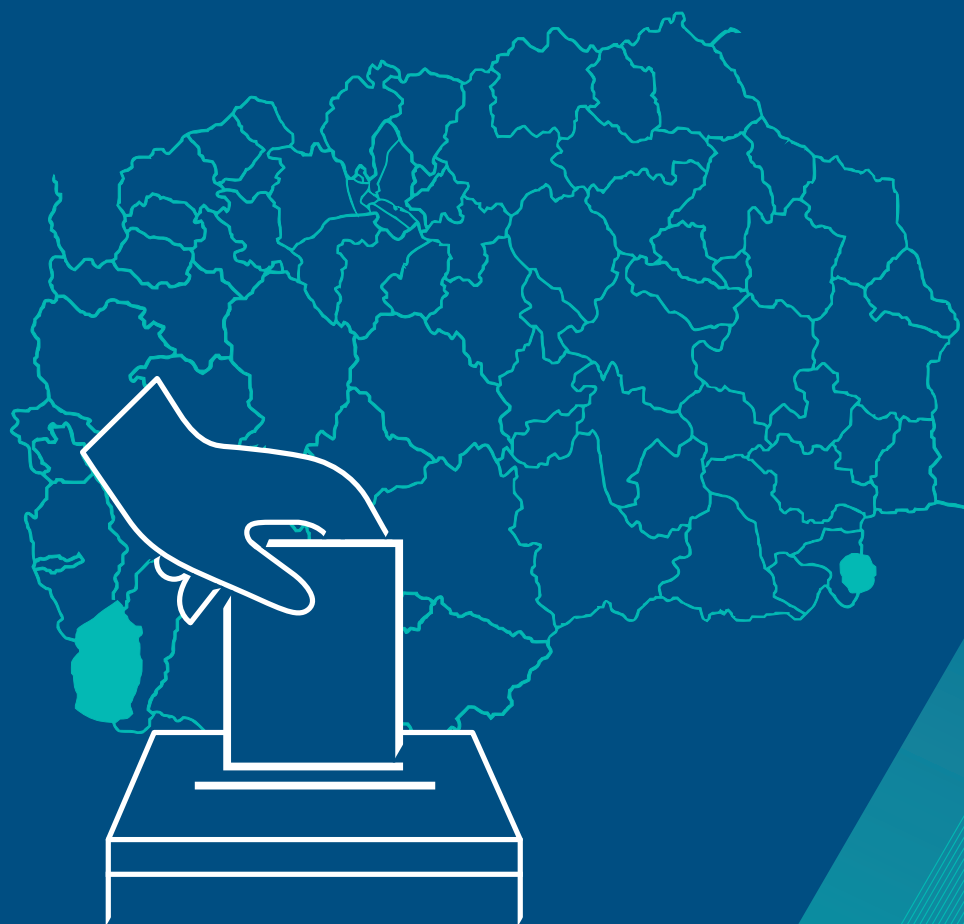


The Republic of North Macedonia's 2025 Local Elections Handbook

Second updated edition



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Contents

INTRODUCTION TO THE 2025 LOCAL ELECTIONS **7**

Preparation for the 2025 local elections.....	8
Participants in the elections.....	11
Recent changes to electoral legislation.....	12

1. HISTORY OF LOCAL ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA (1996–2021) **23**

Local elections 1996.....	23
Local elections 2000.....	23
Local elections 2005.....	23
Local elections 2009.....	24
Local elections 2013.....	24
Local elections 2017.....	24
Local elections 2021.....	24

2. THE MACEDONIAN ELECTORAL SYSTEM FOR LOCAL ELECTIONS **29**

Electoral model.....	29
Electoral bodies.....	29
Right to be elected.....	30
Restrictions for incumbent officials.....	30
Number of council members.....	31
Right and procedure for submitting candidacies for mayor or councillors.....	31
Election campaign.....	32
Role of the media.....	33
Election observation.....	33

3. POLITICAL PARTIES, COALITIONS AND INDEPENDENT MOVEMENTS **37**

"Your Macedonia" coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE.....	37
"Coalition for Local Elections 2025" led by SDSM.....	38
Coalition "National Alliance for Integration" led by the Democratic Union for Integration.....	40
Coalition VLEN.....	41

Coalition “Experience for Success”.....	43
Coalition “For a Green Future” led by DOM.....	46
Bosniak Democratic Union.....	47
VMRO–People’s Party.....	48
Political party Civic Initiative – GRIN.....	48
ZNAM Movement – For Our Macedonia.....	49
Democratic Party of the Roma.....	51
Democratic Party of the Turks in Macedonia.....	51
Democratic Forces of the Roma.....	51
United Macedonia.....	51
The Left.....	52
Macedonian Era Third / Macedonian Independent	
Lists – Sovereignists.....	53
Party for the Movement of the Turks in Macedonia.....	53
Serbian Party in Macedonia.....	54
Political Party Movement for the National Unity	
of Turks (DNET).....	54
Political Party Democrats.....	55
Workers’ Party.....	55
Rodina Macedonia.....	56
Union of Roma from Macedonia.....	57
Your Party.....	57
Permanent Macedonian Radical Unification (TMRO).....	58
Union of Roma Skopje.....	58

4. OVERVIEW OF MAYORAL CANDIDATES **63**

5. THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA’S 2025 LOCAL ELECTIONS **– RESULTS, CAMPAIGN, ASSESSMENTS** **135**

Introduction.....	137
Electoral campaign.....	140
Financing of the election campaign.....	146
Media.....	149
Results of the 2025 local elections.....	158
Protection of the right to vote.....	162
Assessment by observers.....	165
Assessment of the elections by the participants.....	168
Conclusion.....	173
Annex 1 - Elected mayors by municipality.....	177
Annex 2 - Elected councilors by municipality.....	180

6. ELECTORAL ARCHIVE OF ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH **MACEDONIA FROM 1990 TO THE PRESENT** **183**



Introduction

Introduction to the 2025 local elections

The eighth local elections since the independence of the Republic of North Macedonia will be held on October 19, 2025. In accordance with his legal powers, the President of the Assembly, Afrim Gashi, called the elections on August 9, 2025. Citizens will elect mayors and councilors in 80 municipalities and the City of Skopje.

Over the past four years, from October 2021 to October 2025, the largest number of mayoral posts (42) have belonged to the VMRO-DPMNE-led coalition. Mayors supported by the coalition led by the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) headed 16 municipalities, and mayors supported by the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) headed 11. The coalition between the Alliance for Albanians and Alternative won 2 mayoral mandates, BESA-2 and the Coalition DOM/LDP, DPA and GROM one each. Three mayoral positions went to independent candidates.

In the municipal councils, the VMRO-DPMNE-led coalition prevailed, winning 469 council seats, the SDSM coalition – 402, and DUI – 167. The Alliance for Albanians and Alternative coalition had 81 council seats, Levica – 49, BESA – 36, and the DOM and LDP coalition – 29 council seats. Independent candidates were represented with a total of 67 council seats.

The 2021 local elections will be the first local elections to reflect the demographic changes shown by the 2021 Population Census. As a result, there was a decrease in the number of Council members in 14 municipalities, namely: Gostivar, Kichevo, Kratovo, Kriva Palanka, Kumanovo, Pehchevo, Struga, Vrapčishte, Debarca, Zhelino, Jegunovce, Novo Selo, Tearce and Centar Župa.

Amendments to the Electoral Code, adopted after the announcement of the 2024 elections, introduced a new obstacle for independent candidates in local elections - a fixed threshold of 1% signatures from all registered voters in the municipality, which significantly increased the requirement for independent candidacy in many municipalities and the City of Skopje.

These amendments were challenged before the Constitutional Court, which in May this year issued a Decision to repeal Articles 17 and 18 of the Electoral Code because they „directly threaten and weaken political pluralism.“ The Constitutional Court recommended that the Parliament adopt legislative amendments as soon as possible and fill the legal gap created by the repeal of the two disputed articles.

Despite requests from numerous independent councilors and movements, as well as civil society organizations, the MPs did not make any amendments to the Electoral Code and left the State Election Commission (SEC) to decide on the procedure for the nomination of independent candidates for mayors and councilors. Two weeks after the elections were announced, the State Election Commission adopted the Rulebook Regulating the Procedure for Collecting Signatures in Support of Candidate Lists from a Group of Voters, according to which independent candidates only need two signatures to participate in the local elections. After the adoption of the Rulebook, three significant risks emerged: the possibility of an excessive number of candidacies without a real intention to participate, abuse through the use of similar or borrowed names to confuse voters, and the potential emergence of voluminous, overly long ballots.

The mayoral race is contested by 5 coalitions, 18 political parties and 57 independent candidates. The councilor race is contested by 6 coalitions, 28 political parties and 67 independent councilor lists.

Preparation for the 2025 local elections

Following the Decision to Call Local Elections 2025, signed on August 9, 2025, by the President of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, Afrim Gashi, on August 17, 2025, the State Election Commission (SEC) adopted the Schedule for the Execution of Electoral Activities for Conducting Local Elections.

In accordance with the Schedule¹, the SEC is obligated to form the Municipal Election Commissions (MECs) after the mandate of the previous commission has expired. Then, after being established the MECs form the election boards (EBs) and replace the members and deputy members whose mandates have expired for various reasons. MECs submit a request to the opposition political parties that won the most votes in the last elections and the political parties in power that won the most votes in the last elections to submit proposals for members of the EB and their deputies for the purpose of forming the EB and to submit the proposals no later than September 1.

In accordance with the Electoral Code, immediately after the call for elections, the SEC submits a request to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) to submit the data on citizens. The data that must include the citizen's unique identification number

¹ Schedule for the execution of electoral actions for the conduct of elections for members of the municipal councils and the Council of the City of Skopje and mayors of the municipalities and the Mayor of the City of Skopje, 2025. Accessed at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yxLT4YsZxAWu4faR_PcTTncylVp1b5GZ/view (last viewed: 18 September 2025).

(EMBG), must be submitted by the Ministry of Interior to the SEC no later than 48 hours. Then, no later than 15 days from the date of the call for elections, the State Election Commission makes the Voters' List available for public inspection in its regional departments and offices, as well as on the website izbirackispisok.gov.mk, where the voter, by entering his/her personal data, can check whether he/she is on the Voters' List and, if so, at which polling station he/she is voting and where it is located. In these elections, the inspection of the Voter List began on August 23 and ended on September 11 at 24:00. If there are requests for entering, supplementing or deleting data in the Voter List, they are submitted in the period from August 23 to September 11. The State Election Commission shall, within three days (i.e., by September 14th at the latest) after the completion of the public inspection of the Voter List², submit it to the political parties. The parties shall then, within five days of the submission, i.e., by September 19th, submit a request to the SEC for entering, supplementing or deleting data.

The Ministry of Interior is obligated, within one day of the completion of the Voters' List public inspection, i.e. on September 12, to submit a list of citizens who have submitted a request for the issuance of a new ID card or travel document on any basis and have collected them from the day the elections were called until the day the public inspection is completed, and a list of persons who will turn 18 by Election Day. The SEC enters the data on these persons in the Voter List ex officio.

The authority responsible for enforcing sanctions shall, no later than 30 days before the day set for elections, submit to the SEC data on persons who are in custody or serving a prison sentence based on the records kept by this authority. The data is submitted on a magnetic medium and must contain the citizen's unique identification number. This data is submitted no later than September 18th.

The Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth (MSDY) shall, no later than 30 days before the day set for elections, based on its own records and on the basis of the data submitted by the responsible persons in the institutions for non-family care, submit to the State Election Commission data on the persons who have registered to vote in institutions for non-family care no later than September 18.

The SEC shall conclude the voter list, in which all changes since the public inspection have been made, printed in the form of extracts, no later than 15 days after the public inspection has been completed, i.e. no later than September 26. The SEC then signs the finalized Voter List, i.e. the extracts from the Voter List on which

2 State Election Commission – Public Inspection of the Voters List. Accessed at: <https://izbirackispisok.gov.mk/> (last viewed: 18 September 2025).

voting is conducted, no later than 15 days before the day of the elections, i.e. no later than October 3.

Political parties submitted their candidate lists for the local elections by midnight on September 13, when the deadline for submitting candidacies for mayors and councilor lists to the SEC expired, i.e. 35 days before the elections are held. By the deadline, 312 mayoral candidacies were submitted, including the candidacies of independent candidates. The deadline for collecting signatures for independent candidates began on August 18, the tenth day after the call for elections, and lasted for 15 days, until September 1.

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

- » The participant in the election campaign, when the elections are held in one round, is obligated on the 11th day of the election campaign (October 9, 24:00), as well as within one day (October 18) after the end of the campaign, to submit a Report with a form on received election campaign donations to the transaction account. If a second round of voting is held in the elections, the participant in the election campaign is obligated to submit a report with a form on the election campaign donations received to the transaction account one day (November 1) before the second round of voting. The participant in the election campaign is obligated to immediately, and no later than within 15 days from the day of closing the transaction account, submit a complete financial report with a specification of the income and expenditure costs in the election campaign;
- » The participant in the election campaign is obligated, one day after the closing of the election campaign transaction account, to submit a report with a form on the donations received for the period from one day after the end of the campaign until the closing of the election campaign transaction account;
- » The participant in the election campaign is obligated to immediately, and no later than within 15 days from the day of closing the transaction account, submit a complete financial report with a specification of the income and expenditures costs in the election campaign;
- » The State Audit Office is obligated to conduct an audit within 60 days of the submission of the report;
- » Broadcasters, print media and electronic media (internet portals) in the Republic of North Macedonia are obligated to submit a report on the advertising space used by each of the participants in the election campaign and the funds

paid and claimed on that basis. The report is submitted no later than 15 days after the end of the election campaign, i.e. for the first round, November 1, by 24:00 hours, and for the second round, November 15, by 24:00 hours.

Participants in the elections

Of the confirmed lists of mayoral candidates, the largest percentage, i.e. 57%, were submitted by coalitions, 26% were submitted by political parties and 17% were submitted by a group of voters. The majority of confirmed candidates (90%) are men, while only 10% are women. The youngest mayoral candidate is 23 years old, the oldest is 79 years old, while the average age of mayoral candidates is 48 years old³.

Of the total number of confirmed candidates for municipal councilors and councilors of the City of Skopje, the largest percentage, i.e. 45%, are proposed by a political party, 43% are supported by a coalition, while 12% are from a group of voters, i.e. independent lists. More than half of them (55%) are men, while 45% are women. On the other hand, of the total number of candidates on candidate lists, 81% are men while 19% are women. The youngest 78 candidates proposed for councilors are 18 years old, 7 candidates are 90 or older, while the oldest candidate is 97 years old. The average age of candidates for municipal councilors is 43 years old⁴.

As submitters of lists of candidates for mayor and/or lists of candidates for council members, there are 6 coalitions and 26 political parties participating in these elections. Groups of voters have given support to 56 independent candidates for mayor and 67 independent candidate lists for council members⁵.

Recent changes to electoral legislation

In the period from the last local elections in 2017 to the elections scheduled for October 19, 2025, several changes were made relating to the provisions of the Electoral Code of the Republic of North Macedonia. The changes relate to state electoral bodies, political campaign financing, campaign participants, as well as media coverage of the election campaign⁶. Further, these amendments to the Electoral Code provided for the State Election Commission to establish a Center for Continuous Education for Elections. This Center will provide continuous training for

3 The statistical data is obtained based on the information published by the State Election Commission (SEC) on its official website, accessed via: <https://candidate-list.sec.mk/LolcalElectionsCandidates> (Last visit: 03 October 2025)

4 Ibid

5 Ibid

6 Official Gazette: Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Electoral Code, 58/2024.

the election administration, voters, participants in the election process, authorized representatives of list submitters, the media, election observers and all interested parties who participate in the elections in any way, and will also conduct research and analysis for the needs and at the request of the State Election Commission.

Additionally, the provisions regarding the registration of new voters have been further clarified, so that everyone who turns 18 by election day will have the right to vote.

The amendments to Articles 61 and 62 of the Electoral Code have significantly made it more difficult for independent candidates to be elected both at local and at national level. Namely, in accordance with Article 61, instead of the previous 1,000 signatures, submitters of independent parliamentary lists will in the future need the signatures of 1% of the registered voters in the Voters' List of the specific constituency. For local elections, however, in accordance with the amendment to Article 62, when the submitter of a list of candidates for members of the Council, i.e. a list of candidates for mayor, is a group of voters, it is necessary to collect at least 1% of the signatures of the registered voters in the extract from the Voters' List for the municipality, i.e. the City of Skopje, instead of the previous required signatures that varied from 100 to 1,000 (depending on the number of residents in the specific municipality)⁷. Immediately after these changes, some of the independent councilor lists that competed in the previous local elections and received a significant share of councilor seats reacted by saying that this type of changes to the Electoral Code are not in accordance with the OSCE recommendations and that they are also unconstitutional,⁸ for which an initiative was later submitted to the Constitutional Court to assess the constitutionality of these provisions.

The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Macedonia, at a session held on May 20, 2025, adopted a decision⁹ to repeal Articles 17 and 18 of the Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Electoral Code ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 58/2024 of March 11, 2024), which previously should have changed Articles 61 and 62 of the Electoral Code and the required number of signatures for independent lists of councilors and independent candidates for mayors at the local level, as well as for independent parliamentary lists for members of parliament. In the explanation of this decision, the Constitutional Court refers to the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, mainly the fundamental values

7 For an independent councilor list or mayor of the City of Skopje, instead of the previous 1,000, in accordance with these changes, 4,674 signatures are required.

8 „The parties pushed the independents off the ballot.» Radio Free Europe, March 12, 2024 Accessed on: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/partiite-gi-istisnaa-nezavisnite-na-glasachkoto-livche/32858134.html>

9 D.No.186/2024 on 20.5.2025, <https://ustavensud.mk/archives/34667>

(Article 8, paragraph 1, lines 1, 3 and 5), the equality of citizens (Article 9), the freedom of association (Article 20), the right of every citizen to participate in the performance of public functions (Article 23) and several other constitutional provisions. The Constitutional Court further refers in its reasoning to international standards, such as: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Charter of Local Self-Government, as well as the Case Law of the European Court of Human Rights. In its reasoning, the Constitutional Court also refers to the final report of the OSCE/ODIHR Mission for the observation of the local elections held in 2021, which indicates that in practice the required number of signatures in support of independent councilors varied between 0.4% and 5% of registered voters in the respective municipality, which is contrary to international good practice and the principle of equal opportunity to run for election. It was pointed out that in order to ensure equal opportunities in the right to run for all candidates, the required number of signatures in support of independent candidates should be proportional to the actual number of registered voters per constituency, which is why it was recommended to consider the possibility of standardizing the required number of signatures to a maximum of 1% of registered voters in accordance with international good practice. Why the legislator decided on the highest possible percentage remains unclear due to the lack of an explanation in the Draft Law. The legislative amendment that increased the number of signatures required to nominate independent candidates by two, three, and in the case of the City of Skopje even more than 4 times, represents a significant infringement on the right to stand as a candidate, which in the absence of substantiated reasons by the legislator creates the impression that it was made exclusively in the interest of the larger political parties with the sole purpose of reducing the number of independent candidates at the very beginning of the election race. Without a sufficiently argued objective explanation, this amendment cannot be considered justified for the purpose of achieving any legitimate aim, nor that it is necessary and proportionate¹⁰.

This repealing, not annulling, decision of the Constitutional Court created a legal vacuum, because after the repeal of these two articles the previous legal rule does not come into effect, and the legislator should step in and fill this legal vacuum as soon as possible. Otherwise, the legislator's possible failure to act would mean an additional violation. With this legal vacuum, there was no legal rule under which conditions independent citizens would participate in the electoral process¹¹. At a session held on August 16, 2025, the RSM Assembly made an attempt to adopt amendments to the Electoral Code regarding the percentage of signatures of the

¹⁰ Ibid 4

¹¹ Statement of the President of the Constitutional Court on 20.5.2025, accessed on: <https://24.mk/details/ustaven-ukina-dve-odredbi-od-izborniot-zakonik>

total number of voters registered in the Electoral Register of the constituency that independent candidates should collect to participate in the local elections. The proposed amendments and supplements received support from the majority of MPs, but given that it is a solution that relates to local elections, it was necessary to vote according to Badinter. 18 of the MPs from smaller ethnic communities voted against the proposed amendments, while 11 voted “in favor”. The initial proposal submitted with these amendments envisaged that instead of the abolished 1%, it would be required to collect 0.95% signatures of registered voters for the independent lists in one electoral unit, i.e. municipality. After the debate in the Committee on Political System and Inter-Community Relations, this percentage was set at 0.5%, but even as such it did not receive the required Badinter majority.

On August 17, 2025, the State Election Commission (SEC) filled this legal gap by adopting a new Rulebook, with six votes “for” and one “against”, whereby only two citizen signatures are required to be collected for the participation of independent lists and mayors in the local elections¹².

State Election Commission

A person who is a citizen of the Republic of Macedonia with permanent residence in the country, has a higher education with at least eight years of work experience and is not a member of a political party body may be elected as a member of the State Election Commission. The Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia shall, within 30 days before the expiration of the Commission's mandate, publish the Announcement for the election of the new composition, i.e. the 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 press. The announcement shall last eight days from the date of publication in the “Official Gazette”.

The RSM Assembly shall, within 30 days before the expiration of the Commission's mandate, announce the procedure for selecting members. The procedure for selecting members shall remain the same and shall be prepared and implemented by the Commission for Elections and Appointments within the RSM Assembly. This Commission prepares a draft list of the registered candidates and submits it to the Parliament. From the candidates on the proposed 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 Members of Parliament¹³.

¹² <https://www.sec.mk/lokalni-izbori-2025/>

¹³ KAS, IDSCS, Handbook for Presidential Elections in the Republic of North Macedonia 2024,. Accessed at: <https://izbornaarhiva.mk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/handbook-on-2024-presidential-elections-mkd-version.pdf> (last visited: September 15, 2025).

In September 2021, with the intervention in the Electoral Code, several articles regulating the election, mandate, and work of the State Election Commission were changed. With the amendment to Article 26, the Commission members term of office is increased to five years from the date of election. In addition, the amendments to Articles 27, 29 and 30 regulate for the first time the process of reorganizing the Commission's composition in the event of a change of government, as well as the election of new members and the Secretary General¹⁴.

The amendments to the Electoral Code of 2024 oblige the State Election Commission to establish a Center for Continuous Election Education as a separate organizational unit within its service, which will be headed by a state advisor at the B1 level¹⁵, who will be accountable to the Commission and the Secretary General. The Center will aim to provide continuous training to the election administration, voters, election participants, the media and election observers, as well as to produce various research and analyses for the needs and at the request of the SEC¹⁶.

Financing of political parties

The Law on Financing of Political Parties has not undergone any changes in the last few years. The provisions relating to the specification of property and the financing of political parties (movable and immovable property), the amount of total funds for annual financing of political parties in the amount of 0.15% of the total source revenues of the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia, private sources of financing, the amount of individual donations that may not exceed the amount of 60 average salaries, as a donation from legal entities, and 30 net average salaries, if it is a donation from individuals, remain in force. With the latest amendments to the Electoral Code in March 2024, a new paragraph was added to Article 83 that regulates individual donations that political parties receive for election campaigns. Namely, the amount of funds cumulatively on the transaction account for an election campaign must not exceed 3,000 euros in denar equivalent from the same individual or 30,000 euros in denar equivalent from the same legal entity.

The funds for financing political parties in the amount of 30% provided from the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia shall continue to be distributed equally to all political parties that have won at least 1% of the total number of votes in the

14 «Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia», Law on Amendments to the Electoral Code 218/2021.

15 According to Article 24 of the Law on Administrative Servants, a civil servant of category B1 is a first-level administrative officer who meets the requirements to have at least two years in a managerial position in the public sector, or at least three years in a managerial position in the private sector.

16 „Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia”, Law on Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code 58/2024.

last parliamentary or local elections. Of those, 70% of the funds are distributed to political parties according to the number of elected members of parliament in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia in the last parliamentary elections and according to the number of elected councilors in the last local elections.

Article 26 of the Law on Financing of Political Parties stipulates that the supervision of financing shall be carried out by the State Audit Office. The article also stipulates that parties must have only one bank account, and in the case of financing through the provision of funds from a loan from commercial banks, in addition to the main bank account, they may have another separate bank account for the party's funds provided through a loan. Furthermore, the political party has the right to transfer funds between its accounts, and the party research and 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 equivalent are also provided for annual financing of the party research and analytical centers that are established in accordance with the law as part of the internal organization of the party¹⁷.

The amendments to the law in 2018 created an obligation to submit a financial report on the material and financial operations of the party, which contains the financial operations of the account, i.e. the accounts of the political party. The amendments recognize the items "sponsorship" and "credit" as an additional part of the financial report. The amendments provide that the funds intended for financing political parties shall be paid in accordance with the budget possibilities, but no later than March 1 of each current year¹⁸.

Public Media

The ban from the amendments to the Electoral Code in 2018 remains in effect for this election cycle, which means that from the day the elections are announced until the start of the election campaign, broadcasters, print media and electronic media (portals) are not allowed to broadcast, i.e. publish paid political advertising, except for advertisements and announcements for collecting signatures in support of a candidacy of a group of voters. In cases of broadcasting, i.e. publishing announcements for collecting signatures in support of candidacies, this is done in designated advertising blocks within the allowed advertising time of one real hour.

17 «Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia», Law on Amendments to the Law on Financing of Political Parties, 140/2018.

18 KAS, IDSCS, Handbook for Presidential Elections in the Republic of North Macedonia 2024,. Accessed at: <https://izbornaarhiva.mk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/handbook-on-2024-presidential-elections-mkd-version.pdf> (last visited: 15 September 2025).

The amendments to the Electoral Code of March 2024, however, provide for a restriction on the promotion of candidates, i.e. from the moment the candidate lists are confirmed until the start of the election campaign, the participants in the elections have the right to organize one public event each to promote their confirmed lists of candidate(s) and election programs. Consequently, Article 69-a prohibits parties from spending funds allocated for the election campaign during the aforementioned period.

During the first and second rounds of the election campaign, broadcasters covering the elections may broadcast a total of nine minutes and thirty seconds of additional advertising time per real hour of broadcast programming exclusively intended for paid political advertising. Of these nine and a half minutes, a total of four minutes can be allocated to the two largest political parties in power, four minutes to the two largest political parties in the opposition, one minute to the political parties in the Parliament that did not win enough MPs to form a parliamentary group in the last parliamentary elections, as well as thirty seconds to the political parties that are not represented in the Parliament¹⁹.

Broadcasters, print media and electronic media (internet portals) are obligated, within five days from the day the elections were called, to establish price lists for paid political advertising for participants in the electoral process and, also, within three days from the day the elections were called, to register with the State Election Commission. Broadcasters, print media and electronic media (internet portals) that do not register with the State Election Commission will not have the right to use financial resources for paid political advertising, provided by the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia.

State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption

In accordance with the Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest²⁰ and the Electoral Code, the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) has a key role in ensuring the integrity and fair conditions of the electoral process. Its competencies are aimed at preventing the misuse of state resources, controlling campaign financing and strengthening transparency.

The SCPC monitors the legality of the use of budget funds and the financing of election campaigns from the day the elections are announced until their completion.

19 KAS, IDSCS, Handbook for Parliamentary Elections in the Republic of North Macedonia 2024. Accessed at: <https://izbornaarhiva.mk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/belegexemplar-2024-handbook-on-2024-parliamentary-elections-mkd-version.pdf> (last visit: September 15, 2025).

20 «Official Gazette», Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest, 12/19.

In case suspicions of illegal financing are established, the Commission is obligated to initiate a procedure to establish the factual situation and, if the suspicions are confirmed, to initiate a procedure for accountability before the competent authorities. Campaign organizers are obligated, upon request, to submit additional data in order to ensure effective supervision.

In case of suspicion of illegal financing of an election campaign, the SCPC may initiate a procedure to determine the factual situation and, if it determines that the suspicions are well-founded, it is obligated to initiate a procedure to determine liability before the competent authorities within 15 days of the decision.

With the amendments of September 15, 2021, the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption is obliged to publish on its website the register of official motor vehicles of state bodies, local self-government bodies, public enterprises and all other legal entities that have state capital. The deadline for submitting data on the number, type, license plate and driving condition of motor vehicles to the SCPC is ten days from the date of the decision to call elections. The data shall be submitted electronically on a form prescribed by the State Election Commission upon proposal of the SCPC. In the event that the data is not submitted, the SCPC may initiate a misdemeanor procedure within 15 days from the expiration of the deadline for submittal of the data.

The SCPC inspects public procurement documentation during the election process to prevent favoritism and discrimination in awarding contracts. Additionally, if there are suspicions of bribery or pressure during voting, the SCPC is obligated to notify, without delay, the Public Prosecutor's Office.

Based on the information obtained, the SCPC prepares a special report on the determined conditions, which is submitted to the Parliament within three months after the end of the elections and is made public. These reports represent an important instrument for analyzing the conditions and as such have a preventive function - they warn of risks and influence public awareness.

The role of the SCPC is twofold – control (through inspection, procedures and sanctions) and prevention (through publicity, transparency and data publication). It is an additional corrective mechanism that complements the work of the State Election Commission (SEC), providing a broader framework for election integrity.

Although the legal framework provides strong powers, in practice there are several challenges, especially in terms of capacity, where the SCPC often faces limited

human and financial resources to cover during the elections the entire territory and all institutions. Furthermore, in terms of effectiveness, where the real effect of the procedures depends on cooperation with the Public Prosecutor's Office, the SEC and other institutions, sometimes the measures remain at the level of recommendations, and in terms of public trust, the citizens' perception of the impartiality and efficiency of the SCPC directly affects the legitimacy of the electoral process.

The SCPC plays a crucial role in holding fair and democratic elections by preventing corruption and misuse of public resources. However, for that role to be fully effective, it requires continued institutional support, capacity building, and improved cooperation mechanisms with other competent authorities.

State Audit Office

The legal task of the State Audit Office (SAO) is to audit the use of public funds and provide information to state institutions and the public on the proper use of funds. With the changes to the Electoral Code in 2020, the State Audit Office ex officio audits the overall financial report for the election campaign, in accordance with the auditing standards of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) and the rules set out in the INTOSAI Code of Ethics, which are published by the Minister of Finance in the "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia"²¹.

Upon request from the SAO, participants in the election campaign are obliged to submit additional data and notifications on the financing the election campaign. Payment service providers with whom the transaction account for financing the election campaign has been opened are obligated to submit all required data about that account and the transactions on it. Additionally, entities that provide media advertising services are obligated, upon request by the SAO, to submit all contracts, invoices and other financial documents for financing the election campaign.

The SAO has the right to request data on paid political advertising of election campaign participants from the AAVMU. It may also request financial documents from third parties regarding the financing of election campaign participants.

The State Audit Office should publish the audit reports from the audit of the financial statements of the participants on its website, within the deadline set by

21 «Official Gazette»: Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Electoral Code, 42/20.

law, and should submit them to the SEC and SCPC.

In case it determines irregularities in the financial reports of the participants in the election campaign, in accordance with the Electoral Code (Article 85-b paragraph 9), the SAO submits a request to initiate a misdemeanor procedure or a report to the competent public prosecutor within 3 days from the date when the irregularities were determined. This way, the role of the SAO is not limited only to ascertaining the factual situation, but also to take an active initiative to sanction violations.

The SAO not only identifies possible irregularities, but also has a preventive function through its reports influencing public awareness of how funds are spent in elections, putting pressure on political parties and candidates to be more careful and transparent in their financial operations, and increasing public confidence in fair competition in elections.

Although the SAO formally has strong competencies, in practice there are certain challenges:

- » Limited resources: Auditing all election participants requires significant human and technical capacity;
- » Deadlines: Legal deadlines for review and sanctioning are short, which can make it difficult to act thoroughly.;
- » Effectiveness of sanctions: Although the SAO can initiate misdemeanor proceedings, the ultimate responsibility for punishment lies with the judicial and prosecutorial authorities, which sometimes results in delayed or limited sanctioning.

The SAO plays a crucial role in the electoral process by ensuring transparency and legality in campaign financing. Its work is a key part of the control mechanism that guarantees fair competition between political entities. However, in order to fully realize this role, continuous strengthening of institutional capacities and promotion of inter-institutional cooperation are necessary.



History of local elections in the Republic of North Macedonia (1996 – 2021)

1. History of local elections in the Republic of North Macedonia (1996 – 2021)

The first local elections in the independent Republic of Macedonia were held in 1996, with an average voter turnout of 60.17% for councillors and 60.28% for mayors. These elections saw the annulment of voting in several municipalities; thus, the data presented do not include the results from a total of nine municipalities. The elections were conducted pursuant to the territorial organisation established in 1996, providing for the formation of 123 municipalities and the City of Skopje. In these elections, the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) won 51 mayoral seats, VMRO-DPMNE and MAAK won 27, and the Socialist Party won 19. A total of 1,495,288 citizens were eligible to vote in these first local elections.

The 2000 local elections were marked by a significant number of violations of the electoral process and international standards, including incidents of violence and voter intimidation. Armed incidents were reported in several municipalities (Gostivar, Tetovo, Labunista, Dzepciste, and Mavrovi Anovi). Violence was also recorded in the second round of voting. The OSCE/ODIHR Mission reported group voting in 25% of the polling stations it observed. The winner of the 2000 local elections was the coalition of VMRO-DPMNE and the Democratic Alternative, securing 59 mayoral positions, followed by the SDSM-led coalition with 32 mandates, the PDP-NDP with 23, and other parties and independent candidates with 7. There were 1,634,859 registered voters for these elections.

The 2005 local elections again failed to meet international election standards. Unlike the previous ones, these elections were not marked by violence but were characterised by numerous irregularities. They were the first to be held according to the territorial organisation of 2004, under which the country had 84 municipalities plus the City of Skopje. The International Election Observation Mission reported 30 cases of ballot-box stuffing. In nine municipalities, including the City of Skopje, voting in the first round was repeated due to a large number of complaints for electoral irregularities, which delayed the second round. The SDSM-led coalition won these elections with 36 mayoral seats, followed by the VMRO-DPMNE coalition with 21, and DUI with 15 mayors. Other parties and independent candidates won 13 mayoral positions, including the independent candidate for Skopje, Trifun Kostovski,

supported by VMRO-DPMNE. There were 1,711,293 registered voters in 2005.

The 2009 local elections were held on the same day as the presidential elections and were the first to generally comply with international standards. However, the OSCE/ODIHR Mission still noted numerous irregularities, mainly related to pressure and intimidation of voters, especially those employed in public administration and recipients of social assistance. VMRO-DPMNE won in 56 municipalities, DUI in 15, SDSM secured 7 mayoral seats, while other parties and independent candidates won 7. There were 1,792,082 registered voters in these elections.

The next **2013 local elections** took place in a calm atmosphere and received positive evaluations for the way they were conducted. Although rare, observer remarks included cases of breaching ballot secrecy, family voting, and destruction of campaign materials. This election cycle saw the first application of the new Law on Local Self-Government, under which mayors and councillors were elected in 80 municipalities and the City of Skopje. These elections recorded the highest voter turnout in the history of local elections, with 67% turnout in the first round and 59% in the second. VMRO-DPMNE was once again the winner with 56 mayoral seats, DUI won 14, SDSM 4, while other parties and independents secured 7. A total of 1,743,404 citizens were eligible to vote in 2013.

The 2017 local elections were held in a peaceful and competitive atmosphere, with no major incidents or irregularities, which did not significantly affect the outcome. Voter turnout was 59.91% in the first round and 51.92% in the second—noticeably lower than in the previous cycle. These elections were characterised by the restraint of candidates from major parties from using aggressive rhetoric on ethnic grounds, while some parties also reached out to voters from other ethnic communities. The SDSM-led coalition won with 57 mayoral positions, including the City of Skopje. The VMRO-DPMNE-led coalition won 5, DUI won 10, and the Alliance for Albanians, participating for the first time as a separate political party, secured 3 mayoral seats. BESA, DPA, and DPT each won one mayoral seat, and independent candidates won three.

The 2021 local elections were held on 17 October (first round) and 31 October (second round). They took place in a competitive ambience with respect for fundamental freedoms but were marked by predominantly negative rhetoric, especially during the second round. Voter turnout was 51.44% in the first round and 49.65% in the second—a decline compared to 2017. During the campaign, parties were able to campaign freely, with freedoms of association, assembly, and expression respected. These elections were notable for their increased focus on

environmental issues and the significant number of independent candidates for both mayoral and council positions. The coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE won 42 mayoral seats—37 more than in 2017. SDSM and its coalition won 16, which is 41 fewer than in the previous elections. DUI secured 11 mayoral positions, BESA and the Alliance for Albanians–Alternative coalition each won two, while DPA, GROM, and the “Determined for Change” coalition (LDP and DOM) each won one. Three independent candidates won in Kumanovo, Debarca, and the City of Skopje. VMRO-DPMNE won 469 council seats, SDSM - 402, DUI - 167, the AA/Alternative coalition 81, Levica - 49, BESA - 36, the “Determined for Change” coalition -29, DPTM - 17, and DPA - 9. The joint council list of DUI, the Alliance for Albanians, and Alternative in the Municipality of Chaska won 4 seats. TMRO won 3, GROM - 2, SRM - 2, PDT - 2, and DNET - 2. One council seat each was won by DSR, United Macedonia, Podem, BDS, DDPS, and “Rom-Romeske”. Independent lists collectively secured 67 council seats²².

For more information about the history of local elections from independence to the present day, please refer to the Handbook on Local Elections in the Republic of North Macedonia 2021²³.

Table 1: Voter Turnout in Local Elections (1996-2021)²⁴, First and Second Round²⁵

Year	1996	2000	2005	2009	2013	2017	2021
Turnout	60 % (51 %)	59 % (53 %)	56 % (53 %)	57 % (43 %)	67 % (65 %)	60 % (52 %)	51 % (49 %)

22 For more information, see: KAS, IDSCS Handbook on Local Elections in the Republic of North Macedonia 2021, second revised edition. Available at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/belegexemplar_2021_the_republic_of_north_macedonias_2021_local_elections_handbook_mkd_version.pdf. (last accessed: 13 September 2025).

23 Handbook on Local Elections in the Republic of North Macedonia 2021, second revised edition. KAS and IDSCS, 2020, pp. 27–33. Accessed at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/belegexemplar_2021_the_republic_of_north_macedonias_2021_local_elections_handbook_mkd_version.pdf (last accessed: 16 September 2025).

24 For more information, see: KAS, IDSCS, Handbook on Local Elections in the Republic of North Macedonia 2021, second revised edition. Available at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/belegexemplar_2021_the_republic_of_north_macedonias_2021_local_elections_handbook_mkd_version.pdf. (last accessed: 13 September 2025).

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

2

Macedonian electoral system for local elections

2. The Macedonian electoral system for local elections

Electoral model²⁶

In the Republic of North Macedonia, elections for mayors in the local self-government units (LSGUs) are conducted under a majoritarian system, while elections for members of municipal councils are carried out under a proportional system. Local elections are held every four years, in the second half of October. The President of the Assembly calls the elections by an act published in the Official Gazette, and a period of 70 to 90 days must elapse between the announcement and the election date. A mayor is elected if a candidate receives a majority of votes in the first round, provided that the turnout is at least one-third of registered voters. If this condition is not met, a second round is held between the two candidates with the most votes. If only one candidate participates and fails to obtain a majority, the election is repeated. The second round takes place 14 days after the first, and the winner is the candidate who receives the higher number of votes. Councillors are elected proportionally according to the D'Hondt formula, whereby the total number of votes received by each list of candidates is divided by a series of divisors (1, 2, 3 ... up to the number of council seats). The highest quotients are then taken, and each list receives as many mandates as the number of its highest accepted quotients.

Electoral bodies

The State Election Commission (SEC), together with the Municipal Election Commissions (MECs), the Election Commission of the City of Skopje, the Election Boards (EBs), and Special Election Boards (SEBs), are responsible for administering local elections. The SEC consists of seven members elected by the Assembly with a two-thirds majority for a term lasting until a new composition is elected, but no longer than two years. It is responsible for publishing and providing public access to the Voters List. Following amendments to the Electoral Code in March 2024²⁷, the SEC was mandated to establish a Centre for Continuous Electoral Education as a separate organisational unit within its Secretariat. The Centre is headed by a State

26 "Handbook on Local Elections in the Republic of North Macedonia 2021," second revised edition. Accessed at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/belegexemplar_2021_the_republic_of_north_macedonias_2021_local_elections_handbook_mkd_versionnot_exceeding.pdf (last accessed: 11 September 2025).

27 "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia," Law Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code No. 58/2024.

Counsellor, rank B153, who reports to the Commission and the Secretary-General. Its role is to provide continuous training for electoral administration, voters, election participants, the media, and observers, as well as to conduct research and analyses at the initiative or upon the request of the SEC.

The MECs and the Election Commission of the City of Skopje, comprising five members each with a five-year term, conduct elections and oversee the work of election boards within their jurisdiction. Election boards are formed for each polling station and consist of five members with a four-year term—some randomly selected from the civil service, and others nominated by ruling and opposition parties. The law guarantees appropriate representation of non-majority communities in municipalities where they constitute at least 20% of the population, at least 30% representation of each gender, and a prohibition on membership for persons holding specific state or administrative positions.

Right to be elected

Every adult citizen of North Macedonia who possesses legal capacity and has permanent residence in the municipality or the City of Skopje where elections are held has the right to vote. Voting is secret, and no one may demand that a voter disclose for whom they voted or why they did not vote. The SEC informs and educates citizens on voting procedures and provides instructions and candidate lists in all official languages at polling stations. A candidate for mayor or councillor must be at least 18 years old, legally competent, have permanent residence in the municipality, and not be serving or have an unserved prison sentence exceeding six months.

Restrictions for incumbent officials²⁸

The positions of mayor and councillor are considered professional roles and are therefore incompatible with the holding of high state or administrative functions, a parliamentary mandate, engagement in business activities, or membership in management boards of public enterprises and entities with state-owned capital. The Mayor of the City of Skopje may not simultaneously serve as a mayor or councillor in any of the municipalities that fall within the city's administrative territory. From the announcement of elections until their completion, certain activities are expressly prohibited. These include initiating new infrastructure projects without prior budgetary allocation, making extraordinary payments, undertaking

²⁸ Electoral Code (consolidated text). Accessed at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yOTG7wVUyNoUk1_AkIYrNbD4gHQWzS5y/view (last accessed: 19 September 2025).

new employment, disposing of state assets, signing collective agreements, or performing any other actions forbidden under the Electoral Code. Any violation of these provisions is subject to fines and criminal liability. Candidates who are members of the armed forces, police, or security services must suspend their employment during the election campaign and are not permitted to participate in campaign activities while wearing their official uniforms. Furthermore, within 20 days before the start of the election campaign, it is prohibited to hold public events for inaugurating or opening facilities financed from public or budgetary funds. The Ministry of Finance is obliged to publicly disclose all budget expenditures and to submit a pre-election financial report.

Number of council members

The number of members in a municipal council depends on the population size of the respective unit of local self-government. Municipalities with up to 5,000 inhabitants have councils composed of nine members, while those with between 5,001 and 10,000 residents have eleven. Municipalities with populations ranging from 10,001 to 20,000 elect fifteen councillors, and those between 20,001 and 40,000 elect nineteen. In municipalities with between 40,001 and 60,000 inhabitants, councils consist of twenty-three members; those with between 60,001 and 80,000 have twenty-seven; and municipalities with populations between 80,001 and 100,000 elect thirty-one councillors. The largest municipalities, with over 100,000 inhabitants, have councils composed of thirty-three members. The Council of the City of Skopje, as the capital, consists of forty-five members²⁹.

Right and procedure for submitting candidacies for mayor or councillor

The right to submit candidate lists for councillors and mayoral candidacies belongs to registered political parties, individually or in coalition, and groups of voters (independent lists). Independent candidates have been directly affected by the most recent amendments to the Electoral Code. In June 2025, a proposal was submitted to the Assembly to reduce the signature threshold required for independent candidates from 0.95% to 0.5% of registered voters. The proposal, however, did not receive sufficient support and was not adopted³⁰. This initiative followed a Constitutional Court ruling repealing Articles 17 and 18 of the Electoral Code, which had required independent candidates and lists to collect at least 1% of voter signatures in their municipality to be eligible. This effectively abolished the

29 Article 34 of the Law on Local Self-Government, "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 05/16.

30 Radio Free Europe: "The Assembly Did Not Adopt the Amendments to the Electoral Code." Accessed at: (last accessed: 18 September 2025).

highest threshold for signature collection³¹. In such conditions, the State Election Commission (SEC) adopted a formal conclusion³² annulling the previous regulation on signature collection and enacted a new Rulebook³³, under which independent candidates and groups of voters may stand for the 2025 local elections with only two signatures. Later, the Constitutional Court decided not to initiate proceedings to review the constitutionality of this Rulebook, leaving it in force³⁴.

Election campaign³⁵

The election campaign for the 2025 local elections begins 20 days before election day, i.e. at 00:00 on 29 September, and ends at 24:00 on 17 October³⁶. The campaign for the second round runs until 24:00 on 31 October. In both rounds, campaigning is prohibited 24 hours before and on election day. The day before the first round, 18 October, is a pre-election silence day, during which candidates may not campaign and media outlets may not broadcast campaign materials. The same rule applies on 1 November, the day before the second round.

The Electoral Code has undergone several amendments concerning campaign conduct. The March 2024 amendments introduced a new paragraph to Article 83, regulating individual donations to election campaigns. It stipulates that contributions from a natural person may not exceed EUR 3,000, and those from a legal entity may not exceed EUR 30,000, both in denar equivalent. From the confirmation of candidate lists until the official start of the campaign, participants may organise only one public event to promote confirmed lists and programmes, and no campaign funds may be spent during that period³⁷.

31 Decision of the Constitutional Court No. 186/224. Accessed at: <https://ustavensud.mk/archives/34667> (last accessed: 18 September 2025).

32 Conclusion of the State Election Commission on the annulment of the Rulebook regulating the procedure for collecting signatures and determining the notaries, No. 08-563-1 of 20 February 2024. Accessed at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ySAw9lQVzj6w4l9ptHbs33JwVVC6gCD2/view> (last accessed: 18 September 2025).

33 Rulebook regulating the procedure for collecting signatures in support of candidate lists submitted by groups of voters and the manner of determining notaries for the 2025 Local Elections. Accessed at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Cv5oZDTnL4KXwEYf8VSDXv5GQ1wd3QC/view> (last accessed: 18 September 2025).

34 Press conference of President Dr Darko Kostadinovski following the 19th session of the Constitutional Court. Accessed at: <https://ustavensud.mk/archives/35722> (last accessed: 18 September 2025).

35 KAS, IDSCS, Handbook on Parliamentary Elections in the Republic of North Macedonia 2024, second revised edition. Accessed at: <https://izbornaarhiva.mk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/2024-handbook-on-2024-parliamentary-elections-second-updated-mkd-version.pdf> (last accessed: 18 September 2025).

36 Timetable for the implementation of electoral activities for the conduct of elections for members of the municipal councils, the Council of the City of Skopje, and for mayors of the municipalities and the City of Skopje, 2025. Accessed at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yxLT4YsZxAWu4faR_PcTTncylVp1b5GZ/view (last accessed: 18 September 2025).

37 "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia," Law Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Code No. 58/2024.

Role of the media³⁸

During the campaign, private media, online portals, and the public broadcaster must ensure equal, impartial, and balanced access for all electoral programmes and candidates. The Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (AAVMS) monitors media coverage and initiates misdemeanour proceedings in case of violations of the principle of equality. Editors and journalists are prohibited from participating in campaigns; if they do, their professional engagement in the media is suspended until the end of the elections. The Macedonian Radio and Television (MRTV) provides free information on voting and ensures equal media representation, allocating airtime proportionally among the ruling parties, the opposition, and independent candidates. All participants are entitled to a free political presentation. Private broadcasters have no obligation to provide free airtime. From the announcement of elections until the campaign begins, paid political advertising and advertising funded by public resources are prohibited. Media outlets must record and retain their programming for at least 30 days after the elections.

Under the March 2024 amendments, both the public broadcaster and any television stations broadcasting paid political advertisements must ensure that election-related content is available in accessible formats for persons with disabilities, such as sign language, subtitles, audio description, or other accessibility tools, at least once between 16:00 and 24:00. Additionally, Article 75 requires service providers to submit, before the start of the campaign, a schedule to the AAVMS specifying which news editions and other programmes will be broadcast in accessible format. The Agency must then publish this information on its website.

Election observation³⁹

The right to observe elections is granted to accredited observers, authorised by the SEC. Accreditation may be issued to domestic and foreign civil society organisations that have been legally registered for at least one year before the elections and whose statutes include the protection of human rights. Representatives of foreign countries may also observe the elections. Authorised representatives of candidate submitters have the right to appoint their own representative to monitor the work of electoral bodies.

38 Electoral Code (consolidated text). Accessed at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yOTG7wVUyNoUk1_AkIYrNbD4gHQWzS5y/view (last accessed: 9 September 2025).

39 KAS, IDSCS, "Handbook on Local Elections in the Republic of North Macedonia 2021," second revised edition. Available at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/belegexemplar_2021_the_republic_of_north_macedonias_2021_local_elections_handbook_mkd_version.pdf (last accessed: 15 September 2025).

For more information about the Macedonian electoral system and election procedures in the context of local elections, see the Handbook on Local Elections in the Republic of North Macedonia 2021⁴⁰.

40 KAS, IDSCS, "Handbook on Local Elections in the Republic of North Macedonia 2021," second revised edition. Available at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/belegexemplar_2021_the_republic_of_north_macedonias_2021_local_elections_handbook_mkd_version.pdf (last accessed: 24 September 2025).



3

**Political parties, coalitions and
independent movements**

3. Political parties, coalitions and independent movements⁴¹

1. “Your Macedonia” coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE⁴²



VMRO-DPMNE is a party that declares itself as a people's party to the right of center, with an ideological Christian Democrat background.. Since independence, VMRO-DPMNE has been one of the two largest parties in the country. It has participated in almost all parliamentary and local elections, with the exception of the 1994 parliamentary elections when it boycotted the second round. In the previous local elections held in 2021, VMRO-DPMNE and its coalition nominated 63 candidates for mayor and lists for councilors (i.e. 1260 candidates for councilors), and won with 42 mayoral and 469 councilor seats. In 2024,

voters cast their ballots in double elections – regular parliamentary and presidential. In these elections, VMRO-DPMNE with the coalition “Your Macedonia” won 58 parliamentary seats or 14 mandates more than the previous parliamentary composition. They also won the presidential elections, where their candidate for president, Gordana Siljanovska Davkova, won with 561,000 votes, or 65.14% of the votes in the second round of the presidential elections.

From its founding until 2003, president of VMRO-DPMNE was Ljubčo Georgievski. 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 resigned from the position, which was accepted by the Central Committee. At the 16th Extraordinary Congress of VMRO-DPMNE, held in December 2017, Hristijan Mickovski was elected president of the party. In 2021, the 17th Congress was held, where Hristijan Mickovski was re-elected president of VMRO-DPMNE.

⁴¹ The logos of the political parties were taken from the official websites of the respective parties. The internet was used as the source for all logos and photos.

⁴² The order of the participants in the elections is in alphabetical order, starting with the coalitions led by the largest parliamentary groups.



In these local elections, under the slogan **“The right choice. Your man! Your place! For your future!”**, the **“Your Macedonia”** coalition led by **VMRO-DPMNE** will run with 64 candidates for mayor and lists for councilors in 76 municipal councils and the city of Skopje. The coalition is composed of 25 political entities:

1. VMRO-DPMNE;
2. Socialist Party of Macedonia;
3. Democratic Party of Serbs in Macedonia;
4. Democratic Union;
5. MAAK;
6. Serbian Progressive Party in Macedonia;
7. Bosniak People's Party;
8. Democratic Forces of the Roma;
9. PODEM;
10. Party of the Vlachs of Macedonia;
11. VOICE for Macedonia;
12. New Liberal Party;
13. SDU;
14. United Roma of Macedonia;
15. Workers' and Agricultural Party of the Republic of Macedonia;
16. United Party for Equality of the Roma;
17. Dignity;
18. TMRO;
19. United for Macedonia;
20. Macedonian Concept;
21. Party of Croats in Macedonia;
22. Democratic Union of the Vlachs of Macedonia;
23. Coalition of Egyptians;
24. Adnan Cahil and a group of voters;
- and 25. Salko Kuch and a group of voters.

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2. Coalition “Coalition for Local Elections 2025” led by SDSM



The Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) declares itself as a left-of-center party, with a social democratic ideological background. It was founded at a Congress on April 21, 1991, as the legal successor of the Union of Communists of Macedonia - Party for Democratic Transformation (SKM-PDP). The same year, the party changed its name to SDSM and its ideology from a communist to a social democratic party. It has participated in all parliamentary and local elections since independence to date. In the previous local elections, SDSM won power in 16 out of a total of

80 municipalities and lost the mayoral position of the city of Skopje. In the 2024 parliamentary elections, the SDSM-led "For a European Future" coalition received 154,447 votes (15.35%) and secured 18 mandates.

At the same time, in the presidential elections held simultaneously with the parliamentary elections, the SDSM candidate, Stevo Pendarovski, lost in the second round with 251,899 votes (29.25%) against the VMRO-DPMNE candidate, Gordana Siljanovska Davkova, who won 561,000 votes (65.14%).

The party's president from the country's independence and the transformation from SKM-PDP to SDSM in 1991 until 2004 was Branko Crvenkovski. He stepped down from this position due to his victory in the 2004 snap presidential elections and became President of the country.

At an extraordinary congress of SDSM in November 2004, Vlado Bučkovski was elected president, leading the party until its defeat in the 2006 elections. After the elections, Bučkovski was voted out of office, and Radmila Šekerinska was elected party leader. Radmila Šekerinska remained president of SDSM until June 2008, when she resigned irrevocably due to the defeat in the early parliamentary elections. In September 2008, at the 8th Congress of the party, Zoran Zaev was elected acting president. In 2009, after the expiration of the presidential mandate at the party Congress, Branko Crvenkovski returned to lead SDSM.

He was the party leader until 2013, when he stepped down from the position, and the then party president Zoran Zaev was re-elected in his place. In 2021, Dimitar Kovačevski was elected president of the party in the extraordinary internal party elections.

After the defeat in the 2024 parliamentary elections, Dimitar Kovačevski stepped down from the position, and in his place, in the internal party elections held on June 30, 2024, Venko Filipče was elected. In the next internal party elections, held on April 6, 2025, Venko Filipče was re-elected president of SDSM.



In these local elections, under the slogan **“We are fighting for our home”**, the coalition **“Coalition for Local Elections 2025”** led by SDSM will run with 64 candidates for mayor and lists for councilors in 76 municipal councils and the city of Skopje. The coalition is composed of 9 political parties: 1. Social Democratic Union of Macedonia – SDSM; 2. New Social Democratic Party – NSDP; 3. VMRO – People’s Party; 4. Party of the Movement of Turks in Macedonia – PDT; 5. Desnica; 6. Party for Social and Economic Progress – POEN; 7. Party of Democratic Action of Macedonia; 8. Party for Democratic Prosperity of the Roma – PDPR; and 9. Central Democratic Union – CDU.

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www.sdsd.org.mk

3. Coalition “National Alliance for Integration” led by the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI)



The Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) was formed by former members of the former People’s Liberation Army (NLA), that began the armed conflict in 2001. Ideologically, DUI declares itself as a left-center party that advocates for greater rights for Albanians and the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. The party was formed in 2002, and since its foundation until today, the party’s president has been Ali Ahmeti. In the previous local elections in 2021, DUI, under the slogan “Choose life, vote green”, ran mayoral candidates in 19 municipalities and councilor lists in 34 municipalities, and in the municipality of Čaška they ran together with the Alliance for Albanians. In the regular parliamentary elections, held on May 8, 2024, the “European Front” coalition led by DUI won 137,690 votes, or 18 parliamentary seats. In the 2024 presidential elections, DUI nominated Buyar Osmani as its candidate, who won 120,811 votes, or 13.37% of the vote, in the first round, and did not enter the second round of voting.



In the local elections in 2025, the coalition “National Alliance for Integration (NAI)” led by DUI will run under the slogan “Together. Let’s make the change!”. Part of this coalition are the political parties European Democratic Party, People’s Movement, Alliance for Albanians (Ziyadin Sela), Movement of Turks of Macedonia for Justice and Democracy and the Union of Roma. The NAI coalition will run in the elections

with 23 candidates for mayors and 34 lists of candidates for municipal councilors.

Democratic Union for Integration

“Mala Rečica” Str. 1200 Tetovo

press@bdi.mk bdi.mk

<https://bdi.mk/>

4. Coalition “Worth” (VLEN)

The “**Vredi**” coalition includes the political parties Alternative, Besa Movement and Democratic Movement.



Alternativa is a political party that is defined as center-right in the ideological spectrum. The party was formed in 2019. The Central Assembly appointed Afrim Gashi as its first president. The party originates from former members of the Besa Movement, who formed the party after the poor results in the local elections in 2017. The political program is based on four main pillars: Development, Integration, Open Dialogue and Justice.



Besa Movement is a political party founded in 2014. The party's president is Bilal Kasami. In the 2016 parliamentary elections, Besa won five seats, becoming the second largest party in the Albanian political bloc in the Parliament. In the 2020 parliamentary elections, the party participated in a coalition led by SDSM and won 4 seats.



The Democratic Movement is a political party formed by supporters of Izet Mexhiti from the so-called "Fire Group" of DUI. Due to internal disagreements and revolt against the party, the Democratic Movement broke away and began to act independently since 2023. Respect for human rights, the rule of law, the advancement of the rights and status of Albanians, and the achievement of economic well-being are just a few of the core values that the Democratic Movement stands for.

The Vlen coalition won 106,937 votes, or 14 seats, in the 2024 parliamentary elections. In the presidential elections, held in parallel with the 2024 parliamentary elections, the Vredi coalition ran Arben Taravari as its presidential candidate. He won 83,337 votes (9.20%) in the first round, which was not enough to qualify for the second round.



Under the motto "One Voice", the "Vlen" coalition will participate in the 2025 local elections with 20 mayoral candidates and 28 councilor lists in different municipalities. The "Vredi"

coalition was formed in 2024, just before the parliamentary elections, as an alliance of four political parties, the three current members and the political wing of Arben Taravari from the Alliance for Albanians party. At the beginning of 2025, this wing left the coalition.

Alternative

Blvd. "Krstev Petkov Misirkov" No. 11/1, 68a, 1000 Skopje
kontakt@alternativa.mk
<https://alternativa.org.mk/>

Movement Besa

"Hristijan Todorovski - Karpoš" Str, no. 84a, 1000 Skopje
kontakt@levizjabesa.mk
<https://www.levizjabesa.mk/>

Democratic Movement

Goce Delčev Blvd., No. 10, 1000 Skopje
info@levizjademokratike.mk
<https://levizjademokratike.mk/>

5. Coalition "Experience for Success"

The **"Experience for Success"** coalition is an electoral coalition composed of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the Civic Option for Macedonia (GROM), Integra - Macedonian Conservative Party, and the Party for the Full Emancipation of the Roma (PCER).



The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) is a political party with a liberal orientation. It was formed on 19 April 1997 by the unification of the Democratic Party and the Liberal Party, thus inheriting their legal and political tradition. The first president of the newly formed party was Petar Gošev, the former leader of the Democratic Party. The current president of the party is Monika Zajkova.

In the 2021 local elections, the LDP ran as part of the "Decisive for Change" coalition, formed together with the Democratic Renewal of Macedonia (DOM). Out of a total of 19 mayoral candidates and 48 councilor lists presented by this coalition, they won one mayoral and 29 councilor seats. In the 2024 parliamentary elections, they were part of the "For a European Future" coalition, a coalition led by SDSM, consisting of 15 political parties. In these elections, "For a European Future" won 18 parliamentary seats.



Civic Option for Macedonia (GROM) is a political party founded in 2013. The party's president is Stevčo Jakimovski. GROM's principles are based on the original principles of democratic living: freedom of personal choice and the creation of a fairer society for every citizen. In the 2021 local elections, GROM won one mayoral and two councilor seats. In the 2024 parliamentary elections, GROM led the "Brave for Macedonia" coalition, which also included INTEGRA -

Macedonian Conservative Party and the Party for the Full Emancipation of the Roma of Republic of North Macedonia (PCER). This coalition won 4,522 votes (0.45%), which was not enough to secure a parliamentary seat.



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

In the previous local elections, held in 2021, the party ran independently with its own mayoral candidates in 10 municipalities and the City of Skopje and a councilor list in 16 municipalities and the City of Skopje, but did not win a single mayoral or councilor position. In the 2024 parliamentary elections, it ran within the framework of the "Brave for Macedonia" coalition, together with GROM and PCER, but did not secure a parliamentary seat.



The **Party for the Full Emancipation of the Roma (PCER)** is a political party representing the interests of the Roma community in North Macedonia. It was founded on August 12, 1990 by Faik Abdi. The current president of the party is Samka Ibraimovski.

In the 2021 local elections, they ran as part of the “Best for Our Municipality” coalition, led by SDSM. In the 2024 parliamentary elections, they ran as part of the “Brave for Macedonia” coalition, together with GROM and Integra, but did not secure a parliamentary seat.



ПОВЕЌЕ РЕЗУЛТАТИ
ПОМАЛКУ ИЗГОВОРИ

УСПЕХ

The **“Experience for Success”** coalition, under the motto “More results, fewer excuses”, will run in the local elections with 10 candidates for mayor and 36 councilor lists.

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)

14-1/7 Vasil Glavinov St., 1000 Skopje
office@ldp.mk
<https://ldp.mk/>

Citizens' Option for Macedonia

21 Pračka Street, 1000 Skopje info@grom.mk
<https://grom.mk/>

Integra

“Metodija Šatorov - Šarlo” Street, No. 1-3/11, 1000 Skopje
contact@integra.org.mk
<https://integra.org.mk/>

Party for the Full Emancipation of the Roma (PCER)

Ivo Lola Ribar St., No. BB, 1200 Tetovo

pol.partija_pcer@yahoo.com

6. Coalition “For a Green Future” led by the Democratic Renewal of Macedonia

The Coalition “For a Green Future” is an electoral coalition led by the Democratic Renewal of Macedonia (DOM), in cooperation with the Movement for Democracy, Rights and Freedom (DPS) and local civic initiatives.



Democratic Renewal of Macedonia (DOM)

was formed in 2006. In the 2006 parliamentary elections, DOM ran independently with the slogan “To remain a human being” and managed to get one MP, although in the following elections it integrated and acted through coalitions.

The president of the party from its founding until 2018 was Liljana Popovska. At the 4th Congress of the party, Maja Moračnin was elected as the new president, who still holds that same position.

In the 2021 local elections, DOM ran as part of the “Decisive for Change” coalition, formed together with the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Out of a total of 19 mayoral candidates and 48 councilor lists presented by this coalition, they won one mayoral and 29 councilor seats in the 2021 elections. In the 2024 parliamentary elections, they were part of the “For a European Future” coalition, a coalition led by SDSM, consisting of 15 political parties. In these elections, “For a European Future” won 18 parliamentary seats.



The Movement for Democracy, Rights, Freedom

(MPD) is a political party founded in 2021. At the founding assembly held in Bitola, Edin Jakupović was elected its president. In the 2021 local elections, this party ran independently with its own councilor list in Studeničani and with its own candidate for mayor in the Municipality of Tetovo, winning one councilor seat.



The **coalition “For a Green Future”** was formed in September 2025 under the motto “Green, fair and European future”, with the aim of promoting sustainable development, environmental protection and greater transparency at local level. In these local elections, it will run with 12 lists for municipal councils and the city of Skopje.

Democratic Renewal of Macedonia (DOM)

5 Dame Gruev Street, 1000 Skopje

dommakedonija@yahoo.com

<https://dom.org.mk/>

Movement for Democracy, Rights, Freedom (DRF)

74 Metropolitan Teodosij Gologanov Street, 1000 Skopje

infodps.org@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/DemokratijaPravaSlobodaDPS>

Political parties participating in the elections:

1. Bosniak Democratic Union (BDS)



The **Bosniak Democratic Union** was founded on March 1, 2018 on right-of-center ideological principles, and its president is Munir Kolasinac. In the 2024 parliamentary elections, it ran in the “European Front” coalition led by DUI. In these elections, the party runs independently with its own candidate for mayor in the Municipality of Šuto Orizari. It also runs with its own candidates for councilors in 7 municipalities and the City of Skopje.

Bosniak Democratic Union (BDS)

bosnjackidemokratskisavez@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/bds.org.mk/>

2. VMRO-People's Party



VMRO-People's Party was formed on July 4, 2004 in Skopje, by former Prime Minister Ljubčo Georgievski. Ideologically, this party is positioned center-right, promoting democratic, conservative and Christian Democratic principles. In previous election cycles, the party ran in coalitions led by SDSM. In these elections, the party is running independently with a candidate for mayor in the Municipality of Tetovo, while in the other municipalities they are running as part of the coalition led by SDSM.

VMRO People's Party

contact@vmro-np.org.mk

<https://www.facebook.com/vmronarodnapartija/>

3. Political party Civic Initiative - GRIN



Citizens' Initiative "GRIN" is a political party-initiative in North Macedonia founded on September 10, 2025, with headquarters in Skopje. The initiative presents itself as a new, civic platform that unites professionals and activists, competing in local elections with an emphasis on transparency, citizen involvement in decision-making, development of infrastructure, health and education, and the fight against partisanship of public functions. In these debut elections, they compete with a candidate for mayor in the Municipality of Rosoman, as well as with councilor lists in 9 municipalities.

Political party Civic Initiative - GRIN

gragjanskainicijativa.grin@gmail.com

4. ZNAM Movement

The ZNAM Movement – For Our Macedonia is a political party with a leftist ideology. The party was formed from the movement that emerged from the dissatisfied membership of SDSM, which, led by the then MP Dimitrievski, independently participated in the local elections in 2021 under the motto “For Our Kumanovo”.



With the victory of the mayoral candidate, Maksim Dimitrievski, the civic movement grew into a political party. On October 9, 2023, a founding Congress is held, where the current mayor of Kumanovo and candidate for president of the country in the 2024 presidential elections, Maksim Dimitrievski, is named president of the party. In the 2024 parliamentary elections, the party ran

independently and secured six parliamentary seats. In the presidential elections, held simultaneously with the parliamentary elections, the party nominated Maksim Dimitrievski as its candidate; he won 83,856 votes (9.26%) in the first round, but did not advance to the second round. In the 2025 local elections, the party runs independently, with candidates for mayor in two municipalities, Kumanovo and Centar, and with candidates for councilors in more than 50 municipalities.

ZNAM Movement – For Our Macedonia

“St. Cyril and Methodius” Str., No. 50/1-1, 1000 Skopje

contact@dvizenjeznam.org.mk

<https://dvizenjeznam.org.mk/>

5. The Democratic Party of Roma

The Democratic Party of Roma was founded in 2013, the party's president is Milazim Sakipov. It competed in a coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE in the past local elections in 2021 and 2017 and in all parliamentary election cycles from 2014 to 2024, while in the local elections of 2025 it competes independently with a councilor list in the municipality of Rankovce.

The Democratic Party of Roma

"383" Str., no. 24, 1000 Skopje

dprpart1@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064274460538>

6. Democratic Party of the Turks in Macedonia



The Democratic Party of Turks in Macedonia (DPTM)

is a political party representing ethnic Turks in the Republic of North Macedonia. The party is led by Beykan Ilyas. For the 2021 local elections, the Democratic Party of Turks proposed 5 candidates for mayor in Vrapčište, Dolneni, Konče, Plasnica and Centar Župa, additionally with its own list of councilors in 15 municipalities. In other municipalities, the party is running in coalition with SDSM. In these elections, the party won 17 council seats. In the 2024 parliamentary elections, the Democratic Party of Turks ran as part of the "European Front" coalition, led by DUI, when together with six other coalition partners, they won 18 parliamentary seats. In the local elections in 2025, DPTM will participate with mayoral candidates in three municipalities, and in 24 municipalities, it will run with its own councilors lists. In municipalities where it does not have its own mayoral candidates, the party will support VMRO-DPMNE representatives, in accordance with the reached strategic agreement for mutual support.

Democratic Party of the Turks in Macedonia

"Stiv Naumov" Street 1, 1000 Skopje

info@tdp.org.mk

<https://tdp.org.mk/>

7. Democratic Forces of the Roma



Democratic Forces of the Roma is a political party founded in 2011. The party's president is Shaban Saliu. Since its founding in 2006, the party has participated in the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE in four parliamentary elections in 2006, 2011, 2014 and 2016. The party had one seat in the Parliament between 2006 and 2008. In the 2020 parliamentary elections, the party participated in a coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE. In the 2021 local elections, it ran in a coalition with the Roma People's Party with one candidate for mayor and a councilor list in the

municipality of Šuto Orizari and won one councilor seat. In the 2025 local elections, the party will again run in a coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, which will run with 64 candidates for mayor and lists for councilors in 76 municipal councils and the City of Skopje.

Democratic Forces of the Roma

Indira Gandhi St. 56, 1000 Skopje

contact@dsr.com.mk

<https://dsr.com.mk/>

8. United Macedonia



United Macedonia is a political party founded in 2002 under the name "People's Movement for Macedonia". In 2018, the party's Central Committee decided to change its name to "United Macedonia", as well as a complete change in the party's policies regarding the European integration process. The party operates with open Euro-Atlantic skepticism, and in accordance with its Statute advocates membership in the Eurasian Economic Union and a strategic partnership with Russia. Its co-founder

and president is Janko Bacev. In the previous local elections in 2021, it secured one councilor seat. In the parliamentary elections in 2024, it ran independently with candidate lists in five constituencies, but failed to win a parliamentary seat.

United Macedonia

10 Dame Gruev Street, 1000 Skopje

press@edinstvenamakedonija.mk

<https://edinstvenamakedonija.mk/>

9. The Left



The political party The Left was founded in 2015. Statutorily, the party has an explicitly leftist ideology and advocates for leftist values, including anti-capitalism, anti-nationalism, anti-militarism, anti-clericalism, and anti-conservatism. The party focuses on workers' and basic human rights, and as a party advocates, above all, for the poor, the underprivileged, the marginalized, and the disenfranchised. The initiative to form The Left came from members of the Movement for Social Justice "Lenka",

members of the leftist movement "Solidarity", members of the Communist Party of Macedonia, trade unionists, activists and leftist individuals. Until 2019, The Left has a collective presidency, the Presidium, consisting of seven members with an imperative mandate. At a regular session of the Plenum of the political party The Left, a new party statute is adopted, which makes a change in the organizational structure, introducing the position of president with a four-year term. The current president of The Left is Dimitar Apasiev. In the previous local elections in 2021, The Left submitted its candidate lists for the election of mayor in 8 municipalities, as well as candidate lists for councilors in 37 municipalities and the City of Skopje, and won 49 councilor seats. In the parliamentary elections in 2024, it ran independently and won six parliamentary mandates. In the presidential elections held in parallel with the parliamentary elections in 2024, The Left nominated Biljana Vankovska Cvetkovska for the presidential office. She won 41,331 votes (4.56%) in the first round of elections, but did not advance to the second round. In the local elections in 2025, the party nominated 20 candidates for mayor, and has its own candidate lists for councilors in 54 municipalities.

Political Party The Left

Gane Todorovski Street, No. 24/1-1, 1000 Skopje

contact@levica.mk

<https://levica.mk/>

10. Macedonian Era Third / Macedonian Independent Lists - Sovereignists



The political party **“Macedonian Era Third/ Macedonian Independent Lists – Sovereignists”** was formed in 2020, and advocates for the protection of Macedonian national interests and the liberation of the country from globalist slavery. The president of this party is Goran Taskovski. The party's headquarter is located in Bitola.

In the local elections in 2025, this party will run with its own lists for councilors in the City of Skopje, Bitola, Prilep, Kičevo, Novaci and Kumanovo as well as with 4 candidacies for mayor for the City of Skopje, Bitola, Novaci and Prilep.

Macedonian Era Third / Sovereignists

ul. “Kliment Ohridski -Širok Sokak”, no. BB, 7000 Bitola

https://www.facebook.com/makedonskinezavisnilistiE3/?locale=mk_MK

11. Party for the Movement of Turks in Macedonia



Party for the Movement of Turks in Macedonia (PDT) — is a political party founded in 1992. For more than a decade, the party has participated in all elections in coalitions led by SDSM. In these elections, they are running with their own candidate for mayor in the Municipality of Centar Župa, as well as with candidate lists for councillors in Centar Župa and Plasnica. In the remaining municipalities, they are running as part of the Coalition for Local Elections 2025 led by SDSM.

Party for the Movement of Turks in Macedonia

www.thp.mk

thpmakedonya@yahoo.com

12. Serbian party in Macedonia



Српска Странка во Македонија

The political party **“Serbian Party in Macedonia” (SSM)** is a party of Serbs in the Republic of North Macedonia, formed on March 12, 2014. The president of this party is Miroslav Jovanović. The headquarters of SSM is in Kumanovo. In the local elections in 2025, this party will run with its own councilor list and a candidate for mayor in Staro Nagoricane.

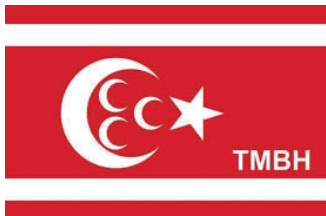
Serbian Party in Macedonia

12 Gjorce Petrov Street, 1300 Kumanovo

srpskastrankavomk@hotmail.com

<https://ssm.mk/>

13. Movement for National Unity of the Turks (DNET)



The Movement for National Unity of the Turks (DNET) is one of the political parties that advocates the rights of the Turkish minority in the Republic of North Macedonia. Ideologically, this political party is positioned in the center. The president of the party is Erdoğan Saraç. The party first participated in the parliamentary elections in

2006. In the 2021 local elections, DNET ran in a coalition with VMRO-DPMNE, while outside the coalition, the party had its own candidate for mayor in Centar Župa, and candidates for councillors in five municipalities where it won two councillor seats. In the parliamentary elections, they ran within the framework of the “Your Macedonia” coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, a coalition that won 58 parliamentary mandates in the elections. In the 2025 local elections, DNET is running independently.

Movement for National Unity of the Turks (DNET)

“Major Čede Filiposki”, No. 96, 1230 Gostivar

tmbh-2006@t.mk

<https://tmbh.org.mk/>

14. Democrats



The party **Democrats** was founded in 2018, and Jorgo Ogdenovski was elected president of the party at the Founding Assembly. The party advocates for democratic values and respect for fundamental human rights, including voting and expressing opinions in elections or referendums, and respecting the will of citizens. In the local elections in 2021, it ran independently with 6

candidates for mayor in the municipalities of Bitola, Dolneni, Struga, Gyorče Petrov, Centar and the City of Skopje and with 10 candidate lists for municipal councils, without a winner among the candidates. In the parliamentary elections in 2024, it ran with its own candidate lists in all six electoral districts, but failed to win a parliamentary seat. In these local elections, it is running with 7 candidates for mayor and 7 lists of candidates for councilors.

Political Party Democrats

Str. "Boris Trajkovski", No. 24-1/2, 1000 Skopje

contact@demokrati.mk

<https://demokrati.mk>

15. Worker's Party



The Workers' Party was founded in 2013. The party advocates for reducing the number of ministries and municipalities, electing judges through direct elections, decentralization and increasing the powers of local self-government, and etc. The party's president and founder is Goran Zafirovski. The party has participated in two parliamentary election cycles in 2014 and 2016, through participation in coalitions. In the 2024 parliamentary elections, the party ran independently, but did not

achieve significant results. In the 2025 local elections, the Workers' Party will again run independently with a councilor lists in 3 municipalities and the City of Skopje, and will participate in the mayoral election in 4 municipalities and the City of Skopje.

Workers' Party

ul. "Anton Popov", no. 103-b, 1000 Skopje
rabotnicka_partija@yahoo.com
<https://rabotnickapartija.org.mk/>

16.Homeland Macedonia (Rodina Macedonia)



The Homeland Macedonia party was founded in 2019 and is governed by the Presidency as a collective governing body. Statutorily, the party is against the country's membership in the European Union, and advocates for withdrawal from the NATO alliance, while advocating for accession to the Eurasian Economic Union and BRICS, as well as a strategic partnership with Russia.

The Chairman of the Presidency is Zoran Jovančev. In the 2024 parliamentary elections the Homeland Macedonia party ran in all six constituencies with candidate lists i and won a negligible number of votes. In the last local elections in 2021, the party ran independently with a councillor list in 9 municipalities and the City of Skopje, and with mayoral candidates in 2 municipalities and the City of Skopje. In the local elections in 2025, Homeland Macedonia is again running independently with a councillor list in the municipality of Konce and the City of Skopje, and in the mayoral elections, it is participating in Gevgelija, Sopište and the City of Skopje.

Homeland Macedonia

Nikola Parapunov Street, No. 3A/52, 1000 Skopje
organizacija@rodina.org.mk
<https://rodina.org.mk>

17. The Union of Roma from Macedonia



The Union of Roma from Macedonia is a political party formed in 1996 and its main goal is the protection of the rights of Roma in the Republic of North Macedonia. On the political scene in the Republic of North Macedonia, the party is known for its founder, the late Amdi Bajram, who was a member of parliament in several parliamentary compositions. In the local elections in 2025, this party will run with its own councilor list and a candidate for mayor in Šuto Orizari.

Union of Roma from Macedonia

“Vašingtonska” Str, no. 67, 1000 Skopje

sojuznaromite@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/p/Sojuz-na-Romite-SRM-100068890570364/>

18. Your Party



Your Party was founded in 2020, and the founders are lawyer Aleksandar Torteovski and professor Mirjana Najčevska. In accordance with the party's statute, “Your Party” is a democratic party whose activity is based on combining policies for social change with policies for solving major environmental problems in national and international frameworks, with the aim of creating a just, fair and sustainable society. In the local elections in 2025, “Your” party submitted lists for councillors in the

City of Skopje and Kavadarci and one candidacy for mayor of the City of Skopje.

Your party

“Makedonija” Str., no. 25-1/6, 1000 Skopje

contact@tvoja.org.mk

<https://tvoja.org.mk/>

19. Permanent Macedonian Radical Unification (TMRO)



Permanent Macedonian Radical Unity (TMRO)

is a political party founded in 2002. Ideologically, the party has a right-wing orientation, promoting values of conservatism and Macedonian patriotism, understanding the state as a national state of the Macedonian people. The party's president and founder is Vančo Šehtanski. In the parliamentary elections of 2006 and 2008, the party achieved

insignificant results. In the parliamentary elections of 2011, the party became part of a coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, with which it also competed in the elections of 2014 and 2016. In the local elections of 2017, TMRO competed independently, with its own candidates for mayor in the Municipality of Kavadarci and the City of Skopje, while in the local elections of 2021, TMRO competed independently with its own councilor list in 16 municipalities and the City of Skopje, and in the mayoral elections it participated in 8 municipalities and the City of Skopje.

In the local elections in 2025, TMRO again stands alone with a councilor list in almost half as many municipalities (9) and the City of Skopje, and in the mayoral election it participates in 3 municipalities and the City of Skopje.

Permanent Macedonian Radical Unity

ul. "Bulevar Jane Sandanski", no. 67, 1000 Skopje

20. Union of Roma - Skopje



The Union of Roma - Skopje is a newly formed party, which has been operating since August 25, 2025. In the local elections, they will run with two councilor lists for the City of Skopje and the Municipality of Šuto Orizari.

Union of Roma - Skopje

32 Melnička Street, 1000 Skopjeunijanaromi@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61555689587174>

Independent movements participating in the elections:

The previous local elections in 2021 were characterized by the significantly increased participation of independent lists and mayoral candidates in most municipalities and the City of Skopje. Independent candidates, often in the form of an independent movement, won 67 council seats. The movement "For Our Kumanovo", which later grew into the political party ZNAM, won 8 council seats and one mayor in the Municipality of Kumanovo. The civic initiative "Chance for Center" won 3 mandates in the Municipality of Centar. The initiative "Differently" from Bitola won 3 council seats in the elections, and the leader of the list is also the current president of the Council in the Municipality of Bitola. The civic initiative "Enough is Enough", which ran with its own councilor lists in Strumica, Bosilovo and Novo Selo, won 3 mandates, "For the Protection of Karpoš" won 2 councilor mandates in the Council of the Municipality of Karpoš, and the movement "Green Human City" won 2 mandates in the Council of the City of Skopje. The initiative "Better for Tetovo" won two councilors, and "Together for Debrca" won a mayoral and one councilor position in the Council of the Municipality of Debrca. The remaining 43 seats went to other independent lists.

Their programs and activities in the past 4 years have mostly focused on local problems and policies, most often in the area of green policies, controlled urbanization, transparency and accountability in municipal governance. The promotion of their work is mostly done through social networks, and some of them also have their own websites.

Independent movements are also participating in the 2025 local elections in most municipalities and the City of Skopje. According to SEC data, a group of voters supported 56 independent candidates for mayor and 67 independent candidate lists for council members.



4

Overview of mayoral candidates

4. Overview of mayoral candidates⁴³

This section provides an overview of the mayoral candidates participating in the 2025 local elections. The nominees in 29 municipalities and in the City of Skopje⁴⁴ are presented with their biographies and photographs⁴⁵, while candidates in the remaining municipalities are listed only by their names and surnames, together with the entity that submitted their candidacy. The detailed overview focuses on the larger municipalities located in urban areas and includes all municipalities within the City of Skopje. The selection of municipalities featured in this handbook was based on several criteria: their urban status, population size—with priority given to larger municipalities—the ethnic composition of the population, ensuring the inclusion of as many multi-ethnic municipalities as possible, and the overall number of nominated mayoral candidates.



City of Skopje

Area	1854 km ²
Population	526 502
Ethnic composition	Macedonians (58.71%)
	Albanians (22.85%)
	Roma (3.51%)
	Serbs (1.80%)
	Turks (1.62%)
Number of council members	45
Budget for 2025	7 061 757 000
Address	Ilinden Boulevard 82, Skopje
Telephone	02/ 3297 204
Website	http://www.skopje.gov.mk

⁴³ All photographs were sourced from the official websites of the political parties and the official social media profiles of the candidates.

⁴⁴ The presentation of mayoral candidates in the 29 municipalities and the City of Skopje follows the alphabetical order of the first letter of the candidates' surnames.

⁴⁵ Due to a lack of available information, biographies and/or photographs are not provided for certain candidates. The overview of mayoral candidates is based on the list of officially announced candidates published by the State Election Commission. The official list is available at <https://candidatelist.sec.mk/>

Mayoral candidates for the City of Skopje



Bashkim Bakiu (VLEN) is the Director of the Directorate for General Services at the University Clinical Centre – Skopje. He is the founder of the Institute for Policy Research and Good Governance (IPRGG) and has previously headed the Research Centre of the Alliance for Albanians. Bakiu has ten years of professional experience in the non-governmental sector and has worked as a consultant for the Ministry of Local Self-Government and the Ministry of Justice. He completed his undergraduate studies in Political Science at Ss.

Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje and earned his master's degree through a joint programme of the Universities of Trento, Corvinus, and Ljubljana.



Orce Gjorgjievski (VMRO-DPMNE and coalition) has served as the Mayor of the Municipality of Kisela Voda since 2021. Prior to that, from 2017 to 2021, he was a VMRO-DPMNE councillor in the Municipal Council of Kisela Voda. Gjorgjievski has professional experience in the private sector and has been active within the higher party structures of VMRO-DPMNE. He graduated from the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus I," Department of Political Studies, and holds a master's degree in Human Resource Management.



Goran Markovski (supported by Independent Together) is a professor and the Dean of the Faculty of Civil Engineering in Skopje. He earned his bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees at the Faculty of Civil Engineering – Skopje, part of Ss. Cyril and Methodius University.



Amar Mecinović (The Left) has been a Member of Parliament since 2024. He is a member of the Praesidium and serves as the spokesperson for the Left (Levica), responsible for public communication. From 2022 to 2024, he served as a member of the City of Skopje's Council. Mecinović holds a degree in Political Science from the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus I" in Skopje.



Skender Rexhepi (DUI and coalition) is a current Member of Parliament serving his second term in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia. In the past, he served as the coordinator of the parliamentary group of Alternativa / Alliance for Albanians, and in 2023, he founded his own political party, the Populi Movement. He graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy.



Aleksandar Torteovski (Your Party) is a lawyer and the founder of the political party Your Party.



Aleksandar Trajanovski (Coalition “Experience for Success”) has served as a member of the Council of the City of Skopje for two consecutive terms (2017–2025) and was, until recently, the Deputy Mayor of the City of Skopje.



Kaja Šukova (SDSM and coalition) served as the Minister of Environment of the Republic of North Macedonia from 2023 to 2024. Prior to that, she held the position of State Secretary in the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning. Shukova graduated from the Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, with key qualifications in environmental management, sustainable development, and the protection of air, water, soil, and natural resources from pollution.

Other candidates:

1. Srdjan Amet – Union of Roma Skopje
2. Vangel Božinoski – Rodina Macedonia
3. Demir Ismail – Union of Roma
4. Zoran Jovanoski – United Macedonia
5. Vladimir Kunovski – Workers’ Party
6. Sasho Manevski – Group of Voters Sasho Manevski
7. Dragan Nikolovski – Group of Voters Dragan Nikolovski
8. Aleksandar Rashković – TMRO



**Municipality of
Aerodrom**

Area	20 km ²
Population	77 735
Ethnic composition	Macedonians (85.22%) Serbs (2.77%) Albanians (1.09%)
Number of council members	27
Budget for 2025	1 530 128 000
Address	Jane Sandanski Boulevard 109b, Skopje
Telephone	02/ 2400 970
Website	http://www.aerodrom.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Aerodrom



Marjan Dimitriev (The Left) is currently employed at a regional real estate company. His previous experience includes work in the banking sector and consultancy in entrepreneurship and business development. Dimitriev holds a degree in Economics from the Faculty of Economics at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje.



Dejan Miteski (VMRO and coalition) has served as Acting Mayor of the Municipality of Aerodrom since July 2024. He is the former President of the Municipal Council (2021–2024) and previously served as a councillor (2013–2017). He has significant experience working in several state institutions. Miteski holds a law degree from the Faculty of Law “Iustinianus I” at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University and a master's degree from the University American College – Skopje.



Aleksandar Trajanovski (SDSM and coalition) is an orthopaedist and traumatologist, and until recently served as Director of the University Clinic for Orthopaedic Diseases "TOARILUC" – Skopje. Trajanovski has been actively involved in the work of several expert commissions at the clinic and is a licensed court expert in the field of orthopaedics and traumatology. He graduated from the Faculty of Medicine at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, where he also completed his doctoral dissertation in 2022.

Other candidates:

1. Dejan Lazarevski – Experience for Success (LDP, GROM, Integra, PCER)
2. Vladimir Mihajlovski – TMRO



Municipality of Butel

Area	57 km ²
Population	37 968
Ethnic composition	Macedonians (44.80%)
	Albanians (37.12%)
	Turks (3.46%)
	Bosniaks (2.98%)
	Serbs (1.60%)
	Roma (1.32%)
Number of council members	19
Budget for 2025	789 624 173
Address	Butelska Street 4, Skopje
Telephone	02/ 2600 506
Website	http://www.opstinabutel.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Butel



Isamedin Azizi (DUI and coalition) is a research associate and assistant professor at the Institute of National History and a member of the Joint Multidisciplinary Expert Commission on Historical and Educational Issues between the Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of Bulgaria.



Darko Kostovski (VMRO-DPMNE and coalition) has been serving as the Mayor of the Municipality of Butel since 2021. He previously served as a councillor in the Municipal Council of Butel (2013–2017) and as a Member of Parliament in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia (2020–2021). His professional career began as an adviser in the Cabinet of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy (2014–2017). Alongside his political career, he has also been the selector and coach of the Macedonian national taekwondo team. Kostovski

holds a degree in Political Science from the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus I" in Skopje, where he also earned his master's degree in Applied Politics and Political System.



Olivera Livrinić (SDSM and coalition) is a current councillor in the Municipal Council of Butel. She works at the Ministry of Culture as Head of the Sector for the Protection of Cultural Heritage. She graduated in Art History with Archaeology from Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, where she also earned a master's degree in Human Resource Management.



Municipality of Gazi Baba

Area	92 km ²
Population	69 626
Ethnic composition	Macedonians(64.98%) Albanians (20.32%) Roma (2.76%) Serbs (1.91%) Bosniaks (1.08%)
Number of council members	27
Budget for 2025	1 693 797 328
Address	Arhimedova Street 2, Skopje
Telephone	02/ 3226 655
Website	http://www.gazibaba.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Gazi Baba



Vlatko Mitovski (SDSM and coalition) is the current President of the Municipal Organisation of SDSM in Gazi Baba. He previously served as Director of the Public Utility Enterprise in Gazi Baba.



Boban Stefkovski (VMRO-DPMNE and coalition) has been serving as the Mayor of the Municipality of Gazi Baba since 2021. He previously served as a member of the Municipal Council of Gazi Baba (2009–2013), State Secretary in the Ministry of Defence, and as an associate and State Counsellor in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. He graduated as a professor of Defence and Protection from Ss. Cyril and Methodius University and obtained his master's degree in Security Studies from the same university.



Zlatko Trenchevski (The Left) is a former owner of a private company and has served as a manager at “Hotel Continental.” He also has experience working with international companies such as “Amazon Germany” and “Kromberg & Schubert,” where he was a quality control team manager. Trenchevski holds a degree in Metallurgical Engineering and has over three decades of professional experience.

Other candidates:

1. Tone Dimkovski – Workers’ Party
2. Marija Majkić – United Macedonia
3. Zoran Petkovski – Democrats
4. Vlatko Utevski – Macedonian Third Era / Macedonian Sovereignists



Municipality of Gjorče Petrov

Area	67 km ²
Population	44 844
Ethnic composition	Macedonians (80.21%) Albanians (3.94%) Serbs (2.82%) Roma (2.38%) Bosniaks (1.02%)
Number of council members	23
Budget for 2025	1 029 338 033
Address	Gjorče Petrov Street 73, Skopje
Telephone	02/ 2039 307
Website	http://www.opstinagpetrov.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Gjorče Petrov



Kostadin Acevski (SDSM and coalition) is a former Member of Parliament in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, serving from 2016 to 2020. In the past, he held the position of Acting Director of "Makedonija Pat" and Acting Director of the Administration for Hydrometeorological Services. He has also served as a member of the Executive Board of SDSM. Acevski holds a degree in Electrical Engineering from the Faculty of Electrical Engineering at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje.



Aleksandar Dimitrijević (The Left) is a lawyer and the founder and owner of a law office established in 2013. He graduated from the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus" at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje.



Aleksandar Stojkoski (VMRO-DPMNE and coalition) has been serving as the Mayor of the Municipality of Gjorče Petrov since 2021. Previously, from April 2009 to May 2014, he held the position of President of the Municipal Council of Gjorče Petrov, and from May 2014 to December 2016, he served as a Member of Parliament in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. Before entering public office, he worked as a specialist radiologist and assistant doctoral researcher at the Faculty of Medicine, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University – Skopje. He graduated from the Faculty of Medicine in Skopje.

Other candidates:

1. Ljupčo Janevski – Experience for Success (LDP, GROM, Integra, PCER)



**Municipality of
Karpoš**

Area	35 km ²
Population	63 760
Ethnic composition	Macedonians (80.94%) Albanians (3.64%) Serbs (2.56%)
Number of council members	27
Budget for 2025	1 587 617 000
Address	Radika Street 9, Skopje
Telephone	02/ 3061 353
Website	http://www.karpos.gov.mk

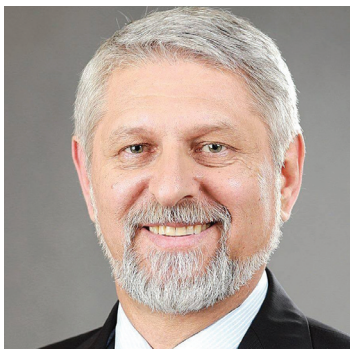
Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Karposh



Nevena Georgievska (Independents for Karposh) is a current councillor of the civic initiative Independents for Karposh in the Municipal Council of Karposh. She holds a degree in Electrical Engineering, Informatics, and Automation from the Faculty of Electrical Engineering – Skopje.



Antonio Dimitrov (The Left) is the current Director of the Cultural Information Centre – Skopje. He graduated as a professor of philosophy and holds a master's degree in Communications and New Media, with additional education in law, journalism, and graphic design.



Stevčo Jakimovski (Coalition “Experience for Success”) is the current Mayor of the Municipality of Karposh. He is the founder and president of the political party GROM. Jakimovski is a former Member of Parliament and has served as Minister of Economy (2003–2004) and Minister of Labour and Social Policy (2004–2006). He has held the position of Mayor of Karposh multiple times (2000–2002; 2009–2017; and again since 2021). He graduated from the Faculty of Economics in Skopje.



Sotir Lukrovski (VMRO-DPMNE and coalition) is the Director of the Sales and Marketing Operations Department at Alkaloid Kons, as well as a civic activist and advocate for the rights of Macedonians in Greece. Lukrovski holds a degree in Economics.



Maja Mojsova-Mijovska (SDSM and coalition) is a medical doctor, specialist in anaesthesiology and intensive care, former National Coordinator for Transplantation, and former Head of the Clinic for Anaesthesia, Resuscitation and Intensive Care (KARIL). She is the President of the Association of Anaesthesiologists and has furthered her education in several European countries. In 2016, she obtained the title of Doctor of Science in the field of transplantation from the Faculty of Medicine in Skopje.



Municipality of Kisela Voda

Area	47 km ²
Population	61 965
Ethnic composition	Macedonians (83.97%) Serbs (1.54%) Turks (1.18%) Vlachs (1.03%)
Number of council members	27
Budget for 2025	1 301 699 958
Address	Petar Deljan Street 17, Skopje
Telephone	02/ 2785 400
Website	http://www.kiselavoda.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Kisela Voda



Jane Acevski (The Left) is the Head of the Department of Botany and Dendrology and a professor at the Faculty of Forestry in Skopje. He earned his bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees at the Faculty of Forestry in Skopje.



Beti Stamenkoska-Trajkoska (VMRO-DPMNE and coalition) has been serving as a Member of Parliament since 2020. She has been a member of the Executive Committee of the VMRO-DPMNE Women's Union since 2018. Stamenkoska-Trajkoska holds a degree in Geography and a master's degree in Human Resource Management from the University of Tourism and Management in Skopje (UTMS).



Goran Trajkovski (SDSM and coalition) is the President of the Municipal Organisation of SDSM in Kisela Voda and the former Director of the State Market Inspectorate.

Other candidates:

1. Oliver Popovski – Experience for Success (LDP, GROM, Integra, PCER)
2. Marko Saldžievski – Your Party
3. Keti Staleska – Group of Voters Keti Staleska
4. Marko Taškov – Group of Voters Marko Taškov



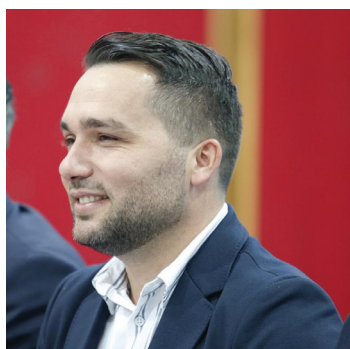
Municipality of Saraj

Area	241 km ²
Population	38 399
Ethnic composition	Albanians (90.07%) Bosniaks (2.72%) Macedonians (2.62%)
Number of council members	19
Budget for 2025	697 554 281
Address	Recreational Centre Saraj, Municipality of Saraj
Telephone	02/ 2057 990 02/ 2057 996
Website	http://www.saraj.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Saraj



Muhamet Elmazi (VLEN) is the Executive Director of NOMAGAS AD Skopje. He is a former member of the Council of the City of Skopje and the Municipal Council of Saraj. Elmazi graduated from the Faculty of Economic Sciences, Department of Business Administration, at the University of Tetovo.



Blerant Ramadani (DUI and coalition) is an assistant professor at Mother Teresa University. He is a former National Coordinator for the Implementation of New Technologies and a doctoral candidate in Electrical Engineering at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University.

Other candidates:

1. Tenzi Beluli – Democrats
2. Remzi Mamuti – Group of Voters Remzi Mamuti



**Municipality of
Centar**

Area	10 km ²
Population	43 893
Ethnic composition	Macedonians (76.85%) Serbs (2.96%) Albanians (2.51%) Roma (1.42%) Vlachs (1.26%) Turks (1.25%)
Number of council members	23
Budget for 2025	1 713 643 000
Address	Mihail Cokov Street, Skopje
Telephone	02/ 3203 600
Website	http://www.opstinacentar.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Centar



Goran Gerasimovski (SDSM and coalition) has been serving as the Mayor of the Municipality of Centar since 2021 and is the former Director of the State Office of Industrial Property. He holds a degree in Sociology and a master's degree in Human Resource Management.



Biljana Ivanovska (independent) is the former President of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) and has long-standing experience as an independent auditor and team leader at the State Audit Office. She graduated from the Faculty of Economics at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. In the elections, she is running with the support of the civic initiative Chance for Centar.



Miroslav Labudović (ZNAM) is the current Deputy Minister for Energy, Mining and Mineral Resources and the President of the City Organisation of the ZNAM Movement – Skopje. He has extensive experience in managerial positions in the private sector. Labudović holds both a bachelor's and a master's degree from the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Information Technologies at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje.



Marija Srebrova (The Left) is the coordinator of The Left's councillor group in the Municipality of Centar and the Chair of the Commission for Culture. She has many years of experience in the private sector as a translator. Srebrova graduated from Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, and obtained a master's degree from the Faculty of Tourism and Management.



Municipality of Čair

Area	4 km ²
Population	62 586
Ethnic composition	Albanians (67.40%) Macedonians (8.56%) Turks (6.68%) Bosniaks (4.04%) Roma (2.14%)
Number of council members	27
Budget for 2025	1 258 453 932
Address	Hristijan Todorovski Boulevard 5, Skopje
Telephone	02/ 2603 001
Website	http://www.cair.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Čair



Izet Mexhiti (VLEN) is the current Minister of Environment and Physical Planning and First Deputy Prime Minister. He is also the President of the Democratic Movement, a former Mayor of the Municipality of Chair (2005–2017), and a former Member of Parliament.



Bujar Osmani (DUI and coalition) is a former Minister of Foreign Affairs (2020–2024) and former Minister of Health (2008–2011), as well as a former Deputy Prime Minister in charge of European Affairs (from 2017). He earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees from the Faculty of Medicine in Skopje and is a specialist in digestive surgery.

Other candidates:

1. Itso Kolevski – Workers' Party



**Municipality of
Šuto Orizari**

Area	7 km ²
Population	25 726
Ethnic composition	Roma (43.80%) Albanians (34.32%) Macedonians (3.52%)
Number of council members	19
Budget for 2025	434 004 949
Address	Hadži Jovan Šiško Street, Skopje
Telephone	02/ 2614 666
Website	http://www.sutoorizari.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Šuto Orizari



Elvis Bajram (Union of Roma) is a former Mayor of the Municipality of Šuto Orizari, having served two terms (2009–2017).



Erdjan Demir (VMRO-DPMNE and coalition) is the President of the Municipal Committee of VMRO-DPMNE in the Municipality of Šuto Orizari.



Gege Demirovski (Bosniak Democratic Union) is the President of the People's Party of the Roma.



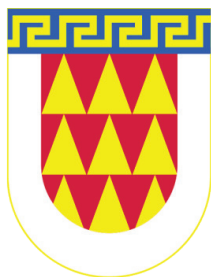
Kurto Dudush (Union of Roma) has been serving as the Mayor of Šuto Orizari since the 2017 elections. He previously served as a Member of Parliament from 2016 to 2017. Dudush holds a degree in Business Management from MIT University in Skopje.



Shaban Saliu (Democratic Forces of the Roma) is Minister without Portfolio responsible for the integration and implementation of the Roma Inclusion Strategy. He is a former Member of Parliament and former Director of the Protection and Rescue Directorate (2008–2017). Saliu holds a law degree from the Faculty of Law at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, a master's degree in Political and Legal Sciences from FON University in Skopje, and a PhD in Political-Legal and Security Sciences from Megatrend University in Serbia.



Edis Hasan (SDSM and coalition) is the current President of the Management Board of the Central Registry. He is a former member of the Advisory Board of the NGO “Romaversitas.” Hasan holds a degree in Political Science from the Faculty of Law “Iustinianus Primus” at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje.



**Municipality of
Bitola**

Area	792 km ²
Population	85 164
Ethnic composition	Macedonians (81.23%) Albanians (4.72%) Roma (3.39%) Vachs (1.41%) Turks (1.38%)
Number of council members	31
Budget for 2025	2 551 171 092
Address	'1 May' Boulevard 61, Bitola
Telephone	047/ 208 442
Website	http://www.bitola.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Bitola



Gabriela Ilievska (independent) is the leader of the independent civic initiative Poinaku and the current President of the Municipal Council of Bitola. Ilievska is a member of the Supervisory Board of ZELS and the Council of Commissions of ZELS. She graduated as a specialist medical laboratory analyst from the Higher Medical School in Bitola.



Toni Konjanovski (VMRO-DPMNE and coalition) has been serving as the Mayor of the Municipality of Bitola since 2021. He previously worked for many years as a senior professional associate and later as Director of the Centre for Public Health in Bitola. Konjanovski graduated from the Faculty of Medicine at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje and obtained the professional title of Primarius in 2014.



Metodija Kunovski (SDSM and coalition) is the current President of the Municipal Organisation of SDSM in Bitola. Previously, he worked for many years as a journalist and editor at the local television station Orbis and also served as spokesperson for REK Bitola.

Other candidates:

1. Vasko Delovski – Group of Voters Vasko Delovski
2. Kjire Dimov – TMRO
3. Mirjana Mirčevski – Macedonian Third Era / Macedonian Sovereignists
4. Zoran Nikolovski – Group of Voters Zoran Nikolovski
5. Jorgo Ognenovski – Democrats



**Municipality of
Veles**

Area	462 km ²
Population	48 463
Ethnic composition	Macedonians (75.99%) Albanians (5.65%) Bosniaks (3.77%) Turks (2.14%) Roma (1.05%)
Number of council members	23
Budget for 2025	1 305 803 652
Address	Panko Brašnar Street 1, Veles
Telephone	043/ 232 406
Website	http://www.veles.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Veles



Marko Kolev (VMRO-DPMNE and coalition) has been serving as the Mayor of the Municipality of Veles since 2021. He previously worked at the Centre for Development of the Vardar Planning Region, where he served as an adviser from 2009 and as head of the centre from 2013. Kolev holds a degree in Geography from the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje.



Maja Hesko (SDSM and coalition) is the current President of the Municipal Organisation of SDSM in Veles. In the past, she has held several party and public positions, including serving as a member of the Municipal Council of Veles. Hesko holds a degree in Sociology and works as a professor of Sociology and Civic Education at the Secondary Vocational School "Dimitrija Chupovski" – Veles.

Other candidates:

1. Marijana Delovska – Democrats



**Municipality of
Gevgelija**

Area	485 km ²
Population	21 582
Ethnic composition	Macedonians (91.64%) Vlachs (1.23%) Serbs (1.01%)
Number of council members	19
Budget for 2025	704 102 538
Address	Dimitar Vlahov Street 4, Gevgelija
Telephone	034/ 213 843
Website	http://www.gevgelija.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Gevgelija



Toni Avramov (The Left) is the current President of the association From Station to Border, founder of several civic organisations in Gevgelija, freelance journalist, and former editor-in-chief of TV Nova 12. He holds a degree in Macedonian Language and Literature and works as a teacher at the Secondary School "Josif Josifovski."



Mile Atanasov (SDSM and coalition) is a former manager with many years of experience in public hygiene. He previously worked in the public hygiene sector and has been actively involved in party activities, holding various positions at the local level. Atanasov graduated from the Faculty of Customs and Freight Forwarding at St. Kliment Ohridski University – Bitola, specialising in Customs and Freight Forwarding Management.



Andon Saramanov has been serving as the Mayor of the Municipality of Gevgelija since 2021. He previously served as a member of the Municipal Council of Gevgelija (2017–2021) and worked at the State Inspectorate for Agriculture. Saramanov graduated from the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje.

Other candidates:

1. Ljupčo Bučkov – Rodina Macedonia
2. Magdalena Karkalaševa – Group of Voters Magdalena Karkalaševa



**Municipality of
Gostivar**

Area	519 km ²
Population	59 770
Ethnic composition	Albanians (55.34%)
	Macedonians (21.43%)
	Turks (12.71%)
	Roma (3.80%)
Number of council members	23
Budget for 2025	1 660 500 000
Address	Braka Gjinoski Street 61, Gostivar
Telephone	042/ 213 511
Website	http://www.gostivavri.gov.mk

Mayor candidates for the Municipality of Gostivar



Visar Ademi (independent) is the founder and Executive Director of My Career. Ademi holds a PhD in Economics.



Darko Grujoski (The Left) is an IT specialist and information systems operator. He holds a degree in Computer Engineering and Technologies.



Sabedin Dauti (VLEN) is a notary and former judge and president of the Basic Court in Gostivar, with prior service in the Ministry of the Interior. He holds a law degree from the University of Pristina.



Valbon Limani (DUI and coalition) has been serving as the acting Mayor of the Municipality of Gostivar since 2024. Previously, from 26 November 2021 to 8 July 2024, he was the President of the Municipal Council of Gostivar. Professionally, he is a specialist in endocrinology and works at the University Clinic for Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolic Disorders in Skopje. Limani graduated from the Faculty of Medicine at Trakya University, where he also completed his specialisation in endocrinology in 2019. From 2022 to 2024, he served as an assistant at the Faculty of Medical Sciences at the State University of Tetovo.



**Municipality of
Debar**

Area	145 km ²
Population	15 412
Ethnic composition	Albanians (54.75%)
	Turks (17.73%)
	Macedonians (7.49%)
	Roma (7.40%)
Number of council members	15
Budget for 2025	527 126 376
Address	'8 September' Street 72, Debar
Telephone	046/ 831 196
Website	http://www.dibra.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Debar



Ramadan Imeri (independent) is the Director of the "28 November" High School in Debar and previously served as Director of the primary school "Penestija." He is a former member and activist of DUI.



Fisnik Mela (VLEN) is the current Deputy Director of the Public Revenue Office (UJP) and Secretary for Strategic Policies of the political party Alternativa. He has many years of professional experience as a software engineer. Mela earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees in Computer Science from the University of Sheffield in the United Kingdom.



Ilirijan Fetahu (DUI and coalition) is the head of the local branch of the Alliance for Albanians in Debar. He is running as a candidate nominated by the Alliance for Albanians led by Zijadin Sela, with the support of the National Alliance for Integration coalition.



Municipality of Kavadarci

Area	1132 km ²
Population	35 733
Ethnic composition	Macedonians (89.59%) Roma (2.04%)
Number of council members	19
Budget for 2025	1 502 453 000
Address	Marshal Tito Square, no number, Kavadarci
Telephone	043/ 416 130
Website	http://www.kavadarci.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Kavadarci



Mitko Jancev (VMRO-DPMNE and coalition) has been serving as the Mayor of the Municipality of Kavadarci since 2017. He is the owner and manager of DPTU "Kozuvčanka." Jancev holds a master's degree in Technical Sciences and, in 2022, earned a PhD in Technical Sciences from Goce Delchev University in Štip, with a dissertation focused on environmental hot spots.



Viktor Veleviski (SDSM and coalition) is the former Director of the State Student Dormitory – Skopje and former Secretary General of the Social Democratic Youth of Macedonia. He previously worked at the Public Revenue Office. Veleviski completed his postgraduate studies at the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus."

Other candidates:

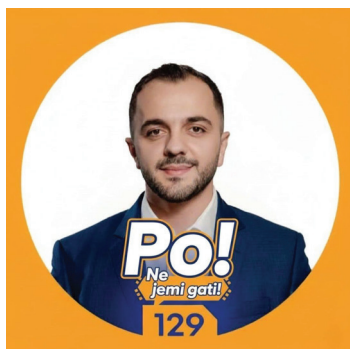
1. Zdravko Boškov – TMRO



**Municipality of
Kičevo**

Area	839 km ²
Population	39 669
Ethnic composition	Albanians (41.27%) Macedonians (40.38%) Turks (6.44%) Roma (5.05%)
Number of council members	19
Budget for 2025	1 149 418 000
Address	Boris Kidrič Street 1, Kavadarci
Telephone	045/ 223 001
Website	http://www.kercova.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Kičevo



Shkodran Alili (independent) is a lawyer from Kičevo and an independent candidate for mayor.



Fatmir Dehari (DUI and coalition) has been serving as the Mayor of the Municipality of Kičevo since 2013 and previously held the position of Mayor of the Municipality of Oslomej. Before being elected mayor, he served as Director of the Public Enterprise Macedonian Post in Kičevo, Deputy Minister of the Interior, and Deputy Director of the Security and Counterintelligence Directorate (DBK). Dehari graduated from the Faculty of Physical Education at the University of Pristina.



Aleksandar Jovanovski (VMRO-DPMNE and coalition) is a medical doctor specialising in general medicine and is employed at his own private healthcare institution, Draga-Medika, in Kičevo.



Fatmir Limani (VLEN) is the Minister of Social Policy, Demography and Youth. He is a former Deputy General Director and member of the Management Board of AD ESM (2001–2021), a member of the Supervisory Board of AD MEPSO (2007–2011), and President of the civic organisation NDRISHE (2007–2010). Limani graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy at the State University of Tetovo, specialising in History.



Area	382 km ²
Population	31 602
Ethnic composition	Macedonians (84.80%) Roma (5.99%)
Number of council members	19
Budget for 2025	345 103 000
Address	Rade Kratovče Street 1, Kočani
Telephone	033/ 274 001
Website	http://www.kocani.gov.mk

Municipality of Kočani

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Kočani



Vladko Grozdanov (VMRO-DPMNE and coalition) is a specialist in gynaecology and obstetrics with more than 20 years of medical experience in the private healthcare sector and has recently joined the General Hospital in Kočani.



Venko Krstevski (independent) has been serving as the acting Mayor of the Municipality of Kočani since March 2025. He is a former member of the Municipal Council of Kočani, having served several terms.



Zoran Todorov (independent) is the Head of the Centre for Solidarity Sakam Zhivot in Kočani and a long-time civic activist. He is the founder of several organisations and associations, including the Rotary Club Kochani-Vinica, Voskresenie, and the Committee for a Healthy Life.



Žaklina Filipova-Svečarovska (The Left) has been employed as a teacher of Macedonian language and literature at the Municipal Secondary School "Gošo Vikentiev" since 2003. She graduated from the Department of Literature and Macedonian Language at the Faculty of Philology "Blaže Koneski."



Igor Hristov (SDSM and coalition) is a civic activist and a teacher at the Secondary School "Ljupčo Santov."

Other candidates:

1. Daniel Gligorov – United Macedonia



**Municipality of
Kriva Palanka**

Area	481 km ²
Population	18 059
Ethnic composition	Macedonian (92.34%) Roma (2.48%)
Number of council members	15
Budget for 2025	263 887 253
Address	Sv. Joakim Osogovski Street 175, Kriva Palanka
Telephone	031/ 375 035
Website	http://www.krivapalanka.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Kriva Palanka



Oliver Aleksovski (VMRO-DPMNE and coalition) is a former Member of Parliament. He graduated from the Institute of Defence at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje.



Saško Mitovski (SDSM and coalition) has been serving as the Mayor of Kriva Palanka since 2021. He holds a degree from the Faculty of Economics at the University of Tourism and Management in Skopje (UTMS).



**Municipality of
Kumanovo**

Area	504 km ²
Population	98 104
Ethnic composition	Macedonians (55.80%) Albanians (25.99%) Serbs (6.52%) Roma (2.85%)
Number of council members	31
Budget for 2025	2 991 022 424
Address	11 October Street, Kumanovo
Telephone	031/ 475 800 031/ 438 633
Website	http://www.kumanovo.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Kumanovo



Selver Ajdini (DUI and coalition) is the former Deputy Director of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services and a former member of the Broadcasting Council. In the past, he served as the manager of TV Hana Kumanovo.



Maksim Dimitrievski (ZNAM) has been serving as the Mayor of Kumanovo since 2017. He is a former Member of Parliament in the Macedonian Assembly and former Chair of the Committee on Security and Defence. Since 2023, he has been the President of the political party Movement ZNAM – For Our Macedonia. Dimitrievski earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees from the Faculty of Legal and Political Sciences at the American University of Europe – FON in Skopje.



Martin Kostovski (SDSM and coalition) has been serving as a Member of Parliament since 2020. He is the President of the Municipal Organisation of SDSM in Kumanovo and a former Director of the Official Gazette. Kostovski holds a law degree from the Faculty of Law at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje.



Miroslav Petrović is a Macedonian actor and holds a master's degree in Performing Arts.



Goran Stojkovski (independent) is employed in the Urban Planning Department of the Municipality of Kumanovo and is a former Director of the Public Utility Enterprise Vodovod – Kumanovo, having served two terms.



**Municipality of
Negotino**

Area	414 km ²
Population	18 194
Ethnic composition	Macedonians (86.28%)
	Roma (2.71%)
	Turks (1.92%)
	Serbs (1.89%)
Number of council members	15
Budget for 2025	/
Address	Aco Adži Ilov Street 2, Negotino
Telephone	043/ 361 045
Website	http://www.negotino.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Negotino



Petar Mantev (SDSM and coalition) is a physical education teacher and former Director of the Primary School Goce Delčev in Negotino.



Marija Naceva (VMRO-DPMNE and coalition) is the current Secretary of the Municipality of Negotino.

Other candidates:

1. Jasminka Ristova - Democrats



**Municipality of
Ohrid**

Area	390 km ²
Population	51 428
Ethnic composition	Macedonians (78.73%) Albanians (3.78%) Turks (3.56%)
Number of council members	23
Budget for 2025	1 957 195 223
Address	Dimitar Vlahov Street 57, Ohrid
Telephone	046/ 262 492
Website	http://www.ohrid.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Ohrid



Kiril Pecakov (VMRO-DPMNE and coalition) has been serving as the Mayor of the Municipality of Ohrid since 31 October 2021. He is a former councillor in the Municipal Council of Ohrid (2009–2013 and 2017–2020) and a former Member of Parliament in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia (2020–2021). Pecakov graduated from the Faculty of Dentistry “St. Pantelejmon” in Skopje and specialised as a Specialist in Paediatric and Preventive Dentistry.



Stevče Stevoski (Your Party) has been employed at the Ohrid Police Department (SVR – Ohrid) for nearly three decades. He is a former independent mayoral candidate, now supported by the political party Democrats. Stevoski graduated from the Faculty of Security in Skopje, specialising in the field of combating organised crime.



Goce Cvetkovski (independent) is a former member of The Left, a mayoral candidate for the Municipality of Ohrid in 2021 supported by TMRO, and an activist of the Bojkotiram movement.



Asen Šajn (SDSM and coalition) is the current President of the Municipal Organisation of SDSM in Ohrid and a former Director of the Public Health Institution "General Hospital" Ohrid.



**Municipality of
Prilep**

Area	1194 km ²
Population	69 025
Ethnic composition	Macedonians (84.53%)
	Roma (5.75%)
	Turks (1.54%)
Number of council members	27
Budget for 2025	2 134 797 237
Address	Prilepski braniteli Street, Prilep
Telephone	048/ 401 701
Website	http://www.prilep.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Prilep



Petra Lukaroska (SDSM and coalition) is the current President of the Municipal Organisation of SDSM in Prilep. She is a former Director of the Secondary School "Gjorgje Petrov" in Prilep and a teacher by profession. Lukaroska completed her studies in Mental Health at the Higher Medical School in Bitola.



Dejan Prodanoski (VMRO-DPMNE and coalition) is a current Member of Parliament. He is a former President of the Municipal Council of Prilep, former councillor, and Head of the Department at the State Archive – Prilep. Prodanoski holds a degree in Transport Engineering from St. Kliment Ohridski University – Bitola.

Other candidates:

1. Žarko Boškoski – Experience for Success (LDP, GROM, Integra, PCER)
2. Vladimir Gjorgjioski – Macedonian Third Era / Macedonian Sovereignists
3. Ljupčo Dunimagloski – Group of Voters Ljupčo Dunimagloski
4. Gjorgjija Igeski – Group of Voters Gjorgjija Igeski
5. Pavlinče Mateska – Group of Voters Pavlinče Mateska
6. Jasminka Stojkovska – Democrats
7. Borče Čupetreski – Group of Voters Borče Čupetreski



**Municipality of
Radoviš**

Area	497.48 km ²
Population	24 122
Ethnic composition	Macedonians (71.63%)
	Turks (16.64%)
	Roma (1.08%)
Number of council members	19
Budget for 2025	669 592 575
Address	Aleksandar Makedonski Boulevard 7, Radoviš
Telephone	032 / 617 700
Website	https://radovis.gov.mk/

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Radoviš



Strahil Gavritov (independent) is the current President of the Municipal Council of Radoviš. In the past, he served three terms as President of the Council and also worked as Head of the User Control Department at the Public Enterprise Plavaja – Radoviš. Gavritov holds a degree in Electrical Engineering.



Ljupče Počivalec (VMRO-DPMNE) is the current Secretary of the Municipality of Radoviš and President of the Municipal Committee of VMRO-DPMNE – Radoviš. He is a former branch manager at the Public Enterprise for Forestry “Plačkovica.” Počivalec holds a law degree from the Faculty of Law “Iustinianus Primus” in Skopje.



Risto Spasov (SDSM) is the current President of the Municipal Organisation of SDSM in Radoviš and a professor of Physical Education. He is a former councillor in the Municipal Council of Radoviš.



**Municipality of
Resen**

Area	739 km ²
Population	14 373
Ethnic composition	Macedonians (70.48%)
	Turks (10.14%)
	Albanians (9.61%)
	Roma (2.18%)
Number of council members	15
Budget for 2025	/
Address	Tsar Samoil Square 20, Resen
Telephone	047/ 551 884
Website	http://www.resen.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Resen



Aleksandar Buzlevski (SDSM and coalition) is the former Director of Galichica National Park.



Jovan Tozievski (VMRO-DPMNE and coalition) is the current Mayor of the Municipality of Resen and a former member of the Municipal Council of Resen, serving from 2013 to 2021. Tozievski holds a degree in Economics.

Other candidates:

1. Igor Mitrevski – Group of Voters Igor Mitrevski
2. Maliq Shemshedini – Coalition “National Alliance for Integration”



Municipality of Struga

Area	507 km ²
Population	50 980
Ethnic composition	Albanians (50.58%) Macedonians (29.23%) Turks (6.81%)
Number of council members	23
Budget for 2025	1 468 828 910
Address	Mother Teresa Square, Struga
Telephone	046/ 781 223
Website	http://www.struga.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Struga



Arsim Dalipi (DUI and coalition) is a medical doctor, specialist urologist, and Head of the Department for Vascular Access at the Public Health Institution – Specialised Hospital for Nephrology in Struga.



Mendi Qura (independent) is the President of the Chamber of Commerce of North-West Macedonia and a former co-founder of the Alliance for Albanians. He is the owner and manager of the company Trim & Lum and the owner of the football club Struga Trim Lum.



Jovana Mojsoska (The Left) has been serving as a Member of Parliament since 2024 and is the Secretary General of the political party The Left. She graduated from the Faculty of Security.

Other candidates:

1. Besnik Asani – Group of Voters Besnik Asani
2. Igor Maleski – Group of Voters Igor Maleski
3. Robert Mileski – Democrats
4. Nasto Palioski – Group of Voters Nasto Palioski
5. Ljube Petrevski – Workers' Party
6. Mirko Saveski – Group of Voters Mirko Saveski



**Municipality of
Strumica**

Area	32 km ²
Population	49 995
Ethnic composition	Macedonians (77.91%) Turks (7.85%)
Number of council members	23
Budget for 2025	1 482 428 450
Address	Sando Masev Street 1, Strumica
Telephone	034/ 348 030
Website	http://www.strumica.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Strumica



Marjan Daskalovski (SDSM and coalition) is the current President of the Municipal Council of Strumica and President of the Municipal Organisation of SDSM in Strumica. He holds a degree in Law.



Petar Jankov (VMRO-DPMNE and coalition) previously worked at the Customs Administration of the Republic of Macedonia (2007–2018) as a senior customs officer and has been active in the private sector since 2018. He graduated from the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality in Ohrid, specialising in Customs and Freight Forwarding.

Other candidates:

1. Dragan Koturović – Group of Voters Dragan Koturović
2. Risto Caskonoje – United Macedonia



**Municipality of
Tetovo**

Area	1080 km ²
Population	84 770
Ethnic composition	Albanians (71.32%) Macedonians (18.32%) Roma (2.22%) Turks (2.06%)
Number of council members	31
Budget for 2025	2 278 738 856
Address	Dervish Cara Street, Tetovo
Telephone	044/ 511 930
Website	http://www.tetova.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Tetovo



Katka Božinovska (The Left) is employed at the State University of Tetovo. She holds a PhD in Legal Sciences from Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje.



Izet Zejnelović (Democrats) is the Vice President of the political party Democrats. He is a lawyer with many years of professional experience in the Ministry of the Interior.



Samka Ibraimovski (Coalition “Experience for Success”) is the current President of the political party PCER. He is a former Minister of Labour and Social Policy (2004–2006), former Minister without Portfolio (2016–2017), and former Member of Parliament. Ibraimovski graduated from the Faculty of Management in Novi Sad.



Bilal Kasami (VLEN) is the current Mayor of the Municipality of Tetovo. He is the founder and first President of the BESA Movement. In the past, he served as a Member of Parliament and worked as a professor at the International Balkan University and Dardania University. Kasami holds a degree in Economics from Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, and earned his PhD in Economic Sciences in 2011.



Bajram Rexhepi (DUI and coalition) is the current Vice President of DUI, a former Member of Parliament, and former Executive Director of NOMAGAS. He graduated from the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, specialising in Informatics.

Other candidates:

1. Stevica Sarkoski – VMRO–People's Party



**Municipality of
Štip**

Area	556 km ²
Population	44 866
Ethnic composition	Macedonians (77.46%)
	Roma (5.13%)
	Vlachs (3.53%)
	Turks (2.97%)
Number of council members	23
Budget for 2025	1 515 172 000
Address	Vasil Glavinov Street, Štip
Telephone	032/ 266 600
Website	http://www.stip.gov.mk

Mayoral candidates for the Municipality of Štip



Pavel Ivanov (SDSM and coalition) is the current President of the Municipal Organisation of SDSM in Štip. In the past, he served as Head of the Regional Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture in Štip.



Ivan Jordanov (VMRO-DPMNE and coalition) has been serving as the Mayor of the Municipality of Štip since 2021. Previously, he was a Member of Parliament in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia (2020–2021), a member of the Central Committee of VMRO-DPMNE, and President of the Municipal Committee of VMRO-DPMNE in Štip. Jordanov graduated from the Faculty of Economics at Goce Delčev University – Štip, specialising in International Economics, and obtained a master's degree in Human Resource Management from the International Slavic University "Gavrilo Romanovich Derzhavin."

Mayoral candidates for the remaining municipalities:

Municipality	Candidate	Submitter of Candidacy
Aračinovo	Fekri Bakiu	Group of Voters Fekri Bakiu
	Skender Isufi	National Alliance for Integration (NAI) led by DUI
	Daut Beqiri	Coalition VLEN
Berovo	Mirče Kirovski	The Left
	Petar Ružinski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
	Ilija Runtevski	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
Bogdanci	Blaže Šapov	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Marjan Peev	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
Bogovinje	Feti Abazi	Coalition VLEN
	Besnik Emši	National Alliance for Integration (NAI) led by DUI
Bosilovo	Mirče Karmažičeva	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Risto Mančev	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
Brvenica	Svetlana Mitreska Anđelkoska	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Haqim Ramadani	Coalition VLEN
	Jovica Ilievski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Enver Pajaziti	National Alliance for Integration (NAI) led by DUI
Valandovo	Pero Kostadinov	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Gjoko Kamčev	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
Vasilevo	Slave Andonov	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Vančo Novoselski	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM

Vevčani	Stefan Radinoski	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Spase Kočovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Gospodin Poposki	Workers' Party
Vinica	Vane Cekov	Group of Voters Vane Cekov
	Biljana Ilievska	United Macedonia
	Goce Milevski	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Mitko Kostadinovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
Vrapčište	Mehmet Seferi	Coalition VLEN
	Isen Šabani	National Alliance for Integration (NAI) led by DUI
Gradsko	Kiro Nackov	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Dragoslav Simonović	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
Debarca	Dimče Andreski	Group of Voters Dimče Andreski
	Ljupčo Paunkoski	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Zoran Nogačeski	Group of Voters Zoran Nogačeski
	Zlatko Siljanoski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Daniel Ognenoski	Coalition "Experience for Success"

Demir Kapija	Natalija Dimitrieva	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Blaže Dimitriev	Group of Voters Blaže Dimitriev
	Zoran Petrov	Group of Voters Zoran Petrov
	Stiven Petkovski	Group of Voters Stiven Petkovski
	Lazar Petrov	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Demir Hisar	Dragančo Šulevski
Demir Hisar	Marjanče Stojanovski	Group of Voters Marjanče Stojanovski
	Oliver Ivanovski	Group of Voters Oliver Ivanovski
	Zlatko Kuzmanovski	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Nikola Najdovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
Dojran	Milan Majkić	Democrats
	Risto Džinev	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Ilija Tentov	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE

Dolneni	Abdula Bajramoski	Group of Voters Abdula Bajramoski
	Suad Adilović	Group of Voters Suad Adilović
	Blerim Islami	Coalition VLEN
	Ramadan Durmoski	Movement for National Unity of the Turks (DNET)
	Isuf Sinani	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Fljamur Gjoleka	National Alliance for Integration (NAI) led by DUI
Želino	Saško Veljanoski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Blerim Sejdiu	Coalition VLEN
	Emir Sulejmani	National Alliance for Integration (NAI) led by DUI
Zelenikovo	Branko Prodanovski	Group of Voters Branko Prodanovski
	Kosta Manevski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Zoran Markoski	Coalition "Experience for Success"
	Borče Gievski	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
Zrnovci	Vančo Mitev	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Boro Kocev	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE

	Marjan Marinkovski	The Left
Ilinden	Žika Stojanovski	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Aleksandar Georgievski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
Jegunovce	Darko Blažeski	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Nasir Abazi	National Alliance for Integration (NAI) led by DUI
	Dimitar Kostadinovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
Karbinci	Viktor Paunov	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Ljubica Sokolovska	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
Konče	Zlatko Ristov	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Blagoj Iliev	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Fikri Usinov	Democratic Party of the Turks in Macedonia
Kratovo	Vlatko Spirovski	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Todorče Nikolovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
Krivogaštani	Igor Karaviloski	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Sašo Graoroski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE

Kruševo	Zoran Janeski	The Left
	Džemil Fejzulloski	Coalition VLEN
	Tome Hristoski	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Niko Čoneski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
Lipkovo	Nađmedin Sadiki	Coalition VLEN
	Erkan Arifi	National Alliance for Integration (NAI) led by DUI
Lozovo	Svetla Aleksić	United Macedonia
	Aco Velkovski	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Milan Ašikovski	TMRO
	Boško Cvetkovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
Mavrovo and Rostuša	Anes Ahmeti	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Oner Jakuposki	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
Makedonska Kamenica	Miran Mitrevski	Group of Voters Miran Mitrevski
	Slobodan Velinovski	Group of Voters Slobodan Velinovski
	Sonja Stamenkova	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Dimčo Atanasovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE

Makedonski Brod	Marjan Gjručski	The Left
	Milosim Vojneski	Group of Voters Milosim Vojneski
	Ivica Stojkoski	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Žarko Risteski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
Mogila	Dragančo Sabotkovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Zoran Ristevski	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Sašo Pivkovski	Group of Voters Sašo Pivkovski
Novaci	Peco Micevski	Macedonian Third Era / Macedonian Sovereignists
	Ljupčo Stojanovski	Group of Voters Ljupčo Stojanovski
	Ljube Kuzmanoski	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Vasko Naumovski	Democrats
	Goran Talevski	Group of Voters Goran Talevski
	Stevče Stefanovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
Novo Selo	Gjorgje Božinov	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Petar Spasov	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
Petrovec	Borče Mitevski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Elizabeta Zelenikovska	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM

	Nevenka Trenčevska	The Left
Pehčevo	Zlatko Nikolovski	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Aleksandar Kitanski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
Plasnica	Elsan Nurçeski	Democratic Party of the Turks in Macedonia
	Alija Jaoski	National Alliance for Integration (NAI) led by DUI
	Dragan Anastasov	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
Probištip	Toni Tonevski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Saše Donev	Group of Voters Saše Donev
Rankovce	Ivan Neševski	The Left
	Daniel Krstevski	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Daniel Pavlovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Branko Janev	Civic Initiative GREEN
Rosoman	Atanas Stojanov	United Macedonia
	Gjorgji Krstevski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Stojan Nikolov	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM

Sveti Nikole	Dejan Gičev	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Gordan Stošević	Group of Voters Gordan Stošević
	Dejan Vladev	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
Sopište	Vasil Ainovski	Rodina Macedonia
	Zvonko Vasev	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Jane Micevski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
Staro Nagoričane	Andrej Dimitrijevi	The Left
	Miroslav Slavkovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Dalibor Trajkovski	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Vlaste Dimković	Serbian Party in Macedonia
Studeničani	Azem Sadiki	Group of Voters Azem Sadiki
	Sedat Bislimi	Coalition VLEN
	Ejup Abazi	National Alliance for Integration (NAI) led by DUI
Tearce	Nazim Taipi	National Alliance for Integration (NAI) led by DUI
	Daut Memiši	Coalition VLEN

Centar Župa	Inajet Baki	Party for the Movement of Turks in Macedonia
	Alil Emrula	Movement for the National Unity of Turks (DNET)
	Arijan Ibrahim	Democratic Party of the Turks in Macedonia
Čaška	Goran Stojanovski	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Dejan Andonovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE
	Suat Šaćirov	National Alliance for Integration (NAI) led by DUI
Češinovo-Obleševo	Sane Jovanov	Group of Voters Sane Jovanov
	Gorančo Krstev	SDSM
	Jordanče Kostadinov	VMRO
Čučer Sandevo	Vlatko Smokovski	Group of Voters Vlatko Smokovski
	Saško Komnenović	Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections led by SDSM
	Zoran Bajovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE



5

**The Republic of North
Macedonia's 2025 local
elections – Results,
campaign, assessments**

5. The Republic of North Macedonia's 2025 local elections – Results, campaign, assessments

Introduction

The first round of the eighth local elections since the independence of the Republic of North Macedonia was held on 19 October 2025, while the second round of voting took place on 2 November 2025. The local elections were organised in 80 municipalities and the City of Skopje. Mayors were elected under a majoritarian electoral system, while members of municipal councils and the Council of the City of Skopje were elected under a proportional electoral system. In accordance with legal provisions, the right to vote prior to election day, on 18 October and 1 November respectively, was exercised by sick and infirm persons, persons under house arrest, and prisoners in penitentiary institutions.

In the first round of elections, 834,440 citizens voted out of a total of 1,832,415 registered voters in the Voters' List, resulting in a turnout of 46.48%. In the second round, in which 1,013,357 voters were eligible to vote, 402,895 citizens cast their ballots, corresponding to a turnout of 40.46%. Voter turnout in the 2025 local elections continued the downward trend observed in previous local elections, compared to 2021 (51.44% in the first round and 49.65% in the second round) and 2017 (59.51% in the first round and 51.92% in the second round).

The voting process was administered by a three-tier election administration, led by the State Election Commission (SEC) as an elected body with professional engagement, followed by Municipal Election Commissions composed through random selection from among employees of state, municipal, and City of Skopje administrations as non-professional bodies, and 3,480 Election Boards responsible for conducting voting at polling stations in the first round. For the 80 municipalities and the City of Skopje, the SEC confirmed a total of 309 mayoral candidates and 577 lists of candidates for municipal councils in the first round⁴⁶.

⁴⁶ OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission, Republic of North Macedonia – Local Elections, 19 October 2025. Available at: <https://odihr.osce.org/sites/default/files/f/documents/1/c/599930.pdf> (last accessed: 24 December 2025).

In the second round of the local elections, voting was held for mayors in 32 municipalities and for the Mayor of the City of Skopje. In addition, voting for councillors was repeated at three polling stations in Šuto Orizari. The second round was conducted by the SEC, 32 Municipal Election Commissions, the Election Commission of the City of Skopje, and 1,777 Election Boards, with minimal changes in the composition of the Municipal Election Commissions and Election Boards between the two rounds⁴⁷.

A total of six coalitions and 26 political parties submitted candidate lists for mayors and/or municipal councillors in these elections. Groups of voters supported 56 independent mayoral candidates and 67 independent candidate lists for municipal councils⁴⁸. The coalitions participating in the elections were: the coalition "Your Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE; the coalition "Coalition for Local Elections 2025" led by SDSM; the coalition "National Alliance for Integration (NAI)" led by DUI; the coalition "VLEN"; the coalition "Experience for Success" led by the Liberal Democratic Party; and the coalition "For a Green Future" led by Democratic Renewal of Macedonia. The following political parties also fielded candidates for mayors and/or councillors: Levica (The Left); ZNAM Movement – For Our Macedonia; Bosniak Democratic Union; VMRO–People's Party; Civic Initiative GREEN; Democratic Party of Roma; Democratic Party of Turks of Macedonia; Democratic Forces of Roma; United Macedonia; Macedonian Third Era / Macedonian Sovereignists; Party for the Movement of Turks in Macedonia; Serbian Party in Macedonia; Movement for National Unity of Turks (DNET); Democratic Party; Workers' Party; Rodina Macedonia; Union of Roma; Your Party; Permanent Macedonian Radical Unification (TMRO); and Union of Roma Skopje.

In accordance with his legal competence, the President of the Assembly, Afrim Gashi, called the elections on 9 August 2025, thereby initiating the electoral deadlines. The campaign for the local elections began on 29 September and ended at midnight on 17 October, with the first round of elections held on 19 October. The campaign for the second round continued immediately after election day and lasted until midnight on 31 October. The second round of local elections was held on 2 November. For the monitoring of the 2025 local elections, the SEC accredited 807 domestic observers from 20 organisations and 644 international observers from 21 organisations. The SEC announced that accreditations issued for the first round remained valid and that additional observers could be accredited. Between the two rounds, the SEC registered a total of 152 additional domestic observers⁴⁹.

47 OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission, Republic of North Macedonia – Local Elections, 2 November 2025. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/sites/default/files/f/documents/d/a/600803.pdf> (last accessed: 24 December 2025).

48 The statistical data were obtained on the basis of information published by the State Election Commission (SEC) on its official website, accessed via: <https://candidatelist.sec.mk/LolcalElectionsCandidates> (last accessed: 3 October 2025).

49 OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission, Republic of North Macedonia – Local Elections, 19 October 2025. Available at: <https://odihr.osce.org/sites/default/files/f/documents/1/c/599930.pdf> (last accessed: 24 December 2025).

According to the OSCE/ODIHR Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions, the local elections held on 19 October 2025 were generally competitive and offered voters a choice among a range of political alternatives, with fundamental freedoms largely respected. At the same time, the electoral process took place in a polarised political environment, and certain challenges were observed related to the use of public resources, the role of public office-holders in the campaign, and the equality of conditions for electoral competition. The report notes that although the legal framework provides a basis for democratic elections, its shortcomings and limited oversight, particularly in the areas of campaign finance and political advertising, continue to affect the transparency of the electoral contest and underscore the need for further improvements in line with international standards⁵⁰.

Building on these findings, OSCE/ODIHR assessed that in the second round of the 2025 local elections, voters again had a choice among clearly differentiated political alternatives, and that the campaign in most municipalities was competitive, with fundamental freedoms largely respected. At the same time, the report indicates that the level playing field was not fully ensured, particularly due to the allocation of funds for paid political advertising, which had a restrictive effect on the visibility of independent candidates and smaller political parties. Additional challenges were identified in relation to the participation of public office-holders in the campaign, as well as the transparency and oversight of campaign financing, including in the online sphere, once again highlighting the need for further improvement of the electoral framework in accordance with international standards⁵¹.

The results of the local elections indicate a diverse distribution of mayoral and councillor mandates among several political actors and independent candidates. In the mayoral races, the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE won the largest number of mayoral positions, with 33 mayors elected in the first round and an additional 21 in the second round, as well as the Mayor of the City of Skopje. The VLEN coalition secured a total of nine mayoral posts, five in the first round and four in the second round. The coalition led by SDSM won six mayoral positions, evenly distributed between the two rounds, while the coalition led by DUI secured four mayoral mandates. One mayoral mandate each was won by ZNAM, the Union of Roma, and independent candidates.

Regarding the election of municipal councillors, the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE won 549 council seats, representing the highest number of mandates obtained

50 OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission, Republic of North Macedonia – Local Elections, 19 October 2025. Available at: <https://odihr.osce.org/sites/default/files/f/documents/1/c/599930.pdf> (last accessed: 24 December 2025).

51 OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission, Republic of North Macedonia – Local Elections, 2 November 2025. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/sites/default/files/f/documents/d/a/600803.pdf> (last accessed: 24 December 2025).

by a single political actor. This was followed by the coalition led by SDSM with 231 seats and the coalition led by DUI with 206 seats, while the VLEN coalition won 131 council mandates. Levica secured 66 mandates, and ZNAM won 44 council seats. Other political parties and coalitions, including the Democratic Party of Turks, the LDP/GROM/Integra coalition, MAAK, the Union of Roma, and several smaller political entities, obtained a smaller number of council seats. Independent candidates also secured representation in municipal councils, with a total of 51 council seats, indicating the presence of multi-party representation and diverse local political offerings.

Electoral campaign

The campaign for the local elections began on 29 September and ended at midnight on 17 October. The campaign for the second round continued immediately after election day, on 19 October, and lasted until 31 October at midnight. The second round of the local elections was held on 2 November, with voting taking place in 32 municipalities and the City of Skopje. In addition, repeat voting for members of the municipal council was conducted at three polling stations in the municipality of Šuto Orizari, following irregularities identified by the State Election Commission.

In the first electoral round, the legally required turnout threshold of at least one third of registered voters at the municipal level was not met in four municipalities (Gostivar, Vrapčište, Mavrovo–Rostuša and Centar Župa). As a result, the entire first round of voting is to be repeated within 60 days of the publication of the final results by the State Election Commission. On 17 November 2025, the President of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, Afrim Gashi, signed the decision on holding repeat local elections in the municipalities of Gostivar, Vrapčište, Mavrovo–Rostuša and Centar Župa. These elections are scheduled for 11 January 2026, in accordance with the Constitution, the Electoral Code and the relevant legislation⁵².

The Electoral Code formally guarantees equal access to campaigning for all participants. However, 80% of outdoor political advertising space, such as advertising panels and billboards⁵³, and 90% of state funds for paid political media advertising are distributed evenly only among the four largest parliamentary parties from the ruling coalition and the opposition. These are the parties that, at the time elections are called, have the largest number of Members of Parliament and officially established parliamentary groups, in accordance with Article 34 of the Rules of Procedure of

52 Repeat local elections announced in four municipalities – voting to take place on 11 January – <https://24.mk/details/raspishani-povtorenite-lokalni-izbori-vo-chetiri-opshtini-kje-se-glasa-na-11-januari> (last accessed: 10 December 2025).

53 Article 78-a of the Electoral Code – <https://www.sec.mk/regulativa/> (last accessed: 10 December 2025).

the Assembly⁵⁴. This model places extra-parliamentary parties and independent candidates at a disadvantage and, in practice, also marginalises smaller parties that do have parliamentary groups, such as ZNAM and Levica⁵⁵.

The political parties largely relied on conventional campaign methods, including rallies, meetings with citizens, door-to-door campaigning and television advertisements. Promotion of candidates' candidatures through social media, participation in televised debates and the use of billboards were also widely employed. The political parties, independent groups and candidates placed strong emphasis on communication via social media, particularly Facebook, and to a lesser extent, Instagram and TikTok. In the final stages of the campaign, a sharper and more accusatory tone became noticeable in online content, including instances of heated rhetoric.

The main campaign themes focused on local issues, but broader national topics were also prominent. These included competing visions of national identity and inter-ethnic relations, EU integration and the continued postponement of accession negotiations, as well as the rule of law and corruption.

According to the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission⁵⁶, the campaign was assessed as competitive, with voters offered a genuine choice of political alternatives and the opportunity to campaign freely. The OSCE/ODIHR report also noted that campaigning on social media in the Republic of North Macedonia is not specifically regulated, and that supervisory bodies do not have a mandate to monitor or respond to disinformation or manipulative content online⁵⁷.

In cooperation with the State Election Commission, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services developed a voluntary Code of Conduct for the online space⁵⁸ as early as 2023. During the 2025 local elections, the complaints mechanism related to electoral activities in the online environment⁵⁹ was once again activated.

54 Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia – <https://www.sobranie.mk/content/Delovnik%20na%20RM/%D0%94%D0%95%D0%9B%D0%9E%D0%92%D0%9D%D0%98%D0%9A%D0%9D%D0%90%D0%A0%D0%A1%D0%9C%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2.pdf> (last accessed: 10 December 2025).

55 Metamorphosis Foundation, Shadow Report: Freedom of Media in North Macedonia (Skopje: Metamorphosis, 2025), pp. 14–17. The report finds that state funding of political advertising “systemically favours large parties”, while “small and new political actors have minimal or no access to paid media promotion”. https://metamorphosis.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/shadow-report-freedom-of-media-north-macedonia_final-1.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com (last accessed: 10 December 2025).

56 OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission, Republic of North Macedonia – Local Elections, 19 October 2025. Statement of preliminary findings and conclusions. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/north-macedonia/595909> (last accessed: 14 November 2025).

57 Ibid.

58 Code of conduct for online space promoted – <https://www.sec.mk/promoviran-kodeksot-za-odnesuvanje-vo-onlajn-prostorot/> (last accessed: 10 December 2025).

59 Council of Media Ethics – <https://semm.mk/odnovo-vo-funkcija-mehanizmot-za-zalbi-povrzani-so-izbornite-aktivnosti-vo-onlajn-prostorot/> (last accessed: 10 December 2025).

The OSCE/ODIHR report further noted that electoral activities by holders of public office are not regulated. As a result, government officials, including the Prime Minister, actively promoted local candidates across the country during the campaign. Although such actions do not constitute a legal violation, they blurred the line between the state and political parties, contrary to paragraph 5.4 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document, which calls for a “clear separation between the state and political parties”⁶⁰.

As in previous elections, numerous instances of negative rhetoric were observed in public discourse during these local elections, too. The use of such rhetoric intensified throughout the campaign, despite most candidates having committed to adhere to the Code for Fair and Democratic Elections, signed on 27 September⁶¹.

OSCE/ODIHR identified negative rhetoric targeting women’s political participation, particularly online, where women were frequently subjected to verbal abuse, threats and explicit graphic content. Gender equality and women’s rights were largely absent from candidates’ programmes and campaigns, and when mentioned, women were predominantly portrayed as voters rather than political actors. A regression in women’s rights and a setback in progress towards participatory democracy were observed. The growing influence of anti-gender movements, often supported by religious leaders and largely unchallenged by political parties, further undermined previous achievements in gender-equality policies⁶².

The coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE contested the elections under the slogan “The real choice – your person, your place, for your future!”. The campaign primarily focused on transparent, accountable and environmentally healthy communities, as well as on roads and communal infrastructure across municipalities⁶³. In addition, the campaign announced 70 new projects in areas such as infrastructure, energy, education, healthcare, agriculture, culture and technology, presented as marking a new phase of national development.

The campaign of the VMRO-DPMNE candidate for Mayor of the City of Skopje focused on pledges to clean the capital within 72 hours of assuming office, improve public transport, ensure a healthy living environment and undertake comprehensive communal renewal of the city.

60 ODIHR Election Observation Mission, Republic of North Macedonia – Local elections, 19 October 2025. Statement of preliminary findings and conclusions. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/north-macedonia/595909> (last accessed: 14 November 2025).

61 MIA - <https://bit.ly/4rMgSLE>

62 ODIHR Election Observation Mission, Republic of North Macedonia – Local elections, 19 October 2025. Statement of preliminary findings and conclusions. Available at: <https://odihr.osce.org/sites/default/files/ff/documents/11/c/599930.pdf>

63 “The real choice – Your person, your place, for your future!” Available at: <https://vmro-dpmne.org.mk/programa> (last accessed: 17 November 2025).

VMRO–DPMNE's online campaign was conducted through the party's official website, www.vmro-dpmne.org.mk, as well as through the official Facebook and Instagram profiles of mayoral candidates. Videos from rallies, meetings with citizens and campaign advertisements were also published on the party's YouTube channel.

The coalition led by SDSM ran under the slogan “We are fighting for our home!”. Its electoral programme was built around four key pillars: (1) Young people at the centre – a new paradigm for healthy and sustainable development through building healthy, democratically aware individuals and providing accessible housing for young people; (2) A clean and healthy environment – through impeccable communal hygiene, cleaner air by addressing sources of pollution, and the removal of illegal dumping sites; (3) Functional and safe public spaces – through humane urban planning, traffic safety and modern, accessible public transport; and (4) Citizen-centred municipalities – through open, accountable, service-oriented and efficient local governments that listen to citizens' voices. SDSM's online campaign was conducted via the party website www.sdsm.org.mk, the website <https://www.zanashiotdom.mk>⁶⁴, and the official Facebook and Instagram profiles of mayoral candidates. Videos from rallies and meetings with citizens were also published on the party's YouTube channel.

At these elections, the coalition led by DUI rebranded itself as the National Alliance for Integration (NAI) and campaigned under the slogan “Together – let us make the change”. Although the campaign was expected to focus on local communities and citizens' everyday problems, NAI primarily emphasised activities aimed at restoring Albanian dignity and pride. In an effort to present itself as a convincing representative of Albanian interests in North Macedonia, DUI raised the stakes by nominating figures from the closest circle of the party leader, Ali Ahmeti, in two of the largest Albanian-majority municipalities, Čair and Tetovo—former minister Bujar Osmani and party vice-president Bajram Rexhepi.

Most mayoral candidates promised modern infrastructure, clean and affordable energy, sustainable job creation to stimulate the economy, and improved quality of life in the municipalities⁶⁵.

64 “We fight for our home!” Available at: <https://www.zanas #hiotdom.mk> (last accessed: 17 November 2025).

65 National Alliance for Integration (NAI), slogan “Together. Let's make the change”. Available at: <https://bdi.mk/> and <https://www.facebook.com/BDI002> (last accessed: 17 November 2025).

In addition to field activities, DUI conducted its campaign through the official Facebook and Instagram profiles of mayoral candidates, the party website www.bdi.mk, and the official Facebook profiles of the party and its leader, Ali Ahmeti.

The coalition “VLEN”, composed of the political parties Alternative, the BESA Movement and the Democratic Movement, campaigned under the slogan “One vote”, emphasising that it represents the voice of Albanians, young people, women, workers, the diaspora and all citizens seeking equality and dignity. The coalition focused on improving everyday problems faced by citizens, with campaign promises centred on infrastructure, communal issues, education, urban planning, sport, culture and broader social concerns of the citizens⁶⁶. Alongside meetings with citizens, the campaign was conducted through the coalition's website <https://vlen.eu/>, Facebook and Instagram, and the official party profiles of mayoral candidates.

The coalition “Experience for Success”, comprising the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Civic Option for Macedonia (GROM), Integra and the Party for the Complete Emancipation of Roma (PCER), ran under the slogan “More results, fewer excuses”⁶⁷. Its campaign promoted the idea that municipalities should serve citizens' needs rather than party interests. Key programme commitments included cleaner air, more green spaces, safer urban environments, digitalisation of municipalities, transparent management of public funds and realistic, achievable projects. In addition to meetings and public forums, the campaign was conducted mainly via Facebook, party websites and the official social-media profiles of candidates, with campaign videos also published on YouTube.

The coalition “For a Green Future”, consisting of Democratic Renewal of Macedonia (DOM) and the Movement for Democracy, Rights and Freedoms (DPS), campaigned under the slogan “A green, just and European future”, aiming to promote sustainable development, environmental protection and greater local-level transparency. The campaign relied primarily on online outreach via DOM's official Facebook page⁶⁸, with only limited in-person activities in a small number of municipalities.

The ZNAM – For Our Macedonia Movement campaigned under the slogan “I know (ZNAM) – and (name of the municipality) knows”, focusing on urban planning and

66 The promotional convention of VLEN – Mexhiti: Work is being carried out in every part of Albanian neighbourhoods - <https://mk.tv21.tv/promotivnata-konventsija-na-vlen-medhiti-se-raboti-vo-sekoj-del-od-albanskite-naselbi/> (last accessed: 17 November 2025).

67 The coalition “Experience for Success” presented its candidates for the upcoming local elections – <https://ldp.mk/2025/09/28/%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0-%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BA%D1%83%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D1%83%D1%81%D0%BF%D0%B5%D1%85-%D0%B3%D0%B8-%D0%BF/> (last accessed: 18 November 2025).

68 The official Facebook page of DOM, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/zelenapartija>

infrastructure, traffic and mobility, economic development, support for local businesses, environmental protection and green spaces⁶⁹. Besides meetings with citizens, campaign activities were conducted mostly through the party's official website <https://dvizenjeznam.org.mk/>, Facebook and Instagram, as well as the party's YouTube channel.

The party Levica ran under the slogan "The people, now", emphasising municipalities as the foundation of genuine change. Its programme focused on local economic development, infrastructure, environmental protection, communal services, fast and high-quality local transport, and inclusive citizen participation in policymaking and oversight of the public interest⁷⁰. Besides meetings with citizens, campaign activities were primarily conducted via the party's Facebook page, the party's official website www.levica.mk, as well as the candidate's official party profiles on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. The recordings from the events, meetings with citizens, and the promotion of the candidates were carried out via social media and the party's YouTube channel.

Tvoja Partija (Your Party) campaigned under the slogan "Try differently – vote for yours", promising a new model of rational and transparent governance, digital cities, a green recovery plan, quality urban planning, and the development of culture and sport. The programme also addressed traffic congestion, air pollution, urban greenery, communal hygiene, social care and inclusiveness⁷¹. The party's online campaign was conducted mainly through its official Facebook page.

A defining feature of these elections and the campaign was the significantly increased participation of independent lists and mayoral candidates across numerous municipalities and the City of Skopje, mirroring trends from the 2021 local elections. Movements such as Green Humane City, initiatives like "Poinaku"(Differently) from Bitola, Chance for Centre, Independents for Karpoš, and other independent lists presented programmes positioned as alternatives to traditional political parties. Their platforms largely focused on green policies, controlled urbanisation, transparency and accountability in local governance. Campaigns included field activities, promotion via Facebook and Instagram, and in some cases⁷², dedicated websites.

69 Election programme of the candidate for the Municipality of Centar, Miroslav Labudović, available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RE6-4BCCZnUs6rEUN94N30PgHj2Dxgz/view?fbclid=IwY2xjawOJUptleHRuA2FibQlxMQBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjIwMzIxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEeHlmpgZWQdFDI7D9Om8ludFzJFW5g_Xxn71tQSbvXu7aglSCx1c7HJE2Qy_A_aem_UGTjO5PwJXFNgD2Ef-KIUA&pli=1 (last accessed: 18 November 2025).

70 "Local Elections 2025", official page of the political party Levica. Available at: <https://levica.mk/lokalnizbori-2025/> (last accessed: 18 November 2025).

71 Official Facebook page of the party "Tvoja partija". Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/tvojapartija> (last accessed: 18 November 2025).

72 Green Humane City (www.zhg.mk), Protection for Karpoš (www.zastitazakarpos.mk), Chance for Centar (www.shansazacentar.mk) (last accessed: 18 November 2025).

Financing of the election campaign

In accordance with the Timetable for the implementation of electoral activities⁷³, participants in these local elections were obliged to submit four financial reports on election campaign expenditures. The first financial report, including the form on received donations, covered the first ten days of the election campaign, and parties and coalitions were required to submit it on the eleventh day of the campaign, namely by 9 October by 24:00. The second report, also accompanied by a form on received donations, covered the second half of the election campaign and was to be submitted one day after the end of the campaign, that is, on 18 October for the first round and on 1 November, one day before the voting day for the second round⁷⁴.

The third financial report again referred to donations received in the period from one day after the end of the election campaign until the closure of the transaction account for the election campaign.

The reports are submitted using a form prescribed by the Minister of Finance, which contains information on the name or title of the donor, the type and value of the donations, and the date on which the donations were received. The reports are submitted to the State Election Commission, the State Audit Office, and the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, all of which are obliged to publish them on their official websites. Political entities are also required to publish these reports on their own websites.

The fourth financial report, which relates to the total revenues and expenditures throughout the entire campaign, together with a detailed specification of costs and revenues, must be submitted by parties and coalitions immediately, and no later than 15 days from the date of closure of the transaction account. The transaction accounts of parties for the election campaign must be closed within 45 days from the publication of the final election results.

Furthermore, the State Audit Office is obliged to conduct an audit within 60 days from the submission of the final financial report. In financing the election campaign, participants may spend a maximum of 110 denars per registered voter on the electoral roll, that is, per municipality for which they have submitted a list of candidates.

73 Schedule for the implementation of electoral activities, State Election Commission. Accessed at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yxLT4YsZxAwu4faR_PcTTncyIVp1b5GZ/view (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

74 Ibid

According to the submitted financial reports^{75 76}, the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE spent the largest amount of funds during the election campaign, namely MKD 149,154,898.00 (EUR 2,425,283)⁷⁷. The financial balance of the campaign is balanced, with total revenues fully corresponding to total expenditures, without any recorded surplus or deficit of funds.

The second participant in terms of campaign revenues and expenditures is the NAI coalition led by the political party DUI, which spent a total of MKD 119,267,514 (EUR 1,939,309) during the election campaign. The total amount of revenues generated for the campaign is equal to the total amount of realised expenditures, meaning that all collected funds were fully utilised for campaign purposes.

The third participant by the amount of funds spent is the coalition led by SDSM, which spent a total of MKD 99,592,276.00 (EUR 1,619,387). This coalition also recorded a balanced financial outcome, without a surplus or deficit of funds.

The VLEN coalition spent a total of MKD 51,412,646.00 (EUR 835,978) for the 2025 local elections. Here as well, there is consistency between realised revenues and expenditures.

The "Experience for Success" coalition, led by the political party LDP, spent MKD 17,381,881.00 (EUR 282,632). This coalition likewise recorded a balanced financial result.

The political party Levica (The Left) spent MKD 6,475,819 (EUR 105,298) on the elections, which is MKD 92,250 (EUR 1,500) less than the collected MKD 6,568,069 (EUR 106,798).

A summary overview of election participants with the highest revenues and expenditures, expressed in denars, is presented below⁷⁸:

⁷⁵ Seven political subjects with the highest expenditures are highlighted.

⁷⁶ Financial reports, Local Elections 2025, State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) – <https://dksk.mk/mk/%d0%bb%d0%be%d0%ba%d0%b0%d0%bb%d0%bd%d0%b8-%d0%b8%d0%b7%d0%b1%d0%be%d1%80%d0%b8-2025/> (last accessed: 29 January 2026).

⁷⁷ Calculations in euros were made using the average exchange rate of 61.5

⁷⁸ Ordered by expenditures. For the coalitions led by VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM, the stated amounts represent the aggregate of several political subjects within the coalitions, which competed with different compositions across municipalities and submitted separate financial reports.

Participants in the elections	Total revenues	Total expenditures	Balance
VMRO-DPMNE and coalition	149,154,898.00	149,154,898.00	0
DUI	119,267,514.00	119,267,514.00	0
SDSM and coalition	99,592,276.00	99,592,276.00	0
VLEN	51,412,646.00	51,412,646.00	0
LDP and coalition	17,381,881.00	17,381,881.00	0
Levica (The Left)	6,568,069.00	6,475,819.00	+ 92,250.00
ZNAM ⁷⁹	/	/	/

Overall, the analysis of the financial reports from the most recent local elections indicates a high level of formal financial discipline among the majority of election campaign participants. For almost all major coalitions, a balanced financial outcome was recorded, with total revenues fully corresponding to total expenditures and no identified surplus or deficit of funds. This indicates that the collected funds were entirely spent for election campaign purposes, in line with legal provisions.

An exception is the political party Levica, where a minimal financial surplus was recorded, which does not significantly affect the overall picture of campaign financing. At the same time, the substantial differences in the level of expenditure among participants point to unequal financial capacities and differing opportunities for media visibility and field presence. Such a situation raises questions regarding the factual equality of conditions for participation in the electoral process. Consequently, transparent and lawful financing of election campaigns remains a key element in ensuring fair and democratic elections.

⁷⁹ The financial report of the political party ZNAM Movement, referring to total revenues and expenditures during the entire campaign, has not yet been published on the websites of the State Election Commission, the State Audit Office, or the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption.

Media

The monitoring of media coverage related to the elections was conducted from the moment the elections were called and throughout the campaign period ahead of both rounds of voting by the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (AAVMS), the body legally responsible for monitoring electronic media during the electoral process⁸⁰. According to AAVMS, the observation of media coverage in the period from the calling of the elections until the start of the campaign indicates that most media outlets respected journalistic standards and enabled the presentation of a variety of viewpoints on current political and social topics and issues. At the same time, the Agency did not identify violations of the limits on paid political advertising⁸¹. In addition, AAVMS notes that, as with previous electoral processes, amendments to the electoral legislation are necessary in the area of paid political advertising, as the current regulatory framework does not ensure equal conditions of access for all participants in the electoral process. AAVMS further points out that with the increasing number of candidates, it is becoming increasingly difficult, and even unrealistic, to fully apply the principles of equal representation and proportionality in broadcasting. This is due to the limited space available in news programmes, as well as the lack of adequate technical and human resources⁸². According to AAVMS, during the campaign period ahead of the first round of voting, the election silence was violated by the media outlets TV 24 Vesti, TV 21 – M, TV Vistel and TV Shutël, against which misdemeanour proceedings were initiated⁸³.

For the campaign period ahead of the first round, from 29 September to 17 October, the Agency observes that equal conditions of access to paid political advertising were not ensured for all participants in the electoral process. The political parties, Levica (the Left) and the ZNAM Movement – For Our Macedonia, although they took part in the campaign, did not have the legal right, pursuant to Article 75-g, paragraph 1 of the Electoral Code, to purchase airtime for paid political advertising on television and radio. As a result, broadcasters did not air any paid political advertising for Levica at all, while for the ZNAM Movement – For Our Macedonia, advertisements were broadcast

80 KAS, IDSCS, Handbook on the 2021 local elections in the Republic of North Macedonia, second supplemented edition. Accessed at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/belegexemplar_2021_the_republic_of_north_macedonias_2021_local_elections_handbook_mkd_version.pdf (last accessed: 13 November 2025).

81 Report from the monitoring conducted in the period from the calling of the elections until the start of the campaign for the 2025 local elections. Accessed at: <https://avmu.mk/lokalni-izbori-2025/> (last accessed: 17 November 2025).

82 Report on paid political advertising for the first round of the election campaign from 29 September to 17 October 2025. Accessed at: <https://avmu.mk/lokalni-izbori-2025/> (last accessed: 17 November 2025).

83 Report on paid political advertising for the first round of the election campaign from 29 September to 17 October 2025. Accessed at: <https://avmu.mk/%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BD%D0%B8-%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%B8-2025/> (last accessed: 25 November 2025).

whose client was the “Your Macedonia” Coalition, led by VMRO–DPMNE. In addition, due to the large number of mayoral and councillor candidates in this electoral cycle, the Agency notes that the editorial teams of the 11 television programme services subject to monitoring generally adopted two editorial approaches. Specifically, five television stations made efforts to provide information about as many participants in the election campaign as possible, including a larger number of non-parliamentary parties and independent candidates, while the remaining broadcasters generally focused on the campaigns of parliamentary parties.

For the period ahead of the second round of voting, from 20 to 31 October, the Agency finds that, as expected, there was a lower volume of paid political advertising compared to the first round. During the second round of the election campaign as well, no violations of the limits on paid political advertising⁸⁴ were identified.

During the first round, one complaint was submitted to the AAVMS by a female mayoral candidate in Kočani, who objected that Radio Kočani had scheduled a debate with only two out of the six candidates. The radio station explained that it planned a series of debates with two candidates at a time due to space limitations. The Agency reminded the media outlet of its legal obligation to ensure equal conditions for all candidates (Articles 75 and 75-a of the Electoral Code), to invite all participants, and to conduct debates until the end of the campaign. If a candidate refuses to participate, this should be stated in the programme. The complainant was informed immediately, and the correspondence was published in anonymised form on the Agency's website.

With regard to the programme services of the public broadcasting service MRT, according to the report of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, they complied with the legal requirements concerning the structure of daily news programmes, the broadcasting of debates and free political presentation. The first programme service, MRT1, provided information on the electoral process and ensured accessibility for persons with sensory disabilities. The Parliamentary Channel broadcast free political presentations of several election participants, allocating airtime in accordance with the statutory provisions. The Agency concludes that the programmes of the public service MRTV and the Parliamentary Channel fulfilled their obligations during the election campaign to provide free political presentation to election participants. The report indicates that the editorial teams of the 11 analysed television stations generally adopted two editorial approaches in election-related news coverage. Some sought to ensure broader and more inclusive coverage of campaign

84 Report on paid political advertising on broadcasters' programmes for the second round of the election campaign (from 20 to 31 October). Accessed at: <https://avmu.mk/%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BD%D0%B8-%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%B8-2025/> (last accessed: 12 December 2025).

participants, including non-parliamentary parties and independent candidates, while others focused primarily on the campaigns of parliamentary parties, with limited attention given to other participants. The public service programmes subject to monitoring were the First Programme Service MRT1, the Second Programme Service MRT2 and the Parliamentary TV Channel.

Table 1.1: Representation of political entities in the informative genres (29 September – 17 October 2025) (first round)

	MRT1		MRT2 in Albanian	
Activities related to the campaigns of the ruling political parties				
	Duration	Percentage	Duration	Percentage
Coalition VM-RO-DPMNE and others	1:07:41	42.50%	0:59:08	32.91%
Coalition VLEN	0:37:57	23.83%	1:12:21	40.26%
Movement ZNAM – For Our Macedonia	0:38:20	24.07%	0:35:30	19.75%
DPSM – Democratic Party of Serbs in Macedonia	0:15:16	9.59%	0:12:44	7.08%
Total for topic	2:39:14	100%	2:59:43	100%
Activities related to the campaigns of opposition political parties				
	Duration	Percentage	Duration	Percentage
Coalition SDSM and others	1:04:03	37.65%	0:32:58	17.61%
Levica (the Left)	0:33:08	19.48%	0:13:04	6.98%
National Alliance for Integration – NAI	0:32:36	19.16%	0:53:59	28.84%
Experience for Success	0:29:45	17.49%	0:23:35	12.60%
Democratic Party of the Turks in Macedonia	0:10:35	6.22%	1:03:34	33.96%
Total for topic	2:50:07	100%	3:07:10	100%

Table 1.2: Representation of political entities in informative genres (29 September – 17 October 2025) (first round)

Non-parliamentary parties and independent candidates

	MRT1		MRT2 Albanian language	
	Duration	Percentage	Duration	Percentage
Coalition for Green Future	0:01:19	2.46%	0:01:04	1.80%
TMRO	0:05:31	10.29%	0:03:53	6.52%
Visar Ademi - Group of voters	0:01:18	2.44%	0:06:35	11.05%
Zoran Nikolovski - Group of voters	0:02:12	4.09%	0:01:46	2.96%
Keti Staleska - Group of voters	0:01:18	2.42%	0:00:32	0.89%
Zoran Todorov - Group of voters	0:01:24	2.60%	0:01:04	1.80%
Marjan Kalevski - Group of voters	0:01:50	3.41%	0:01:10	1.96%
MAAK - Conservative Party	0:01:57	3.62%	0:01:06	1.83%
Biljana Ivanovska - Group of voters	0:02:02	3.78%	0:01:37	2.71%
Goran Markovski - Group of voters	0:03:23	6.32%	0:02:19	3.90%
Jana Belčeva Andreevska - Group of voters	0:01:31	2.84%	0:01:38	2.74%
Jane Dimeski - Group of voters	0:01:31	2.84%	0:01:05	1.82%
Your Party	0:01:33	2.90%	0:01:05	1.82%
Macedonian Third Era/ Sovereignists	0:03:32	6.59%	0:02:51	4.77%
Democrats Skopje	0:03:58	7.39%	0:01:06	1.84%
Workers' Party	0:01:12	2.25%	0:02:16	3.80%
Mendi Qira - Group of voters	0:02:37	4.87%	0:05:31	9.24%

Dragan Dimković - Group of voters	0:01:01	1.88%	0:01:04	1.79%
Nasto Palioski - Group of voters	0:02:03	3.82%	0:01:37	2.71%
Jovan Zlatevski - Group of voters	0:01:15	2.34%	0:01:11	2.00%
Borče Čupetreski - Group of voters	0:01:09	2.15%	0:01:05	1.81%
Pavlinče Mateska - Group of voters	0:01:40	3.11%	0:01:38	2.75%
Ljupčo Dunimagloski - Group of voters	0:01:11	2.21%	0:01:05	1.82%
Goran Stojkovski-Diro - Group of voters	0:02:30	4.65%	0:01:04	1.78%
Gabriela Ilievska - Group of voters	0:02:21	4.38%	0:02:06	3.53%
Gjorgija Igeski - Group of voters	0:00:55	1.71%	0:01:40	2.79%
Vasko Delovski - Group of voters	0:00:34	1.05%	0:01:11	2.00%
Goce Cvetkovski - Group of voters	0:00:51	1.58%	—	—
Besnik Asani - Group of voters	—	—	0:04:20	7.28%
Shkodran Alili - Group of voters	—	—	0:03:47	6.34%
Ramadan Imeri - Group of voters	—	—	0:01:10	1.96%
Total	09:34:41		10:12:06	

Table 1.3: Free political presentation on the Parliamentary Channel

Political entity	Duration
Igor Maleski – Group of voters	0:08:38
Coalition of VMRO - DPMNE	0:37:48
Macedonian Third Era / Macedonian Independent Lists – Sovereignists	0:36:30
Workers' Party	0:15:14
Coalition SDSM	0:34:10
Zoran Nikolovski - Group of voters	0:44:02
Mirjana Mirčevska - Macedonian Third Era	0:07:07
Movement ZNAM	0:13:37
Group of Voters – Independents for Karpoš (joint spot for mayoral and councillor candidates)	0:02:37
Gordan Stošević – Group of Voters	0:05:19
Saše Donev – Group of Voters	0:03:25
Marjan Kalevski – Group of Voters	0:09:46
Marko Taškov – Group of Voters	0:10:59
Total	3:49:12

For the period from 29 September to 17 October, it can be established that the First Programme Service MRT1 provided 2 hours, 39 minutes and 14 seconds of coverage to the ruling parties and 2 hours, 50 minutes and 7 seconds to the opposition parties. The Second Programme Service MRT2, Albanian-language programme, provided 2 hours, 59 minutes and 7 seconds for the activities of the ruling parties, while 3 hours, 7 minutes and 10 seconds were allocated to the opposition parties⁸⁵.

With regard to the two largest political parties, on the First Programme Service MRT1, the activities related to the campaign of the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE received almost four minutes more coverage compared to the coalition led by SDSM. The difference is more pronounced on the Second Programme Service MRT2, where the coalition led by SDSM received 27 minutes less coverage compared to the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE.

⁸⁵ Report on the manner of reporting by broadcasters in the first round of the election campaign for the local elections (from 29 September to 17 October 2025). Accessed at: <https://avmu.mk/%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BD%D0%B8-%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%B8-2025/> (last accessed: 10 November 2025).

Table 2: Representation of political subjects in news genres (20–31 October 2025) (second round)

	MRT1		MRT2 Albanian language	
Activities related to the election campaigns of the ruling political parties				
	Duration	Percentage	Duration	Percentage
Coalition VMRO - DPMNE and others	0:47:48	48.01 %	0:37:06	34.48 %
Movement ZNAM - For Our Macedonia	0:26:24	26.50 %	0:27:25	25.48 %
Coalition VLEN	00:25:23	25.49 %	0:43:04	40.03 %
Total	1:39:35	100%	1:47:35	100%
Activities related to the election campaigns of the opposition political parties				
Coalition SDSM and others	0:40:39	38.60 %	0:29:36	29.08 %
The Left	0:23:34	22.38 %	0:20:32	20.17 %
National Alliance for Integration - NAI	0:21:35	20.50 %	0:38:19	37.64 %
LDP - Experience for Success	0:19:30	16.97 %	0:13:21	13.11 %
Total	1:45:18	100%	1:41:48	100%

Based on the monitoring of the public broadcaster for the period preceding the second round, from 19 to 31 October 2025, the First Programme Service MRT1 provided 1 hour, 39 minutes and 35 seconds of coverage for the ruling parties and 1 hour, 45 minutes and 18 seconds for the opposition parties. The Second Programme Service MRT2, Albanian-language programme, provided 1 hour, 47 minutes and 35 seconds of coverage for the activities of the ruling parties, while 1 hour, 45 minutes and 18 seconds were allocated to the opposition parties.

With regard to the two largest political parties, during the campaign prior to the second round, on the First Programme Service MRT1 the coalition led by SDSM received 7 minutes less coverage compared to the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE. On the Second Programme Service MRT2 – Albanian-language programme, VMRO-DPMNE received 8 minutes more coverage compared to the coalition led by SDSM.

Regarding paid political advertising by political entities, which is also monitored by the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (AAVMS)⁸⁶, it was established that during both rounds of the election campaign the largest volume of paid political advertising was recorded for the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, totalling 254 hours, 27 minutes and 56 seconds; for the National Alliance for Integration (NAI) – 134 hours, 10 minutes and 35 seconds; for SDSM and its coalition – 121 hours, 46 minutes and 17 seconds; for the Coalition VLEN – 82 hours, 41 minutes and 15 seconds; for the Democratic Party of Turks – 25 hours, 26 minutes and 56 seconds; for the Democratic Party of Serbs in Macedonia – 15 hours, 17 minutes and 45 seconds; for the coalition led by LDP – 8 hours, 43 minutes and 4 seconds; for MAAK – Macedonian Action – 1 hour, 57 minutes and 22 seconds; for the Workers' Party – 1 hour, 34 minutes and 45 seconds; and for the Group of Voters represented by Goran Stojkovski Diro – 1 hour, 40 minutes and 30 seconds. The remaining participants did not exceed the threshold of one hour of total purchased broadcasting time for paid political advertising during the first round of the campaign. Among the national-level television broadcasters, the highest volume of paid advertisements was broadcast on the national television stations TV Kanal 5 (46 hours, 1 minute and 29 seconds), TV Alsat-M (39 hours, 37 minutes and 42 seconds) and TV 21-M (29 hours, 43 minutes and 39 seconds).

Political entity	24 Vesti		Alsat-M		Alfa		Kanal 5		Sitel		Telma	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE	05:05:01	01:40:10	01:32:29	00:40:56	15:51:27	04:42:17	16:32:29	03:09:47	11:37:09	02:26:56	07:23:15	01:55:11
Coalition led by SDSM	07:55:02	00:28:30	03:06:20				13:42:22	01:19:29	06:48:10	01:08:17	04:24:37	00:49:12
Coalition VLEN			15:16:12	02:36:00			01:25:20	00:24:20			00:54:40	00:18:00
National Alliance for Integration - NAI	00:56:27		14:57:52	01:26:23			04:18:22		00:13:05		00:32:32	
Goce Cvetkovski - Group of voters							00:01:52		00:00:42			
Danijel Stojanovski - Group of voters									00:03:20			
Agron Arifi - Group of voters			00:01:36									
Coalition led by LDP "Experience for Success"	01:14:25						02:43:12		01:29:02		00:52:09	

86 Report on paid political advertising on broadcasters' programmes for the second round of the election campaign (from 20 to 31 October). Accessed at: <https://avmu.mk/%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BD%D0%B8-%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%B8-2025/> (last accessed: 25 December 2025).

MAAK - Macedonian Action	00:12:36	00:00:56	00:07:54
TMRO		00:01:30	
Tatjana Čakulev – Group of voters		00:06:18	00:01:10
Democratic Party of Serbs in Macedonia	03:17:00	02:04:30	00:06:18
Petar Kotevski – Group of voters		00:08:20	00:11:20
Nevena Georgievska – Group of voters			00:04:12
Marjan Kalevski – Group of voters "ZHG"			00:05:00

The OSCE/ODIHR Mission also monitored the media landscape during the local elections. In its preliminary statement on the first round, it noted that the overall election coverage was neutral in tone, while the two largest parties dominated news coverage on the monitored national broadcasters⁸⁷. With regard to the second round, the Mission found that the monitored broadcasters provided voters with sufficient information about the candidates, generally using a neutral tone. The Mission observed that, although national media reported on smaller parties and independent candidates, the Electoral Code nevertheless places them in a subordinate position, contrary to OSCE recommendations and international good practice⁸⁸.

87 Statement of preliminary findings and conclusions of the ODIHR election observation mission – local elections, 19 October 2025. Accessed at: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/1/c/599930.pdf> (last accessed: 11 November 2025).

88 Statement of preliminary findings and conclusions of the ODIHR election observation mission – second round of the local elections, 19 October 2025. Accessed at: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/1/c/599930.pdf> (last accessed: 25 November 2025).

Results of the 2025 local elections

In the first round of the local elections, held on 19 October 2025, a total of 834,440 voters out of 1,832,415 registered voters on the electoral roll cast their ballots, resulting in a turnout of 46.48%⁸⁹ in the first round. The second round of the local elections was held on 2 November 2025, and a lower voter turnout was recorded. Out of a total of 1,013,357 voters who were eligible to vote in the second round, 402,895 voted, or 40.46%⁹⁰. Turnout in these local elections was lower compared to the previous local elections in 2021, when turnout was 51.44% in the first round and 49.65% in the second round, as well as compared to the 2017 elections, when turnout reached 59.51% in the first round and 51.92% in the second round.

In the first round of voting for the election of mayors of the municipalities and the City of Skopje, a total of 66,083 ballot papers were declared invalid, while in the second round 29,813 invalid ballots were recorded. From the ballot papers cast for the election of members of municipal councils and the Council of the City of Skopje, a total of 64,269 ballots were declared invalid⁹¹.

For the 80 municipalities and the City of Skopje, the State Election Commission (SEC) confirmed 309 mayoral candidates and 577 candidate lists for members of municipal councils. As submitters of mayoral candidate lists and/or lists of candidates for council members, six coalitions and 26 political parties participated in these elections. Groups of voters supported 56 independent mayoral candidates and 67 independent candidate lists for council members⁹².

The coalition “Your Macedonia” led by VMRO-DPMNE, as well as the coalition “Coalition for the 2025 Local Elections” led by SDSM, participated in these elections with an equal and, at the same time, the largest number of mayoral candidates – 64 – as well as the same and largest number of councillor lists – 76. The coalition “National Alliance for Integration (NAI)” led by DUI participated with 23 mayoral candidates and 34 lists of candidates for municipal councils, the coalition “VLEN” (Worth it) with 20 mayoral candidates and 28 councillor lists, while the coalition “Experience for Success” led by the Liberal Democratic Party, participated with 10 mayoral candidates and 36

89 See Voter turnout in the first round of the 2025 local elections, State Election Commission. Accessed at: <https://rezultati-prv.sec.mk/mk/mayr/t6> (last accessed: 11 November 2025).

90 Voter turnout in the second round of the 2025 local elections, State Election Commission. Accessed at: <https://rezultati.sec.mk/mk/asmb-sk/t6> (last accessed: 11 November 2025).

91 See local elections results, State Election Commission. First-round results: <https://rezultati-prv.sec.mk/mk/asmb-sk/r>. Second-round results: <https://rezultati.sec.mk/mk/mayr-sk/r> (last accessed: 14 November 2025).

92 The statistical data were obtained on the basis of information published by the State Election Commission (SEC) on its official website, accessed via: <https://candidatelist.sec.mk/LolcalElectionsCandidates> (last accessed: 3 October 2025).

councillor lists. The coalition “For a Green Future”, led by the Democratic Renewal of Macedonia, participated in these local elections only with lists for municipal councils and the Council of the City of Skopje, totalling 12 lists.

The following political parties also nominated candidates for mayors and/or councillors: The Left, Movement ZNAM – For Our Macedonia, Bosniak Democratic Union, VMRO–People’s Party, Civic Initiative GREEN, Democratic Party of Roma, Democratic Party of Turks in Macedonia, Democratic Forces of Roma, United Macedonia, Macedonian Third Era / Macedonian Sovereignists, Party for the Movement of Turks in Macedonia, Serbian Party in Macedonia, Political Party Movement for the National Unity of Turks (DNET), Political Party Democrats, Workers’ Party, Rodina Macedonia, Union of Roma, Your Party, Permanent Macedonian Radical Unification (TMRO), and Union of Roma Skopje.

Following the first round of voting for the election of mayors of municipalities and the Mayor of the City of Skopje, and after the expiry of the legal deadlines for filing lawsuits with the Administrative Court regarding complaints in the voting and results determination process, 44 mayors were elected. In the municipalities of Gostivar, Vrapčište, Mavrovo and Rostuša, and Centar Župa, the legal requirement that at least one third of the total number of registered voters listed in the extract from the electoral roll participate in the vote was not met, and therefore the entire electoral procedure must be repeated, in accordance with Article 132 paragraph (2) of the Electoral Code⁹³. This means that in these four municipalities, a new electoral procedure will be conducted within 60 days of the publication of the final results, and they did not participate in the second round of voting. The election procedure for mayors and councillors in these four municipalities will be repeated in January 2026. After the first round of voting, a total of 11 complaints regarding the voting for the election of mayors and 17 complaints regarding the voting for the election of members of municipal councils were submitted to the SEC⁹⁴.

In the second round of the local elections, voting was conducted for mayors in 32 municipalities and for the Mayor of the City of Skopje, while in three polling stations in Šuto Orizari, the voting for councillors was repeated. In this round, 16 complaints regarding the voting for the election of mayors in the municipalities of Brvenica, Šuto Orizari and Karpoš were submitted to the SEC, as well as three complaints regarding the voting for the election of councillors at the polling stations where re-voting was

93 Decision on the finality of the voting results from the first, round for the election of members of municipal councils and the Council of the City of Skopje, and for the election of mayors of municipalities and the Mayor of the City of Skopje, held on 19 October 2025. Available at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1L5dRdo1hhZKe2k-STM0VdeHicQZL-GMP/view> (last accessed: 24 November 2025).

94 Ibid.

conducted in the municipality of Šuto Orizari. Upon completion of the complaints and appeals procedures, on 12 November 2025 the SEC published the Supplement to the Decision on the Final Results for the completed second round of voting. Across both rounds of the elections, 76 municipal mayors and the Mayor of the City of Skopje were elected. In the four municipalities where the requirement for at least one third of registered voters to participate in the first round was not met – Gostivar, Vrapčište, Mavrovo and Rostuša, and Centar Župa – the voting will be repeated in January 2026.

The results of the 2025 local elections indicate significant changes in the distribution of local power among political actors. The coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE won the largest number of municipalities, securing 33 victories in the first round and an additional 21 in the second round, as well as the mayoral office in the City of Skopje. With a total of 54 municipalities plus the capital city, this coalition established the broadest local presence in this electoral cycle. The coalition VLEN (Worth it) achieved a total of nine victories – five in the first round and four in the second round – thereby strengthening its influence in municipalities with a predominantly Albanian electorate and in several multiethnic environments. The coalition led by SDSM won three municipalities in each electoral round, totalling six, which represents a continuation of the trend of reduced local strongholds compared to previous electoral cycles. The coalition led by DUI won three municipalities in the first round and one in the second round, totalling four, reflecting the changing political dynamics in parts of its traditional support base. The parties ZNAM and the Union of Roma each won one municipality, both in the second round, maintaining a limited local presence. One independent candidate was also elected in the second round, indicating the continued, albeit selective, presence of non-party and civic initiatives in the local political arena.

The distribution of councillor seats following the 2025 local elections shows strong representation of coalitions led by the largest parties, alongside a notable presence of smaller political parties and independent lists. The coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE won 549 councillor mandates, thereby retaining the most extensive presence in municipal councils across the country. The coalition led by SDSM secured 231 councillor seats, positioning it as the second most represented option, albeit with fewer mandates compared to previous electoral cycles. The coalition led by DUI won 206 councillor seats, while the coalition VLEN secured 131 mandates, reflecting the new balance in municipalities with predominantly Albanian electorates and in several multiethnic municipalities. The Left, with 66 councillors, maintained a moderate but stable presence, while ZNAM, with 44 mandates, demonstrated locally concentrated influence. Smaller parties, such as DPT (21), as well as the LDP/GROM/Integra coalition (12), occupied limited positions in individual municipalities. Several political entities, including MAAK, the Union of Roma, GREEN, DPSM and DNET, hold between three

and four mandates, while multiple parties secured one or two councillor seats each.

Independent lists won a total of 51 councillor mandates, indicating a noticeable increase in non-party initiatives and growing support for locally oriented candidates outside traditional party structures.

Table 1: Results of mayoral elections

Political subject	First round	Second round	Total
Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE	33	21 + City of Skopje	54 + City of Skopje
Coalition VLEN	5	4	9
Coalition led by SDSM	3	3	6
Coalition led by DUI	3	1	4
ZNAM	0	1	1
Union of Roma	0	1	1
Independents	0	1	1

Table 2: Results of councillor elections

Councillor seats won

Political entity	Number of councillors
Coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE	549
Coalition led by SDSM	231
Coalition led by DUI	206
Coalition VLEN (Worth it)	131
The Left	66
ZNAM	44
DPT	21
Coalition LDP/GROM/Integra	12

MAAK	4
Union of Roma	4
GREEN	3
DPSM	3
DNET	3
VMRO-NP	2
United Macedonia	2
DOM	2
Union of Roma	2
Pensioners' Party	1
DS	1
Macedonian Third Era	1
BDS	1
Democrats	1
PODEM	1
SP	1
PDT	1
DSR	1
Independents	51

Protection of the right to vote

The Electoral Code guarantees the protection of the right to vote. Pursuant to the Electoral Code, every submitter of a list of candidates and every voter has the right to file a complaint with the State Election Commission (SEC) if they consider that their right has been violated.

Complaints submitted by the submitters of candidate lists may relate to the voting procedure, the tabulation and determination of results, while voters may file a complaint if their voting right has been violated during the procedure. The procedure conducted for the protection of the right to vote is urgent; therefore, in such cases, complaints and lawsuits may not be submitted by post.

Complaints submitted by the submitters of candidate lists must be filed with the SEC within 48 hours after the completion of voting, or after the publication of the preliminary results, and the SEC is obliged to adopt a decision within 48 hours of

receipt of the complaint. The SEC informs the complainant of its decision via electronic mail, and the decision is deemed delivered within five hours from the moment the electronic notice is sent.

A complainant whose complaint has been rejected by the SEC has the right to file a lawsuit with the Administrative Court within 24 hours of receipt of the decision. The Court must adopt a decision within 60 hours of receipt of the lawsuit. The Administrative Court may either confirm or amend the decision of the SEC, and its decisions are final, meaning that no appeal or other legal remedy may be lodged against them.

In cases where a voter's right to vote has been violated, the voter may file a complaint with the SEC within 24 hours, and the SEC is obliged to adopt a decision within four hours of receipt of the complaint. The decision of the SEC may be appealed by submitting a lawsuit to the Administrative Court within 24 hours of receipt of the decision. If the deadlines run and intersect during the voting process and the decision is favourable to the voter, the voter shall be enabled to exercise their right to vote⁹⁵.

For the 2025 local elections, on the day of voting in the first round, a total of 51 complaints were submitted to the State Election Commission, while an additional 30 complaints were submitted between the two election rounds, related to voter registration and voting from home. The majority of complaints in the first round related to the determination and tabulation of results (32 complaints), as well as to the voting procedure itself (19 complaints). The State Election Commission rejected 43 complaints as unfounded and dismissed eight complaints as inadmissible or submitted outside the prescribed procedure. In examining some of the complaints, the SEC acted collectively rather than individually, which the OSCE/ODIHR observation mission assessed as an overly formalistic approach that limited the possibility for a substantive examination of the allegations⁹⁶. Between the two election rounds, 30 complaints were submitted to the SEC, of which 22 were upheld and eight rejected. These complaints most often concerned registration for voting from home, corrections to the Voters' List, and violations of individual voting rights⁹⁷. With regard to the procedure for the tabulation and determination of results from the second round of the local elections, 16 complaints were submitted to the SEC, all of which were rejected.

95 IDSCS and KAS, Handbook on the 2024 Parliamentary Elections in the Republic of North Macedonia, second updated edition. Accessed at: <https://izbornaarhiva.mk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/2024-handbook-on-2024-parliamentary-elections-second-updated-mkd-version.pdf> (last accessed: 12 December 2025).

96 Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. OSCE/ODIHR, second round, 2 November 2025. Accessed at: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/d/a/600803.pdf> (last accessed: 24 November 2025).

97 Ibid.

Regarding the appeals procedure, during the first round, 14 appeals against SEC decisions were submitted to the Administrative Court. The Court confirmed the SEC's decisions in 10 cases, while four appeals were upheld, resulting in the annulment of results at several polling stations in the municipality of Šuto Orizari and the repetition of voting at certain polling stations. In all four cases, the Administrative Court found that the SEC had incorrectly assessed the procedure for tabulation and determination of results, and upheld the lawsuits submitted by the political party Union of Roma Skopje and the political party Alliance of Roma of Macedonia. Through its rulings, the Court annulled the SEC decisions and upheld the complaints concerning polling stations 2961, 2962 and 2966, after which the voting results for mayor and municipal councillors at these polling stations were annulled⁹⁸. ODIHR noted that the handling of some cases by the SEC limited the right to an effective legal remedy, while the Administrative Court acted thoroughly and in accordance with procedures⁹⁹. With regard to the second round of the local elections, a total of 16 lawsuits against SEC decisions were submitted to the Administrative Court, of which 11 were submitted by the Alliance for Albanians, four by the Besa Movement, and one by the People's Movement for Macedonia. All 16 lawsuits related to the second round were rejected by the Administrative Court.

With regard to the work of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), ODIHR noted that from the calling of the elections until the second round, the Commission received approximately 36 reports, most of which were related to the misuse of state resources and pressure on voters. However, as before the first round, the SCPC did not treat these submissions as formal complaints and therefore did not decide on them prior to election day¹⁰⁰. Nevertheless, the SCPC acted upon several reports related to the electoral process, which it did not treat as formal complaints but examined within the scope of its competences. Some of the reports were forwarded to competent authorities, such as the Public Prosecutor's Office, while others were closed due to the absence of established violations of legal provisions. Among the cases examined were a report concerning a secondary school principal who shared election propaganda in an electronic group, a report regarding the election of a university vice-rector for whom no legal violation was established, as well as several reports related to employment and public statements by candidates. In all cases, the SCPC concluded that either the competence belonged to another authority or that

98 Rulings of the Administrative Court. Accessed via: <https://shorturl.at/dIADc> ; <https://shorturl.at/IO0C0> ; <https://shorturl.at/gPqnH> ; <https://shorturl.at/IPHx> (last accessed: 24 November 2025).

99 Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. OSCE/ODIHR, second round, 2 November 2025. Accessed at: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/d/a/600803.pdf> (last accessed: 24 November 2025).

100 Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. OSCE/ODIHR, second round, 2 November 2025. Accessed at: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/d/a/600803.pdf> (last accessed: 24 November 2025).

there were no grounds to establish a violation of electoral rules. Additionally, within the framework of its analysis of corruption risks and review of electoral provisions related to media representation, the SCPC pointed out that unclear terminology in the Electoral Code creates regulatory risks and unequal conditions for participants in the campaign¹⁰¹.

Assessment by observers

A total of 1,622 domestic and international observers¹⁰² were accredited to monitor the 2025 local elections. By comparison, these elections were observed by more monitors than the previous local elections in 2021 (1,257 observers), but significantly fewer than the 2017 local elections, which were observed by a total of 6,082 observers¹⁰³.

This electoral cycle was monitored by 957 domestic observers. Among them, the most numerous were observers from the Association for the Development of Socio-Social Innovations "Wake Up" from Skopje, with 709 observers. A significant number of observers were also accredited from the civil association CIVIL (60 observers), the Institute for Economic Strategies and International Relations – Ohrid (27), the National Council for Gender Equality (25), the Youth Cultural Centre from Bitola (23), the National Network – Women for Women (20), as well as other domestic civil society organisations such as Interaktiv from Bitola, Romalitiko from Skopje, the association Inkluziva, and others¹⁰⁴.

International observers numbered 651 persons, which is 281 more observers than during the previous electoral cycle in 2021. The most represented among them were observers from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), whose mission included 500 international observers. In addition, the electoral process was monitored by representatives of the Embassy of the United States in Skopje with 30 observers, the Council of Europe with 24 observers, and the European Parliament with 18 observers. Diplomatic missions accredited observers as follows: 11 observers from the British Embassy, 10 from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, 9 from the French Embassy, 8 from the Hungarian Embassy, 4 from the Albanian Embassy in Skopje, 3 from the Embassy of Kosovo, 3 from the Swiss

101 Radio Free Europe, SCPC with multiple election-related reports, some forwarded to the Prosecutor's Office, published on 3 November 2025. Accessed at: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/33580223.html> (last accessed: 24 November 2025).

102 Table of accredited observers for the 2025 Local Elections. State Election Commission. Accessed at: <https://www.sec.mk/lokalni-izbori-2025/#tab-id-35> (last accessed: 10 December 2025).

103 Handbook on the 2021 Local Elections in the Republic of North Macedonia, second updated edition. Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" – Skopje. Accessed at: https://izbornaarhiva.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/belegexemplar_2021_the_republic_of_north_macedonias_2021_local_elections_handbook_mkd_version.pdf (last accessed: 10 December 2025).

104 State Election Commission (2025).

Embassy, and one observer each from the Embassies of Slovakia and Türkiye. From foreign state institutions, the Central Election Commission of Kosovo participated with 10 observers, electoral authorities from Croatia, Moldova, and Türkiye with two observers each, and the Central Election Commission of Ukraine with one observer. In addition, the elections were monitored by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) with seven representatives, the Centre for Development, Reforms and Training of Electoral Systems from Georgia with two observers, as well as two civil society organisations from Moldova and Serbia, each represented by one observer¹⁰⁵.

In addition to domestic and international observers, the elections were also followed by several foreign media outlets, represented by 14 journalists. Among them, the Kosovo television channel Klan was present with six journalists, TV1 Kosovo, Radio Television of Kosovo, and the Turkish State Television with two representatives each, and Top Channel Albania and the European Press Agency with one journalist each¹⁰⁶.

In the preliminary conclusions of the OSCE Election Observation Mission (EOM), the first round of elections was assessed as highly competitive, providing voters with a wide range of political alternatives. Although observers assessed election day as calm and orderly, they described the electoral atmosphere as politically polarised, particularly with regard to interethnic relations. The Mission noted that fundamental freedoms and electoral rules were largely respected, but expressed concern over isolated cases of misuse of public resources, as well as pressure and intimidation of voters¹⁰⁷.

With regard to electoral debate and campaign conduct, observers noted that although parties generally focused on local issues, broader topics were also prominently featured, including identity issues, EU integration, corruption, and the rights of ethnic communities¹⁰⁸.

As in previous electoral cycles, the OSCE highlighted weak transparency in campaign financing and addressed the lack of regulation and oversight of election campaigning on social media. According to the Mission, the legal framework regulating campaign financing still contains systemic gaps which, despite numerous ODIHR recommendations, remain unresolved. The preliminary conclusions further warned that nearly two-thirds of electoral contestants failed to submit initial interim financial

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Preliminary findings and conclusions of the ODIHR Election Observation Mission – first round of the local elections, 20 October 2025. Accessed at: <https://odihr.osce.org/sites/default/files/f/documents/1/c/599930.pdf> (last accessed: 10 December 2025).

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

reports, in contravention of electoral legislation¹⁰⁹.

Regarding the voting process at polling stations, observers positively assessed voting in 98 per cent of observed polling stations. However, procedural shortcomings were reported at some locations, including group voting, inappropriate interference by third parties, problems with the secrecy of the vote and biometric voter identification, as well as limited access for voters with physical disabilities. The vast majority of observed vote counts and tabulations were assessed positively¹¹⁰.

The process of conducting the second round of elections was assessed by the Election Observation Mission as well organised, professional, and calm. In the period between the two rounds, fundamental freedoms of association, assembly, and expression were respected, and candidates were able to campaign freely. The election campaign itself was assessed as highly competitive, although in certain municipalities observers noted a clear division along ethnic lines.

The Mission indicated that not all candidates enjoyed equal campaign conditions, referring in particular to the formula for allocating funds for paid political advertising, which, according to observers, undermined the ability to conduct media campaigns in several electoral contests¹¹¹. With regard to campaign financing, the preliminary conclusions for the second round stated that limited legal reporting requirements and the absence of oversight mechanisms reduced accountability in the electoral process and, consequently, public trust. According to the Mission, none of the institutions responsible for overseeing campaign financing initiated proceedings against candidates who failed to meet reporting requirements prior to the first round, further diminishing public trust and accountability¹¹².

Polling stations observed during the second round were positively assessed, and Mission observers reported no incidents or serious procedural violations. Where observed, the counting and tabulation of votes were assessed as transparent, professional, and efficient, in line with prescribed procedures¹¹³.

The civil society organisation CIVIL, which was the second-largest domestic observer group, also provided a positive assessment of the electoral process, while highlighting several systemic and institutional shortcomings. CIVIL observers pointed to violations

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Preliminary findings and conclusions of the ODIHR Election Observation Mission – second round of the local elections, 20 October 2025. Accessed at: <https://odihr.osce.org/sites/default/files/f/documents/d/a/600803.pdf> (last accessed: 10 December 2025).

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

of the election silence, voter pressure, allegations and indications of vote-buying, and breaches of ballot secrecy at multiple polling stations. Particular attention was drawn to the outdated Voters' Register, which, according to CIVIL, still contains deceased persons. Similar to the OSCE Mission, CIVIL raised concerns about limited access to polling stations for persons with physical disabilities. Regarding the election campaign, CIVIL highlighted the use of extreme nationalist narratives and ethnic mobilisation, which, in their assessment, shifted the focus of the campaign away from local policies towards national and geopolitical issues¹¹⁴.

Assessment of the elections by the participants

After the closure of polling stations in both election rounds, political parties and independent candidates presented their views on the conduct of election day.

At the press conference held after the completion of voting, the Vice-President of VMRO-DPMNE, Minister Timcho Mucunski, stated that the party was on the threshold of a major victory and expected to win more votes and mayoral positions than in the 2021 elections. Declaring the elections to be peaceful and successful, among the most exemplary in the country's recent history, he thanked citizens for their turnout and their willingness to reward the party's work. Prior to the official declaration of the election victory, Mucunski emphasised that SDSM was a party facing numerous problems and that a process of reform was expected to begin¹¹⁵. After the announcement of the official results, the party leader, Hristijan Mickoski, declared victory in the first round in over 30 municipalities, highlighting the historic victory in the Municipality of Strumica after two decades¹¹⁶. According to him, citizens had chosen values and people who made promises, and the party had promised and delivered victory.

Following the completion of the second round of elections, party leader Mickoski thanked citizens and declared a major joint victory of the coalition in most municipalities across the country. He particularly highlighted the victory in the Municipality of Kičevo, where the VMRO-DPMNE candidate defeated the long-standing mayor from the opposition DUI, Fatmir Dehari. According to him, the victory

114 "Local Elections 2025: A generally peaceful process with serious systemic and institutional shortcomings — preliminary assessment by CIVIL". CIVIL civic organisation. 3 November 2025. Accessed at: <https://civilmedia.mk/lokalni-izbori-2025-generalno-miren-protses-so-seriozni-sistemske-i-institucionalni-slabosti-preliminarna-otsenka-na-tsvil/> (last accessed: 10 December 2025).

115 "Mucunski: We expect more votes and mayors than in the 2021 local elections", *Libertas*, 19 October 2025. Accessed at: <https://libertas.mk/mucunski-ochekuvame-pove-e-glasovi-i-gradonachalnici-od-lokalnite-izbori-vo-2021-godina/> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

116 "Mickoski: We waited 20 years for a victory in Strumica, Sotir fought alone in Karpoš against alliances and underground games", *Lokalno*, 19 October 2025. Accessed at: <https://lokalno.mk/mickoski-20-godini-chekavme-pobeda-vo-strumica-sotir-vo-karposh-sam-se-boreshe-protiv-sojuzi-i-podzemni-igri/> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

in Kičevo is proof that citizens can unite around shared values and common goals regardless of political or religious affiliation¹¹⁷. Mickoski noted that this election result sends a message to SDSM and stated that he was not pleased by their debacle, while also calling for unity¹¹⁸.

The Secretary General and Head of the SDSM Election Headquarters, Aleksandar Saša Dimitrijević, after the closing of the polls, informed that they expected victory in seven municipalities. He described election day as generally peaceful but stated that a series of violations of the electoral process had been recorded, including misuse of the voter register, attempts at vote-buying, direct threats and blackmail, breaches of the pre-election silence through campaigning, and numerous irregularities during the voting process itself¹¹⁹. Subsequently, party leader Venko Filipče also sent congratulations for the good organisation and peaceful conduct of voting on election day, emphasising that all remarks had already been submitted to the relevant institutions and congratulating all mayors elected in the first round¹²⁰. According to him, although the party's election result did not meet expectations, they were nevertheless satisfied¹²¹.

After the conclusion of voting in the second round, President Filipče congratulated citizens on their dignified voting and congratulated the mayors from all political parties on their victories. At the same time, he declared victory in the municipalities of Centar, Makedonska Kamenica, and Zrnovci, thereby completing the total of six elected mayors¹²². However, despite declaring the elections fair and democratic, Filipče accused the authorities of exerting pressure on all SDSM candidates in the 17 municipalities where the party entered the second round, and announced that, despite demands from the authorities, he would not resign from the party leadership. He also announced that the party would hold a Congress to discuss the election

117 "Mickoski: Kičevo showed that Macedonia knows how to unite", Republika, 2 November 2025. Accessed at: <https://republika.mk/vesti/makedonija/miczkoski-kichevo-pokazha-deka-makedonija-znae-da-se-obedini/> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

118 "VMRO-DPMNE declares a major victory, Mickoski to celebrate in Brvenica and Kičevo", Netpress, 2 November 2025. Accessed at: <https://netpress.com.mk/2025/11/02/golema-pobeda-proglasi-vmro-dpmne-miczkoski-ke-slavi-vo-brvenicza-i-vo-kichevo/> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

119 "SDSM expects victory in seven municipalities", 360 Stepni, 19 October 2025. Accessed at: <https://360stepeni.mk/sdsm-ochekuva-pobeda-vo-sedum-opshtini/> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

120 "Filipče: SDSM won in three municipalities in the first round, leads in around ten and enters the second round in about twenty municipalities", SDSM Press, 19 October 2025. Accessed at: <https://sdsd.org.mk/pres-konferencii/104312> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

121 "Filipče after the defeat in the local elections: This result is not what we wished for, but it is not bad", MKD.mk, 19 October 2025. Accessed at: <https://mkd.mk/makedonija/filipche-po-porazot-na-lokalnite-izbori-ovoj-rezultat-ne-e-toj-shto-go-posakuvavme-no-ne-e-losh/> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

122 "Filipče after the defeat in the local elections: This result is not what we wished for, but it is not bad", MKD.mk, 19 October 2025. Accessed at: <https://mkd.mk/makedonija/filipche-po-porazot-na-lokalnite-izbori-ovoj-rezultat-ne-e-toj-shto-go-posakuvavme-no-ne-e-losh/> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

results and introduce changes to the party leadership¹²³.

The Vice-President of DUI, Arber Ademi, following the completion of the first round, stated from party headquarters that the National Alliance for Integration (NAI) considered these elections free, fair, and democratic, with a small number of remarks that would be submitted to the institutions¹²⁴. Ademi declared a historic victory in the Municipality of Čaška, where for the first time the municipality elected a mayor from the ranks of NAI, while in Gostivar their candidate won with a 6:1 margin over the VLEN candidate¹²⁵. After several days of silence, DUI leader Ali Ahmeti also addressed the public, denying speculation that he intended to resign and emphasising that, according to the election results, NAI were the winners of the first election round¹²⁶.

Regarding the results of the second round, leader Ahmeti described them as a “message from the citizens” which his coalition accepts with respect and responsibility. However, according to him, the results in some municipalities did not reflect the genuine will of the citizens but were a consequence of unprincipled coalitions and temporary agreements that undermined the spirit of democratic competition¹²⁷. Ahmeti stated that the loss of several positions at the municipal level would serve as a call for in-depth analysis, renewal of strategies, and correction of potential shortcomings. Vice-President Ademi characterised the elections as a test of the political and moral character of the state, warning of an unfair and unlawful campaign and accusing numerous electoral irregularities. On behalf of the NAI coalition, he issued a direct call to every member of the State Election Commission, observers, and all institutions to guarantee the integrity of the electoral process¹²⁸.

The spokesperson of the VLEN Election Headquarters, Driton Sulejmani, assessed the first-round results as a clear message sent by Albanians that Ali Ahmeti's time

123 “SDSM won in Centar and two other municipalities, Filipče does not resign”, Radio Free Europe, 2 November 2025. Accessed at: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/33579516.html> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

124 “Arber Ademi: NAI considers these elections free, fair and democratic”, Nova Makedonija, 19 October 2025. Accessed at: <https://novamakedonija.com.mk/makedonija/arber-ademi-nai-ovie-izbori-gi-smeta-za-slobodni-fer-i-demokratski/> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

125 “DUI boasts of a ‘historic victory’ in Čaška, its candidates enter the second round in Kičevo and Struga”, Lokalno, 19 October 2025. Accessed at: <https://lokalno.mk/dui-se-pofali-so-istoriska-pobeda-vo-chashka-nivnite-kandidati-vleguvaat-vo-vtor-krug-vo-kichevo-i-struga/> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

126 “DUI defends its leader – Ali Ahmeti does not step down”, 24 Vesti, 24 October 2025. Accessed at: <https://24.mk/details/dui-vo-odbrana-na-liderot-ali-akhmeti-ne-se-povlekuva> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

127 “The beginning of the end of ethnic voting, Kičevo shattered the myth of divisions”, Večer Press, 4 November 2025. Accessed at: <https://www.vecer.press/pochetok-na-krajot-na-etnichkoto-glasane-kichevo-go-urna-mitot-za-podelbi/> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

128 “Ademi: These were dishonest elections with vote-buying and misuse of state resources in favour of the authorities”, 360 Stepeni, 2 November 2025. Accessed at: <https://360stepeni.mk/ademi-ova-bea-nechesni-izbori-so-kupeni-glasovi-i-zloupotreba-na-drzhavnite-resursi-vo-korist-na-vlasta/> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

on the political scene had ended. Sulejmani declared victory in the first round and emphasised that they entered the second round as favourites in Tetovo, Debar, Brvenica, Debar, and Struga. At a press conference, he criticised NAI leaders, accusing them of attempting for months to hold citizens hostage through a referendum initiative¹²⁹. One of the VLEN leaders and mayoral candidate for Čair, Izet Mexhiti, after the announcement of election results, celebrated victory in the first round in Čair and thanked all voters who supported the VLEN coalition. Mexhiti emphasised that in municipalities where they felt strongest, DUI faced a loss of public trust¹³⁰, and did not miss the opportunity to state that the Albanian vote had sent their opponent, Ali Ahmeti, into political retirement and that he must resign¹³¹.

Baškim Bakiu from the VLEN Election Headquarters declared a convincing victory in the second round in all municipalities where the coalition participated, assessing that VLEN had positioned itself as the second political force in the country. Bakiu thanked citizens for their strong support and called on DUI to accept that it was time for Ali Ahmeti to resign and for the party to reform if it wished to remain relevant on the political scene.¹³² In official statements to the media, the party assessed that the second round of voting took place in a fair and democratic atmosphere and that citizens demonstrated a high level of democratic culture¹³³.

The leader of Levica (the Left), Dimitar Apasiev, after the first round, stated that the party had achieved a historic result by winning over 70 councillor seats nationwide and entering municipal councils in around ten municipalities for the first time. Emphasising that, in addition to the Council of the City of Skopje, Levica was emerging as the second political force in the councils of most Skopje municipalities, Apasiev declared victory over SDSM and stated that Levica was the true leader of the opposition¹³⁴. At the same time, Levica's campaign spokesperson, Krume Bogeovski, presented numerous allegations of electoral irregularities at a press conference, for

129 "VLEN declares victory in the first round in Čair, Saraj, Bogovinje, Tearce, Želino and Aračinovo", 360 Stepni, 19 October 2025. Accessed at: <https://360stepni.mk/vlen-proglasi-pobeda-vo-prviot-krug-vo-chair-saraj-bogovine-teartse-zhelino-i-vo-arachinovo/> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

130 "Mexhiti declares victory in Čair, claims that VLEN won 4-5 municipalities already in the first round", Lokalno, 19 October 2025. Accessed at: <https://lokalno.mk/medjiti-proglasi-pobeda-vo-chair-tvr-di-deka-vlen-osvoila-4-5-opshtini-ushte-vo-prviot-krug/> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

131 "Mexhiti congratulates Ahmeti on his political retirement", 360 Stepni, 19 October 2025. Accessed at: <https://360stepni.mk/video-medhiti-mu-chestita-politichko-penzionirane-na-ahmeti/> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

132 "VLEN Coalition: With the municipalities we won, we became the second political force in the country", Nezavisen, 2 November 2025. Accessed at: <https://nezavisen.mk/koalicija-vredi-so-osvoenite-opshtini-stanavme-vtora-politichka-sila-vo-drzhavata/> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

133 "VREDI Coalition: With the municipalities we won, we became the second political force in the country", Nezavisen, 2 November 2025. Accessed at: <https://nezavisen.mk/koalicija-vredi-so-osvoenite-opshtini-stanavme-vtora-politichka-sila-vo-drzhavata/> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

134 "Apasiev: Levica enters 10 new councils – we became the second party in Skopje and several municipalities", Skopje1, 20 October 2025. Accessed at: <https://skopje1.mk/apasiev-levica-vleguva-vo-10-novi-soveti-stanavme-vtora-partija-vo-skopje-i-povekje-opstini> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

which the party had submitted complaints to the competent institutions¹³⁵.

After the completion of voting in the second round, the leader of Levica stated at a press conference that the doubling of votes showed that opposition tendencies in the country were consolidating behind Levica. He congratulated only the VMRO-DPMNE candidates who won in Kičevo and Brvenica¹³⁶. The mayoral candidate for the City of Skopje, Amar Mecinović, assessed that the party had achieved success over the past two months beyond what it could have imagined. He declared a major result and thanked SDSM voters for their support, calling on them to align behind Levica as an opposition alternative to the ruling VMRO-DPMNE¹³⁷.

According to ZNAM spokesperson Nikola Memov, the first round of local elections demonstrated stable support and growth for the ZNAM Movement, establishing it as a relevant political force in the country. Memov highlighted that for the first time the party had won councillor mandates in more than 50 municipalities nationwide, particularly emphasising the convincing lead in Kumanovo, where their candidate achieved a margin of over 11,000 votes. According to him, this indicates that citizens have lost trust in SDSM, and he welcomed the significant number of votes won by independent candidates, which he assessed as a positive signal for Macedonian democracy¹³⁸.

The leader of ZNAM and current Mayor of the Municipality of Kumanovo, following the second round, congratulated his opposing candidate, thanked government partners, and dedicated the victory to all citizens of Kumanovo. Asked about the low voter turnout, Dimitrievski stated that the message from citizens had been received¹³⁹.

Among independent candidates, the most vocal comment on the electoral process came from the movement "Šansa za Centar". During the first round of elections in the Municipality of Centar, it was established that the logo of their independent

135 "Levica (the Left) accuses irregularities: The electoral process was compromised by pressure and offers of vote-buying", Plusinfo, 19 October 2025. Accessed at: <https://plusinfo.mk/levica-obvinuva-zaneregularnosti-izborniot-proces-bil-narushen-so-pritisoci-i-ponudi-za-kupuva-e-glasovi/> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

136 "Apasiev: Levica doubled its support, Amar is the new face of the party", Sloboden Pečat, 2 November 2025. Accessed at: <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/video-apasiev-levica-ja-duplirashe-poddrshkata-amar-e-novoto-lice-na-partijata/> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

137 "Mecinović announces a tougher battle in Parliament starting tomorrow and calls on SDSM voters to stand behind Levica's votes", Lokalno, 2 November 2025. Accessed at: <https://lokalno.mk/mecinovikj-od-utre-najavuva-pozhestoka-borba-vo-sobranieto-i-gi-povika-glasachite-na-sdsm-da-ostanat-zad-glasovite-na-levica/> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

138 "Memov: Stable support and growth of the ZNAM Movement in the local elections", MKD.mk, 20 October 2025. Accessed at: <https://mkd.mk/makedonija/memov-stabilna-poddrshka-i-rast-na-dvizhenjeto-znam-na-lokalnite-izbori/> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

139 "Maksim Dimitrievski declares victory in Kumanovo with a lead of around 1,400 votes", Racin, 2 November 2025. Accessed at: <https://racin.mk/izbori-25/maksim-dimitrievski-proglasi-pobeda-vo-kumanovo-so-prednost-od-okolu-1-400-glasovi/> (last accessed: 20 November 2025).

candidate list for council members and mayor was not printed on the ballot papers. As a result, during the voting process, the movement issued a reaction stating that a “flagrant discrimination, unequal treatment, and annulment of the equality of voting rights” had occurred. The movement considered that this represents a basis for repeating the voting throughout the entire municipality and stated that they had already submitted a complaint to the relevant institutions¹⁴⁰.

Conclusion

The President of the Assembly, Afrim Gashi, called the eighth local elections since the independence of the Republic of North Macedonia on 9 August 2025. This year, the elections were held on 19 October and 2 November, in a competitive, peaceful, fair, and democratic atmosphere. What these elections confirmed was the trend of a continuous decline in voter turnout, particularly in local elections, which has been decreasing for the fourth consecutive electoral cycle. With approximately 47% turnout in the first round and 40% in the second round, these elections will remain recorded as having the lowest voter turnout of any electoral cycle since the country's independence. In addition, the highest number of invalid ballots recorded to date was observed in these elections—6.1% in the first round and 5.6% in the second round. Statistically, every seventeenth vote cast by citizens was invalid.

The election campaign for the first round of the local elections began on 29 September and ended at midnight on 17 October, while the campaign for the second round continued immediately after election day on 19 October and lasted until midnight on 31 October. Political parties employed the usual methods of electoral promotion, including rallies, meetings with citizens, television campaigns, billboards, as well as campaigns on social media. According to the International Election Observation Mission, the election campaign was assessed as particularly free and competitive, with remarks submitted regarding several issues related to campaign financing, negative rhetoric, and the lack of oversight over election campaigning on social media. The main campaign themes were focused on local issues; however, broader national topics related to identity issues, interethnic relations, and European integration were also noticeably present.

With regard to media coverage of the elections, monitoring by the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (AAVMS) and the OSCE/ODIHR Mission indicates that media reporting was generally predominantly neutral and within legal obligations,

¹⁴⁰ “A chance for Center: We were left without a logo on the ballots, annulment of the elections in the municipality is possible”, MKD.mk, 19 October 2020. Accessed at: <https://mkd.mk/makedonija/shansa-za-centar-ostanavme-bez-logo-na-livchinjata-mozhno-e-ponishtuvanje-na-izborite-vo-opshtinata/> (last accessed: 23 November 2025).

without violations of the limits for paid political advertising, and with dominance by the two largest political parties. The reports note that equal conditions for access were not ensured for all participants in the electoral process during this campaign, referring to non-parliamentary parties that remained without the right to purchase paid political advertising airtime. The Agency concluded that the programmes of the public service broadcaster MRT and the Assembly Channel fulfilled their obligations during the election campaign to provide free political presentation for election participants.

In the first round of elections, held on 19 October 2025, a total of 834,440 voters out of 1,832,415 registered voters on the voters' list cast their ballots, representing a turnout of 46.48%. The second round proved less attractive to the electorate, as reflected in a turnout of 40.46%. In addition to the low turnout, which has been declining over several election cycles, these elections also recorded the highest number of invalid ballots to date—almost 54,000 or 6.1% of the total votes in the first round and 19,285 or 5.58% of the votes in the second round.

The election results brought expected changes in several key municipalities across the country. The coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE won in the largest number of municipalities, securing 33 mayors in the first round and an additional 21 in the second round, or 54 in total, including victory in the City of Skopje as well as several key municipalities that had traditionally been governed by other political entities. The governing coalition VLEN (VREDI) won a total of 9 municipalities (5 in the first round and 4 in the second round), thereby strengthening its influence in municipalities with a predominantly Albanian electorate and in most multiethnic environments across the country. The coalition led by SDSM won three mayoral mandates in each of the two election rounds, while the coalition led by DUI won three municipalities in the first round and one in the second round, or four in total. The parties ZNAM and the Union of Roma each won one municipality, both in the second round of voting. In these elections, only one mayor was elected through an independent candidacy. With regard to council lists, the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE won 549 council mandates, the SDSM coalition won 231, DUI won 163, VLEN won 132 councillors, the Levica party won 66, and ZNAM won 44. The remaining political parties shared 69 council mandates, while independent lists and movements won 52 councillors, maintaining the trend of significant presence of non-partisan and civic initiatives in municipal councils across the country. Due to low turnout and failure to meet the required census for mayoral election, voting will be repeated on 11 January 2025 in four municipalities—Gostivar, Mavrovo and Rostuša, Vrapčište, and Centar Župa.

On election day in the first round of local elections, a total of 51 complaints were submitted to the State Election Commission (SEC), with an additional 30 complaints submitted between the two rounds. Complaints submitted on election day concerned the tabulation of results (32 complaints) and the voting procedure itself (19 complaints). Of these, the SEC rejected 43 complaints as unfounded. Between the two election rounds, of the 30 complaints submitted, the SEC accepted 22 and rejected 8. In this phase, complaints related to home voting registration, corrections to the voters' list, and violations of personal voting rights. With regard to the tabulation procedure in the second round, 16 complaints were submitted to the SEC, all of which were rejected. In terms of the appeals procedure, 14 appeals against SEC decisions were submitted to the Administrative Court—10 were upheld, and 4 were accepted, resulting in annulment of results and repetition of voting at several polling stations.

After the closing of polling stations in both rounds, political parties and independent candidates presented contrasting, but generally positive, assessments of the electoral process. VMRO-DPMNE assessed the elections as free, fair, and democratic and declared a convincing victory in the majority of municipalities across the country. The Social Democratic Union characterised the elections as fair and free, while simultaneously noting a series of irregularities during voting and pressures between the two rounds. Acknowledging the weaker electoral outcome with a limited number of won municipalities, the SDSM leadership announced an internal party analysis and leadership changes following the elections. The coalition led by DUI assessed the elections as free and democratic but attributed part of the results to unprincipled coalitions and illegal campaigning. According to the VLEN coalition, the local elections were conducted in a fair and democratic atmosphere. Declaring a major shift in the Albanian political bloc, VLEN directed strong criticism and calls for leadership changes towards rival DUI. Levica (The Left), pointing to numerous irregularities in the first round, declared a historic victory and growth in the number of councillors across municipalities. In the second round, Levica congratulated the ruling VMRO-DPMNE on its victory in Kičevo and Brvenica and expressed gratitude for the support of SDSM voters. Among independent movements, the “Chance for Centar” movement raised concerns about serious technical shortcomings in the voting materials, which, according to them, violated the principle of equality of voting rights. Overall, public assessments reflected a typical post-election dynamic, namely legitimisation of one's own results by the winners and problematisation of the regularity of the process by less successful actors.

In a period of intense political processes, the figures and election outcomes showed that even traditional party strongholds are not untouchable, given that a significant number of municipalities changed their political orientation. As in the past, this

electoral cycle confirmed that local results are largely a product of broader national political dynamics and relations between party actors at the central level, with limited space for authentic local exceptions. This year's results demonstrated that citizens are prepared to support governing structures that demonstrated efficiency over the past four years, while also punishing those with whom they are dissatisfied by creating space for the entry of new political entities—primarily smaller parties and independent civic movements.

These elections clearly showed that frequent and ad hoc amendments to electoral legislation generate perceptions of legal uncertainty, thereby further undermining the credibility of the electoral process. At the same time, the local elections once again illustrated a decline in public trust in the political order, manifested through exceptionally low voter turnout and a significant increase in the number of invalid ballots. This indicates deepened apathy, disappointment, and distance of citizens from political life, and may also serve as an indicator for opening a debate on the effectiveness of electoral rules and voter education.

Annex 1 – Elected mayors by municipality

Municipality	Elected mayor	Political party/coalition
City of Skopje	Orce Gorgievski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Aerodrom	Dejan Miteski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Butel	Darko Kostovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Gazi Baba	Boban Stefkovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Gjorče Petrov	Aleksandar Stojkoski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Karpoš	Sotir Lukrovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Kisela Voda	Beti Stamenkoska-Trajkoska	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Saraj	Muhamet Elmazi	Coalition VLEN
Centar	Goran Gerasimovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Čair	Izet Mexhiti	Coalition VLEN
Šuto Orizari	Kurto Dudush	Union of Roma
Aračinovo	Daut Beqiri	Coalition VLEN
Berovo	Petar Ružinski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Bitola	Toni Konjanovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Bogdanci	Blaže Šapov	Coalition for the local elections
Bogovinje	Feti Abazi	Coalition VLEN
Bosilovo	Risto Mančev	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Brvenica	Jovica Ilievski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Valandovo	Gjoko Kamčev	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Vasilevo	Slave Andonov	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Vevčani	Spase Kočovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Veles	Marko Kolev	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Vinica	Mitko Kostadinovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Vrapčište	Voting to be repeated	
Gevgelija	Andon Saramanov	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Gostivar	Voting to be repeated	
Gradsko	Kiro Nackov	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Debar	Fisnik Mela	Coalition VLEN
Debarca	Zlatko Siljanoski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Delčevo	Ivan Gocevski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Demir Kapija	Natalija Dimitrieva	Coalition "Your Macedonia"

Demir Hisar	Nikola Najdovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Dolneni	Blerim Islami	Coalition VLEN
Dojran	Ilija Tentov	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Želino	Blerim Sejdiu	Coalition VLEN
Zelenikovo	Kosta Manevski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Zrnovci	Vančo Mitev	Coalition for the local elections
Ilinden	Aleksandar Georgievski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Jegunovce	Dimitar Kostadinovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Kavadarci	Mitko Jančev	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Karbinci	Viktor Paunov	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Kičevo	Aleksandar Jovanovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Konče	Zlatko Ristov	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Kočani	Vlatko Grozdanov	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Kratovo	Todorče Nikolovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Kriva Palanka	Saško Mitovski	Coalition for the local elections
Krivogaštani	Igor Karaviloski	Coalition for the local elections
Kruševo	Niko Čoneski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Kumanovo	Maksim Dimitrievski	ZNAM Movement
Lipkovo	Erkan Arifi	National Alliance for Integration
Lozovo	Boško Cvetkovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Mavrovo and Rostuša	Voting to be repeated	
Makedonska Kamenica	Sonja Stamenkova	Coalition for the local elections
Makedonski Brod	Žarko Risteski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Mogila	Dragančo Sabotkovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Negotino	Marija Naceva	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Novaci	Stevče Stevanovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Novo Selo	Gjorgje Božinov	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Ohrid	Kiril Pecakov	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Petrovec	Borče Mitevski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Pehčevo	Aleksandar Kitanski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Plasnica	Alija Jaoski	National Alliance for Integration
Prilep	Dejan Prodanoski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"

Probištip	Toni Tonevski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Radoviš	Ljupče Počivalec	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Rankovce	Daniel Pavlovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Resen	Jovan Tozievski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Rosoman	Gorgi Krstevski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Sveti Nikole	Dejan Vladev	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Sopište	Jane Micevski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Staro Nagoričane	Miroslav Slakovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Struga	Mendi Qura	Group of voters
Strumica	Petar Jankov	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Studeničani	Ejup Abazi	National Alliance for Integration
Tearce	Daut Memiši	Coalition VLEN
Tetovo	Bilall Kasami	Coalition VLEN
Centar Župa	Voting to be repeated	
Čaška	Suat Šakjiov	National Alliance for Integration
Češinovo–Obleševo	Jordanče Kostadinov	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Čučer Sandevo	Zoran Bajovski	Coalition "Your Macedonia"
Štip	Ivan Jordanov	Coalition "Your Macedonia"

Annex 2 – Elected councillors by municipality

Municipality	Total number of council members	VMRO-DPMNE	SDSM	VLEN	DUI	ZNAM	Levica	Others	Independents
City of Skopje	45	18	5	6	6	1	6	1	2
Aerodrom	27	15	5			1	6		
Butel	19	9	1	4	4		1		
Gazi Baba	27	17	4	1	1		4		
Gjorče Petrov	23	14	4			1	4		
Karpoš	27	11	4			1	4	4	3
Kisela Voda	27	17	4			1	5		
Saraj	19			9	10				
Centar	23	7	8			2	3	1	2
Čair	27	1		14	11			1	
Šuto Orizari	19	4		4	4			7	
Aračinovo	15			8	7				
Berovo	15	9	5				1		
Bitola	31	16	5		1	1	2	2	4
Bogdanci	11	5	6						
Bogovinje	19			9	10				
Bosilovo	15	10	5						
Brvenica	15	6	2	4	3				
Valandovo	15	8	7						
Vasilevo	15	11	3			1			
Vevčani	9	5	3			1			
Veles	23	16	3			1	3		
Vinica	15	9	6						
Vrapčište	15			1	13			1	
Gevgelija	19	11	4			1	2	1	
Gostivar	23	5	1	3	12			2	
Gradsko	9	7	2						
Debar	15	2	1	5	4				3
Debarca	9	6	2					1	
Delčevo	15	10	3			1	1		
Demir Kapija	9	5	4						
Demir Hisar	11	6	3			2			
Dojran	9	4	4			1			

Dolneni	15	3	2	2		1		5	2
Želino	15		1	8	6				
Zelenikovo	9	5	2	1	1				
Zrnovci	9	4	3					2	
Ilinden	15	11	1			1	1	1	
Jegunovce	11	5	1	2	2	1			
Kavadarci	19	12	2			1	2		2
Karbinci	9	7	2						
Kičevo	19	8	1	3	5			2	
Konče	9	4	3					2	
Kočani	19	8	3			1			7
Kratovo	11	9	1			1			
Kriva Palanka	15	7	8						
Krivogaštani	11	5	5				1		
Kruševo	11	4	5	1	1				
Kumanovo	31	6	4	3	5	7	1	3	2
Lipkovo	19			8	11				
Lozovo	9	3	2			1	1	1	1
Mavrovo and Rostuša	11	5	3		1			2	
Makedonska Kamenica	11	5	4						2
Makedonski Brod	11	4	2			1	1	1	2
Mogila	11	5	1					1	4
Negotino	15	8	5				1	1	
Novaci	9	5	2						2
Novo Selo	11	7	3						1
Ohrid	23	13	5			2	1	1	1
Petrovec	11	5	1	1				2	2
Pehčevo	9	5	3			1			
Plasnica	9	1			5			3	
Prilep	27	17	6			1	3		
Probištip	15	6	4			2	1	2	
Radoviš	19	9	5				2	3	
Rankovce	9	4	2				2	1	
Resen	15	9	3	1	1			1	
Rosoman	9	4	2			1	1	1	
Sveti Nikole	15	9	3			2	1		
Sopište	11	7	1	3					

Staro Nagoričane	9	3	3			1		2	
Struga	23	6	1	4	8		1		3
Strumica	23	13	8			1	1		
Studeničani	19	1	1	5	6			1	5
Tearce	15	1		8	6				
Tetovo	31	3	1	13	12		1		1
Centar Župa	9	1	2					6	
Čaška	11	3	2		6				
Češinovo–Obleševo	11	5	3					2	1
Čučer Sandevo	11	3	3	1	1	1		2	
Štip	23	16	4			1	2		
Total	1307	548	233	132	163	44	66	69	52



6

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

6. Election Archive of the Republic of North Macedonia, Comprehensive Database from 1990 Onwards

Since March 2016, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation's office in North Macedonia and the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" – Skopje (IDSCS) have been implementing the joint project "Electoral Archive of the Republic of North Macedonia since 1990 to date". The aim of the project is to enable comprehensive monitoring of the electoral processes in the Republic of North Macedonia. The project encompasses all previously held presidential, parliamentary, and local elections, consolidating all available documents related to these electoral processes into a single repository.

The need to implement such a project arises from the lack of an official state archive containing all documents and data on election cycles since the declaration of independence of the Republic of North Macedonia. The Election Archive groups the documents into seven sections:

1. Election Announcement Document
2. Voter List
3. Candidate Lists
4. Election Results
5. Election Report
6. Observation reports from international and domestic organizations
7. Electoral Code

In parallel with the organization of the elections, the Election Archive is updated and all relevant documents are uploaded in the above sections. A key feature of the Election Archive is its collection of election handbooks. These handbooks, which cover presidential, parliamentary, and local elections, are created in real time alongside the electoral events in a collaborative effort of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" – Skopje.

The Election Archive has released a series of ten in-depth handbooks covering various elections. These include detailed information on the 2013, 2017, and 2021 local elections, the 2014, 2019, and 2024 presidential elections, as well as the 2014, 2016, 2020, and 2024 parliamentary elections. The handbooks are available on the Election Archive website (izbornaarhiva.mk) in Macedonian, Albanian, and English.

