressed the arguments appropriately, meaning that an MP directly responded to arguments previously presented to him or her by another speaker in the discussion. In 28% of the discussions, the MPs partially responded to the presented arguments, and partially twisted or ignored them. In 9% of cases the arguments were not ignored, but were twisted, while in 6% the arguments of other MPs were completely ignored. In 44% of cases, there were no arguments or questions submitted from other MPs, which indicates a generally low

level of discussion. Compared to the previous monitoring period which included the current parliamentary composition for the first time, a marginal and gradual improvement in this area is observed.

In 14% of their presentations, MPs appropriately addressed the arguments, i.e. the MP directly responded to arguments previously addressed by another participant in the discussion.

Chart 8. MPs accountability (%)

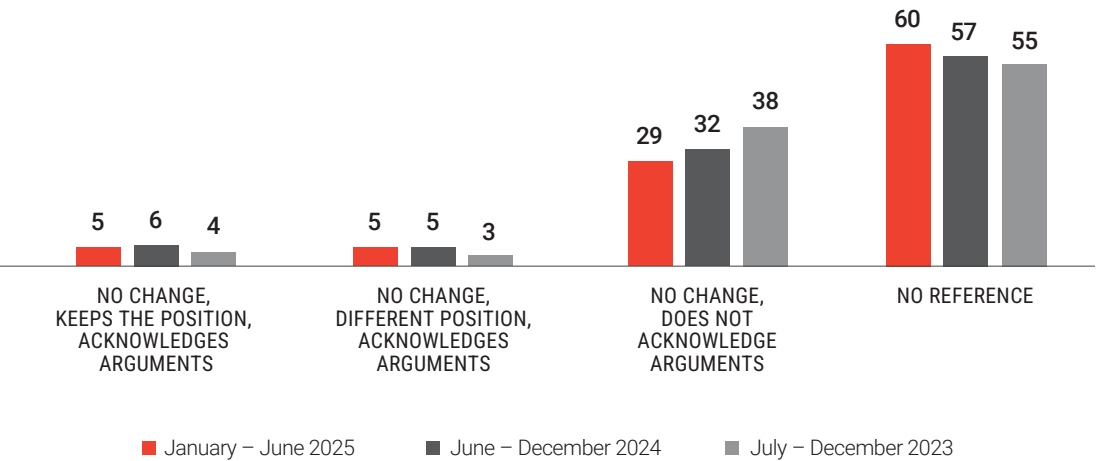


■ THE POWER OF A BETTER ARGUMENT

In this reporting period, **no change of attitude was observed in the monitored discussions among MPs because of better arguments of the interlocutors**, – it is at the same level as in the previous parliamentary composition. In 60% of the discussions, no reference to the quality of the arguments of other MPs was observed, which is three percentage points more than in the previous period. In 5% of the discussions, MPs from a different political party, acknowledged the quality and value of the arguments of their interlocutors from other parties despite not changing their opinions on the topic. In terms of respecting the arguments of the interlocutor, a slight improvement was observed compared to the previous period. In 29% of discussions, MPs maintained their positions and did not acknowledge the value of the arguments of the speakers from other political parties.

During this reporting period, no change in the position of the MPs was observed in the monitored discussions due to better arguments from the interlocutors.

Chart 9. Power of a better argument (%)



■ **REPORTS FROM INDEPENDENT AND REGULATORY BODIES**

From January to June 2025, the report monitored the review of 15 reports from independent and regulatory bodies submitted to the Parliament. For four reports¹⁸ a discussion developed on the content. For the remaining eleven reports from independent and regulatory bodies, discussions were brief or not conducted.

Reviewing the reports from independent and regulatory bodies in the Parliament is exceptionally important because it ensures greater transparency of the work of the executive power, so that citizens have greater insight into the work of independent and regulatory bodies.

Out of 15 monitored reports from independent and regulatory bodies, 9 were not discussed in the Parliament.

Table 1. Reports from independent and regulatory bodies

1	Annual Report on the work of the State Commission for Public Procurement Complaints for 2024	9	Annual Report on the work of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services for 2024
2	Annual Report of the Ombudsman on the level of ensuring respect, promotion and protection of human freedoms and rights 2024	10	Annual Report on the work of the Inspection Council for 2024
3	Annual Report of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination for 2024	11	Annual Report on the work of the Operational-Technical Agency for 2024
4	Annual Report on the work of the State Commission for Decision-making in Administrative Procedures, Employment Procedures and Inspection Supervision in the Second Instance for 2024	12	Annual Report of the Agency for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information for 2024
5	Annual Report on the work of the Agency for Electronic Communications for 2024	13	Annual Report of the Fiscal Council of the Republic of North Macedonia for 2024 and Work Program of the Fiscal Council of the Republic of North Macedonia for 2025
6	Annual Report on the work of the Railway Regulatory Agency for 2024	14	Annual Work Program of the State Commission for Public Procurement Complaints for 2025
7	Annual Report on the work of the Public Broadcasting Company Macedonian Radio and Television for 2024	15	Financial statements of the Insurance Supervision Agency for 2024 audited by a certified auditor
8	Annual Report on the work of the Agency for Administration for 2024		

■ There is a discussion ■ Weak discussion ■ No discussion

¹⁸ Annual Report on the Work of the State Commission for Public Procurement Complaints for 2024, Annual Report of the Ombudsman on the Level of Ensuring Respect, Promotion and Protection of Human Freedoms and Rights for 2024, Annual Report of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination for 2024, Annual Report on the Work of the State Commission for Decision-making in Administrative Procedures, Employment Relationship Procedures and Inspection Supervision in Second Instance for 2024.



RESPECT, INTERRUPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS



V. RESPECT, INTERRUPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

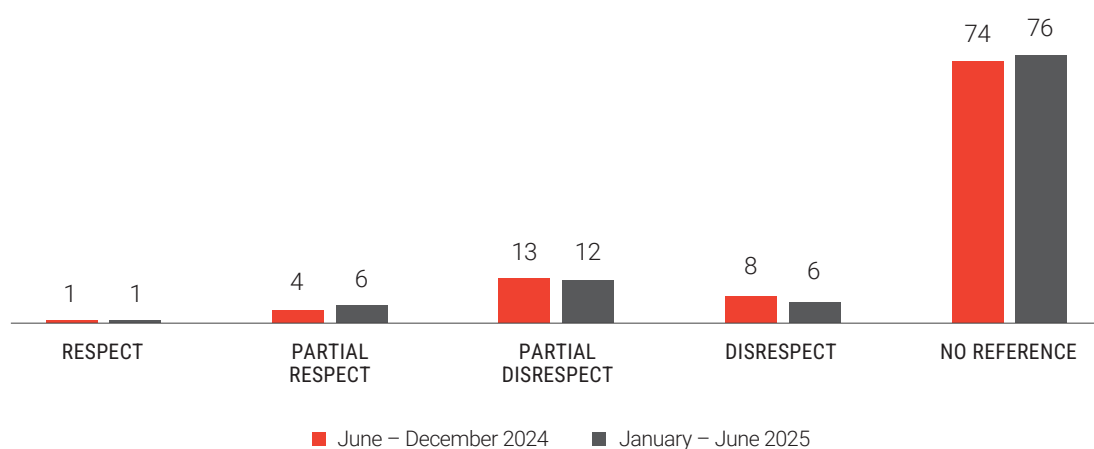
■ ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ARGUMENTS AND PERSONALITY OF THE MPS FROM OTHER POLITICAL PARTY

A speakers' attitude towards the person or the arguments of the speaker from the opposite side can affect the overall atmosphere of the debate. In other words, particular expressed forms of disrespect can change the course of discussion and the focus of MPs from the arguments aimed at attacks and insults, thus further polarizing the atmosphere and preventing substantive debate. Proper atmosphere and mutual respect are basic prerequisites for developing a rational and reasoned debate.

Point: In more than two-thirds of speeches (76%), MPs do not take into account the claims and statements of their colleagues at all.

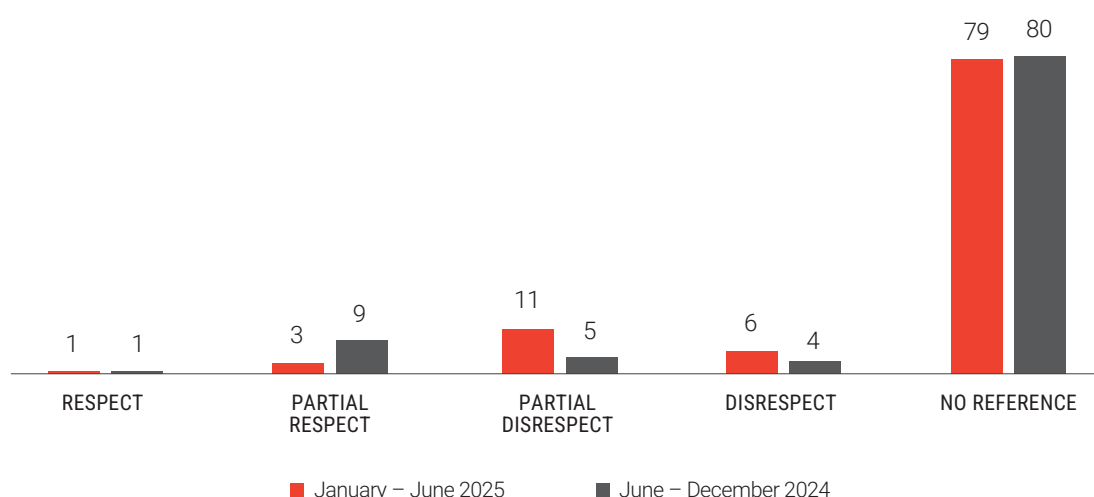
This period, **a respect for arguments was expressed in less than 1% of speeches**. Partial respect was expressed in 6% of cases, which is marginally an improvement compared to the previous monitoring period. During the monitoring period, partial disrespect of arguments of interlocutors from different political party is again at a high level, reaching 12% across observed cases, and has decreased by one percentage point compared to the previous report. **Disrespect of arguments in the period January – June 2025 was observed in 6% of cases. However, most of the interlocutors' arguments (76%) remain unreferenced by their colleagues.** ►

► Chart 10. Attitude towards arguments of MPs from other party (%)



Regarding the attitude of MPs towards the personality of their colleagues from another political party, respect was shown in only 1% of the discussion, that is, there were no changes compared to the previous monitoring period. Partial respect was expressed in 9% of the discussions, which is a slight change compared to the previous period. Partial disrespect for the personality of the interlocutor was expressed in 6% of the discussions, while full disrespect was expressed in 4% of the speeches. These results show marginally improved interpersonal relations of the new parliamentary composition. In 80% of the discussions, the MPs did not refer to the personality of their colleagues from the other camp, which is an increase of 1 percentage points compared to the previous period.

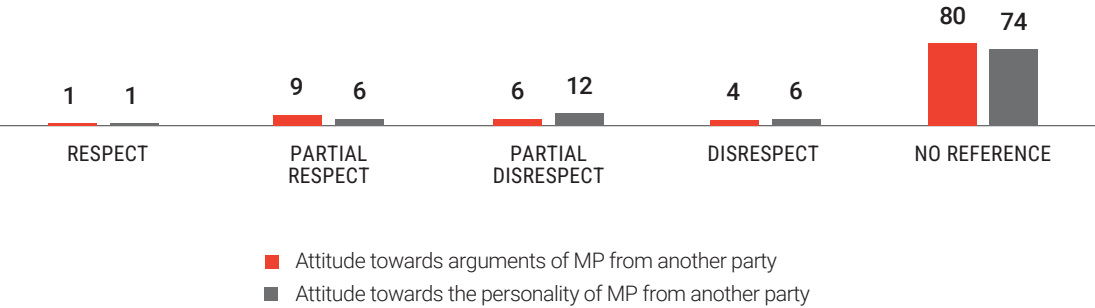
Chart 11. Attitude towards the personality of MPs from other political party (%)



In the period January - June 2025, MPs in 74% of their speeches did not address the arguments of the interlocutor from another political party, while in 80% of the speeches they did not address their personality. This indicates that MPs, to a slight degree, address the arguments more than the personal characteristics of the interlocutor.

MPs mildly refer more to the arguments than to the personal characteristics of the interlocutor.

Chart 12. Attitude towards arguments and personality of MPs from another party (%)

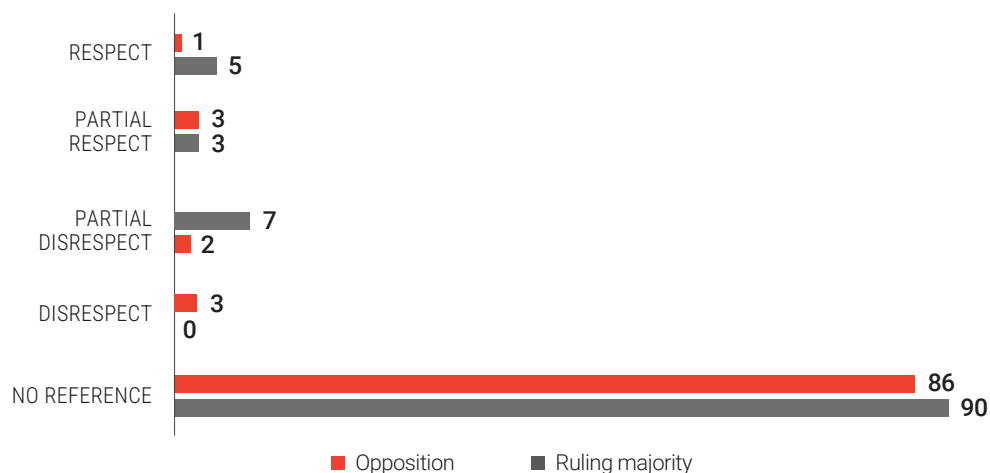


■ ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ARGUMENTS AND PERSONALITY ACCORDING TO THE TYPE OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE DISCUSSION

The MPs from the ruling majority made no reference to the presentations of the external participants in 90% of the discussion. Partial or full disrespect for the arguments of the external participant were observed in 2% of speeches by the members of the parliamentary majority, while in 8% of discussions they expressed partial or full respect. The MPs from the opposition had no reference in 86% of their discussions, while in 10% of the cases partial or full disrespect was observed. In 4% of cases, partial or full respect towards the external member was shown.

In most of their discussions, the ruling and opposition MPs did not address the arguments of the external participants.

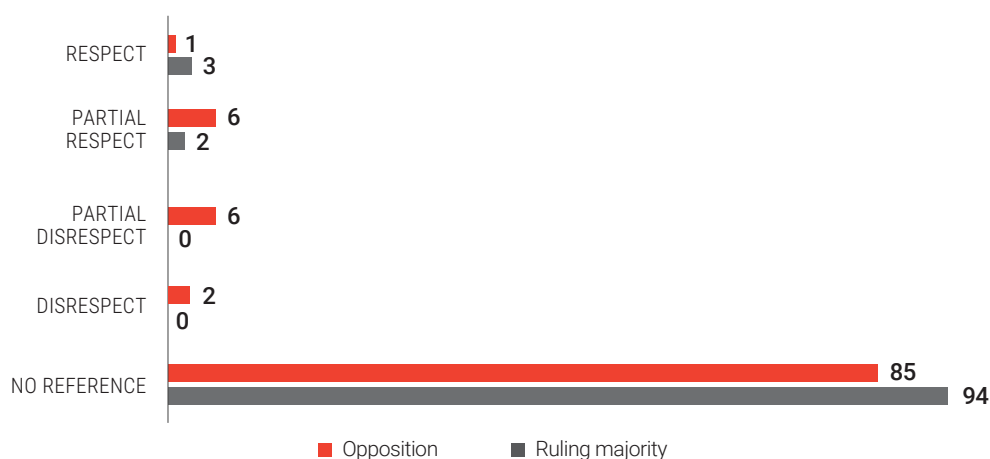
Chart 13. Attitude towards arguments of external participants according the political affiliation (%)



In 94% of discussions, MPs from the parliamentary majority made no reference to the personality of the external participants, in 5% of the speeches they showed partial or full respect, and in 0.5% they showed disrespect. On the other hand, MPs from the opposition did not show their attitude towards the personality of the external participants in 85% of the discussions. In 7% of the cases, the opposition showed partial respect or respect for the personality of the external participants, while partial disrespect or disrespect for the personality of the external participant was showed in 2% of the discussions.

In most of their discussions, the ruling and opposition MPs did not address the arguments of the external participants.

Chart 14. Attitude towards personality of external participants according to political affiliation (%)



In both the current and past reporting periods, the MPs have **rarely used stories, anecdotes or testimonies in their discussions. Such elements were observed in 4% of the discussions.**

There was **interruption in one speech of the MPs** by other MPs. These are interruptions lasting a maximum of ten seconds, caused mostly by barracking at the speakers by MPs who were not given the floor at that moment. **In 3% of discussions, obstruction of the speaker was observed,** the majority of which is a passive obstruction of the speaker. In most of the speeches (67%), there are gestures towards their speech, while in 5% of the discussions use of props in the discussion was observed. In 26% there are no explicit gestures, while in 2% the gestures are directed at others.

Members of Parliament
are generally free and
unrestricted in expressing
their views on the podium.

VI.

MARGINALIZED GROUPS IN THE PARLIAMENT



VI. MARGINALIZED GROUPS IN THE PARLIAMENT

When monitoring the quality of the debate in the Parliament, the analysis included marginalized groups and how often MPs refer to their needs and rights in their speeches. **During the previous monitoring period, in 86% of their speeches, MPs did not refer to the rights and needs of marginalized groups, which is worse compared to the previous period. It has been noted that, in most of their speeches, MPs do not refer to the rights of marginalized groups, unless a specific law or agenda topic related to their rights is being discussed.** Taking into account that most of the laws affect different groups of citizens differently, when considering the items on the agenda, the

MPs should refer to several aspects that could potentially affect citizens from marginalized groups. Young people, women, and social assistance beneficiaries are **mostly involved in the discussions that were monitored during this period. As in the previous period, single parents and the LGBTI+ community are the most neglected marginalized groups in the speeches of the MPs, with only four speeches for the former and two speeches for the latter.**

MPs do not address the rights of marginalized groups in most of their speeches, unless a specific law or agenda topic related to their rights is being specifically discussed.

Although MPs rarely refer to the rights of marginalized groups and communities, female MPs refer to these communities more often than their fellow male MPs. In that regard, 65% of the total number of speeches in which marginalized persons were included, were delivered by female MPs. ►

► Table 2.

Marginalized groups	Speeches (%)	Speeches (number)
Young people	10	129
Women	2	20
Persons with disabilities	1	19
Social assistance beneficiaries	1	18
Unemployed	1	11
Elderly people	1	10
Residents of rural areas	0	5
Roma	0	4
Single parents	0	4
LGBTI+	0	2
Other	3	46
No mention of marginalized groups	86	1165

VII.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA ON THE SPEAKERS

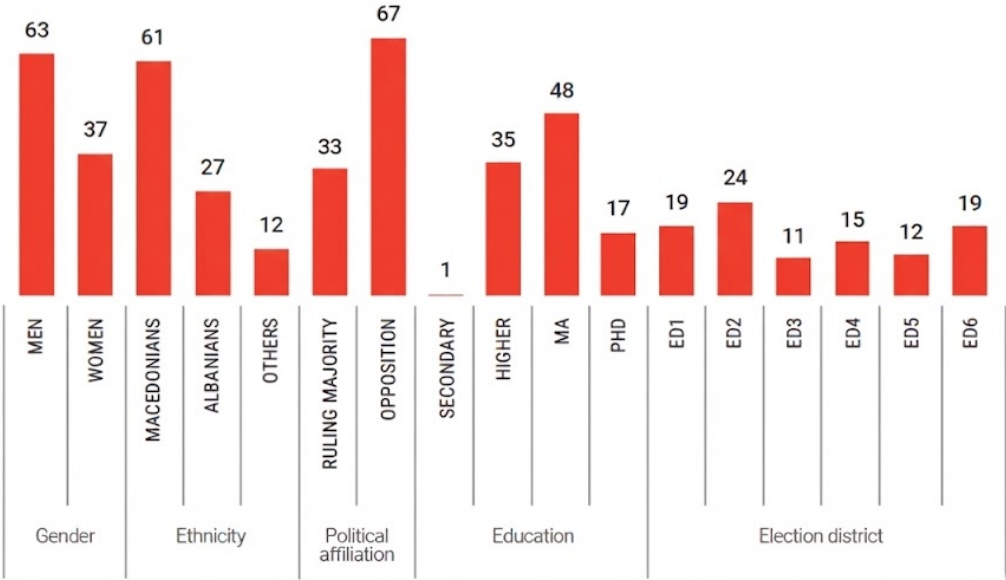


VII. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA ON THE SPEAKERS

The demographic structure of the speakers, in terms of their ethnicity, gender, education and constituency, has changed significantly compared to the previous period June - December 2024. MPs from the Macedonian ethnic community participate in 61% of the total discourse, MPs from the Albanian ethnic community in 27%, which is a significant increase in participation in the discourse by 10 percentage points, while the participation of the other ethnic communities is noted in 12% of the discussion, which implies a marginal increase of one percentage point compared to the second half of 2024. The most active are MPs from constituencies one (19%), two (24%) and six (19%) – if compared to the previous monitoring period, MPs constituency two and constituency six are equally or more active than constituency one, which confirms the significantly increased share of MPs from the Albanian ethnicity. The participation of women in the discussion has slightly increased, by three percentage points compared to the previous period, but it is still lower compared to the previous years when it reached 43%. In terms of education, a higher participation of speakers who are Ph.D. is noticeable, from whom a higher level of argumentation in their presentations can be expected. ►

The participation of Members of Parliament from the Albanian ethnic community increased by 11 percentage points, while the participation of female MPs decreased by 7 percentage points compared to the previous observation period within the former parliamentary composition.

► Chart 15. Demographic structure of speakers (%)



VIII.

RECOMMENDATIONS



VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The culture of debating among MPs in the Parliament, supported by clear and solid arguments that directly corroborate the advocated position, is at a relatively low level. **The reports of the Institute for Democracy that cover debate quality of the current composition of the Parliament, indicate that a dominant number of discussions taking place in the Parliament are generally poorly argued, especially in the part of the replies and counter-replies.** In other words, most of the positions that MPs advocate in the Assembly are not firmly based on evidence, and no adequate explanations have been offered in relation to them. For these reasons, it is necessary to improve the debate quality and the level of argumentation of the MPs' speeches in the Parliament. This report on debate quality includes several recommendations in this section as well as tools that are available to the MPs to achieve a higher level of debate quality.

Increasing the awareness and knowledge about the topics being subject to discussion, as well as improving the debating and oratorical skills of the MPs can significantly contribute towards a better-quality debate in the Parliament. The Parliamentary Institute (PI) and the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO), which operate within the Parliament, offer services that can address these needs. Both PI and PBO conduct research on topics of interest to MPs, while PI also offers education and training in specific areas. For these reasons, better and more effective utilization of PI and PBO services is needed.

The Parliament should actively apply the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) process, which would significantly increase the quality and argumentation of the discussions. The RIA contributes to improvement of quality of decision-making regarding regulations, provision of information on the impacts and consequences of new regulatory measures, and performs assessment and monitoring of existing regulations. This tool is used by the Government, as they are the main proposer of draft acts in the country, but it is not used by the Parliament. For these reasons, the Parliament is in a role of evaluator of the Government proposals, but is generally inconsistent in this role, because the argumentation of the MPs are not sufficiently focused on the content of the proposed regulations or the discussion is poorly argued.¹⁸ In that sense, the implementation of RIA in the Parliament and the active practicing of RIA by the MPs as proposers of legal solutions, will enable a more argued discussion and making informed decisions.¹⁹ In this direction, the research of the Parliamentary Institute (PI) and the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO), which function within the Parliament, can contribute to the comprehensiveness of the RIA process.

The MPs should carefully and minimally use the fast-track procedure and the procedure of review of draft laws with the European flag. The fast-track and urgent procedure reduces the time for debate as it foresees less time for finalization of the discussion, and in some cases votes are casted without any discussion. Limitation of the discussion in the Parliament is also foreseen for draft laws for which European

¹⁸ Dimeski, Jane, "Entrenched Debate - Analysis of the Quality of the Discussion in the Parliament June 2014 - May 2015", IDSCS, (2015), available at <https://idscs.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/rovovska-debata-mk.pdf>

¹⁹ Bliznakovski, Jovan "Comparative good practices in the application of PVR and the possibility of their implementation in Macedonia", IDSCS, (2017), available at <https://idscs.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/>

flag is used, which indicates harmonization of that law with the legislation of the European Union.²⁰ Praktika e përdorimit të procedurës me flamurin evropian është kritikuar edhe nga Delegacioni Evropian në Maqedoninë e Veriut.²¹ The practice of using the procedure with European flag was also criticized by the European delegation in North Macedonia.²² The abuse of these mechanisms limits the debate between MPs, negatively affects its quality, denies MPs the right to speak and deprives them of making informed decisions. Such abuse inevitably results in hasty and inappropriate legal solutions. At the same time, such practices contribute to a more negative perception by the citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Increasing the oversight role of the Parliament is particularly important in the context of the strategic measures undertaken by the Government, such as the Reform Agenda within the framework of the new Growth Plan. The Parliament, as a representative and oversight body, should proactively monitor and evaluate how the Government creates, implements and builds on these strategic policies. This includes not only reviewing reports, but also organizing thematic discourses, asking precise parliamentary questions and using political accountability mechanisms. At the same time, it is crucial to include the Parliament in the planning and adoption phase of reforms in a timely manner, in order to ensure transparency, accountability and a broader political and social consensus around reform processes that directly affect the economic and institutional development of the country.

It is essential that MPs increase their knowledge and understanding of the impact the laws have on the lives of different groups of citizens. In part, they can achieve this by using the analyses made by the Parliamentary Institute and the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO). It is also necessary to request for the RIA reports prepared by the Government and to consult with experienced parliamentary officers, citizens and the non-governmental sector on the impact of the laws. During the debate, an added value is the use of *examples* from experiences, concerns or interests of voters (office for communication with citizens, personal stories, media stories, local businesses) as well as reacting and appropriately dealing with *sexist or discriminatory* remarks or speech in the Parliament. In this direction, an added value would be the use of mechanism for legislative public hearings regulated by the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament, where the main committees can organize a public hearing regarding a proposed law.

²⁰ Dimitrievski, Dejan "Enactment of a law by fast-track or urgent procedure" Parliamentary Institute, (2017) available at: <https://www.sobranie.mk/content/PI/>

²¹ Meta (2023). Gere: The concern with using the European flag is when there is no compliance with European regulation. Accessed at: <https://meta.mk/gir-zagrizhenosta-za-koristenjeto-evropsko-znamence-e-koga-nema-usoglasuvanje-so-evropskata-regulativa/>

Apart from the expertise of the PI and PBO, MPs also have several tools at their disposal to strengthen their capacity when it comes to reviewing and debating laws, including training offered by the Parliament Support Programme (PSP) which is supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). This program provides MPs with training on policy analysis and compliance with EU legislation, training on Legislative Impact Analysis (LIA), gender equality impact and budgetary implications of laws, LIA simulations for the parliamentary service and the parliamentary TV channel, support for the Parliament for inclusion of RIA for the law proposals as well as strengthening of knowledge and skills for conducting an argumentative debate, including skills for public speaking and cooperation with the media. Every newly elected parliamentary composition, such as the current one that is the subject of monitoring in this report, has a significant percentage of MPs who are MPs for the first time. For these MPs, in addition to regular introductory training, special focus should be placed on the way in which they should present and elaborate their positions, and also focus should be placed on the tools available to them that will help them prepare their speeches and on the existing mechanisms for improving their speeches. This report can serve as a reference point for insight into whether new MPs (and all MPs in general), when reviewing the quality of their speeches at the beginning and end of their mandate, improve their oratory skills over the years as well as the manner in which they deliver and corroborate their speeches.

Finally, it is necessary to introduce a calendar of sessions. The new Rules of Procedure of the Parliament include this tool, and it remains on the MPs to introduce it and put it into use. The calendar of sessions provides for predictability of the Parliament work as well as more time for the MPs to prepare themselves regarding items on the agenda. Having the available time and greater predictability, MPs will be timely informed about the draft laws, amendments and changes to laws, reports by regulatory and independent bodies and on other acts in the Parliament. The predictability of the sessions will contribute to a higher quality and argued discussion.

IX. ANNEX 1 – DISCOURSE QUALITY INDEX

The Discourse Quality Index is a composite index made up of several indicators resulting from the monitoring of debates. The index is generated in several phases where the last phase is a sum of all weighted values of the individual indicators. The Index includes the following:

Table 1.

Name	Scale	Share in the total (%)
Level of argumentation	[-1:1]	20
Scope of argumentation	[-1:1]	5
Accountability	[-1:1]	20
Power of a better argument	[-1:1]	20
Attitude towards participants from another political party	[-1:1]	10
Attitude towards arguments of participants from another political party	[-1:1]	10
Attitude towards external participants	[-1:1]	2,5
Attitude towards arguments presented by external participants	[-1:1]	2,5
Interruptions	[-1:1]	5
Limitations	[-1:1]	5

For indexing purposes, each indicator is assigned a score for individual categories. The scoring is shown in the table below:

Table 2.

Level of argumentation	Grades	Scope of explanation	Grades
More than 2 arguments	4	Abstract principles	2
2 arguments	3	Common good	2
1 argument	2	Other groups	1
Weak	0	Own group	1
None	-2	Neutral	0

Accountability	Grades	Power of a better argument	Grades
Properly addresses arguments	2	Change due to arguments	5
Partially ignores, twists, addresses the arguments	1	No change, with different position, acknowledges arguments	3
No addressed arguments or questions from another speaker	0	No change, keeps the position, acknowledges arguments	1
Ignores arguments	-1	No change, no acknowledgement of arguments	0
Does not ignore, but twists the argument	-2	Change, not deriving from arguments	0
		No reference	0

Attitude towards participants from another political party	Grades	Attitude towards external participants	Grades
Full respect	2	Full respect	2
Respect	2	Respect	2
Partial respect	1	Partial respect	1
No reference	0	No reference	0
Partial disrespect	-1	Partial disrespect	-1
Disrespect	-2	Disrespect	-2

Attitude towards arguments presented by another political party	Grades	Attitude towards arguments presented by external participants	Grades
Full respect	2	Full respect	2
Respect	2	Respect	2
Partial respect	1	Partial respect	1
No reference	0	No reference	0
Partial disrespect	-1	Partial disrespect	-1
Disrespect	-2	Disrespect	-2

Limitations	Grades	Interruptions	Grades
None	0	No interruption	0
Passive obstructions	-1	With interruption	-1
Yes, the speaker indicates the obstructions	-1		
Physical interruption	-2		

Each of these indicators was linearly transformed into sub-indices on a scale of -1 to 1, taking into account the transformation so that the original score did not lose the positive or negative sign. Hence, the universal transformation formula is:

$$i = \frac{2 \times \text{indicator}}{(\max - (-\max))}$$

This pertains to all indicators except for interruption and limitation, because in these two indicators the absolute value of the lowest possible grade is greater than the value of the highest possible grade. Hence, the formula is:

$$i = \frac{2 \times \text{indicator}}{(|\min| - (\min))}$$

Once the sub-indices of the individual indicators are calculated, for calculation purposes we take into consideration the calculation of the pre-DQI with weighted values of the sub-indices according to the participation given in Table 1. For easier viewing, the final DQI is transformed linearly in a scale of 1 to 10 according to the following formula:

$$DQI = \frac{(10 - 1)}{(1 - (-1)) \times (\text{preDQI} - 1)} + 10$$

These calculations and transformations are made for each speech individually and the report transmits the arithmetic mean of all speeches from the observed period.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The **Swiss Parliamentary Support Program (PSP)** supports the efforts of the Assembly of Republic of North Macedonia for independence through building consensus, structural reforms and capacity building for the institutional development of the Assembly; its legislative and oversight role and institutional transparency and accountability. The PSP is implemented by the National Democratic Institute, the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" – Skopje and the Centre for Change Management, aimed at supporting the strategic planning of the Assembly; human resources management reforms; improved regulatory impact assessment and procurement processes; commitment to open data and measuring the public opinion and monitoring the efforts for reforms, including an enhanced citizen participation in the policy-making processes.

ABOUT NDI

Since its founding in 1983, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) has worked to strengthen democracy and support inclusive political participation worldwide. The Institute has been active in North Macedonia since 1993, partnering with citizens, civil society, political parties, media, and institutions to build more transparent, accountable, and resilient democratic practices. Today, NDI is implementing the *Swiss Parliament Support Programme* and *Integrity Driven Communities* initiatives, supported by the Governments of Switzerland and Sweden, to foster stronger democratic governance and integrity at both the national and local levels.

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ABOUT IDSCS

Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" Skopje (IDSCS) is a think tank organization that researches the good governance development, the rule of law and the European integration of North Macedonia. The IDSCS mission is to support citizen involvement in decision-making and to strengthen the participatory political culture. By strengthening the liberal values, IDSCS contributes to the cohabitation of diversities.

Since June 2014, IDSCS has been monitoring the debate quality in the Assembly and the media coverage of the work of the Assembly. The monitoring in the first cycle took place during a period of 10 months - from June 2014 to May 2015. The second period of monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the parliamentary debate and the media reporting started in September 2015 and it lasted until December 2017, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The third period of monitoring of the debate quality began in January 2018 and it lasted until December 2019. **Since January 2020, the Institute for Democracy has been monitoring the work of the Assembly and the debate quality within the framework of the Parliamentary Support Program (PSP).**

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