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THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA'S 2014 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS HANDBOOK

second updated edition

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POLITICS

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INTRODUCTION TO THE 2014 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

INTRODUCTION TO THE 5TH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

The 5th general presidential elections in the Republic of Macedonia will take place on 13th April 2014. There will be four candidates running for president of the Republic of Macedonia: the candidate of the non-parliamentary party Citizen Alliance for Macedonia (GROM) Zoran Popovski; the candidate of the Democratic Party of the Albanians (DPA), which is in opposition, Iljaz Halimi; the candidate of the party in opposition the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), Stevo Pendarovski; and the current president of the state, as a candidate of the ruling VMRO-DPMNE, Gjorge Ivanov.

The elections were called on 1st February 2014 when the president of the Parliament, Trajko Veljanovski, in accordance with the constitutional and legal duties, signed the resolution to call for presidential elections. According to the resolution, the elections are scheduled for 13th April, which sets the possible second round two weeks later, on 27th April.¹ The voting abroad, which will take place in the Diplomatic-Consular Missions (DCM) is scheduled for a day earlier, 12th April, relative to the time zone in the appropriate state. On 12th April the ailed and infirmed persons will vote in their homes, as well as persons doing time in prison or who are sentenced with detention in a penitentiary institution, persons on parole in the places where they are constrained, and the internally displaced persons, who will vote in the collective homes or the response centers. In the case of a second round, these categories of voters will vote a day before the elections are held.

The procedure for collecting signatures for the presidential candidates started on 16th February, and closed on 2nd March. The first candidate to reach 10.000 citizens' signatures in support of his candidacy was the

¹ Call for the Republic of Macedonia's Presidential Elections Resolution, No. 08-608/1, 1st February 2014 Skopje, available at: http://www.sec.mk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=214:resenie-za-izbor&catid=29&Itemid=1278&lang=mk (last accessed on 13th March 2014).

member of the non-parliamentary party GROM, Zoran Popovski, who informed the public on a press conference, held on 17th March that the process has been closed successfully.²

The current President Gjorge Ivanov has also secured his candidacy with citizens' signatures. Ivanov concluded the procedure in the final 24 hours of the period assigned for collecting signatures, in the period when the convention of the ruling party VMRO-DPMNE was held on 1st March, until the deadline on 2nd March. The current President succeeded in collecting more than 60,000 signatures in support of his candidacy.³ Prior to this, Ivanov secured the support of the majority of delegates at the party convention of VMRO-DPMNE. On the convention the university professor Jove Kekenovski, the lawyer Stavre Dzikov, and Bozidar Nocev MA in Architecture and Construction filed their candidacies as well. Ivanov got the support of 1099 out of 1234 present delegates, while his closest competitor Jove Kekenovski won 124 votes from the delegates.⁴

Iljaz Halimi, a former MP and vice-president of the Parliament, was promoted on the press-conference as a presidential candidate of the DPA on 26th February,⁵ and succeeded in collecting the signatures until 1st March.⁶

There were two other candidates collecting signatures for candidacies, the independent candidate Biljana Vankovska - a university professor, as well as the president of the non-parliamentary party Dostoinstvo (Dignity), Stojance Angelov. Vankovska and Angelov did not succeed in collecting

² 10,000 signatures collected for Zoran Popovski's candidacy, Telma TV, 17.02.2014, accessed at: <http://www.telma.com.mk/index.php?task=content&cat=1&rub=15&item=35041> (last visited on 10th March 2014).

³ 63,253 signature for Ivanov in total, Telegraf, 04.03.2013, accessed at: <http://www.telegraf.mk/aktuelno/114187-vkupno-63-253-potpisi-za-ivanov> (last visited on 13th March 2014).

⁴ Gjorgje Ivanov elected for Republic of Macedonia's presidential candidate by VMRO-DPMNE, VMRO-DPMNE's official website, 01.03.2014, accessed at: <http://vmro-dpmne.org.mk/?p=21701> (last visited on 13th March 2014).

⁵ Iljaz Halimi a presidential candidate from DPA, Alfa TV, 26.02.2014, accessed at: <http://www.alfa.mk/News.aspx?ID=72039#.UxXuTM51DiA> (last visited on 10th March 2014).

⁶ DPA collected the necessary amount of signatures for Iljaz Halimi, Telma TV, 01.03.2014, accessed at: <http://telma.com.mk/index.php?task=content&cat=1&rub=15&item=35438> (last visited on 10th March 2014).

the signatures in the assigned period. The university professor was campaigning mostly on the Internet using the social media, where she complained for a series of inconsistencies in the process, primarily for the unpreparedness of the State Election Commission (SEC) for organizing such a process, for the pressure imposed by the rest of the political parties on the citizens and the monopolization of the regional offices of the SEC in the final day for collecting the signatures by the activists from VMRO-DPMNE, who turned out massively to give their support to the President Gjorge Ivanov.

The last but not the least to join the run for presidency was the candidate of the largest party in opposition SDSM, Stevo Pendarovski, who was elected on the party congress held on 4th March 2014. His candidacy was supported with the signatures of 30 members of the Republic of Macedonia's Parliament, members of the parliamentary group of SDSM and the coalition. On the congress, Pendarovski was the only nominated candidate and as such he was voted in unison by the 588 present delegates.⁷

The two largest parties chose different ways for nominating their presidential candidates, while the election was conducted within the two biggest bodies of both parties - VMRO-DPMNE on the convention with 1234 delegates attending, while SDSM on the congress with 588 delegates from the municipal organizations. The nomination of candidates in VMRO-DPMNE was conducted by the principle of self-nomination of the candidates (filing candidacies), as for SDSM the municipal organizations of the party filed the recommendations for presidential candidates, and the Executive Board confirmed the candidates based on the given recommendations.

⁷ Pendarovski officially a presidential candidate of SDSM, Deutsche Welle, Macedonian service, 05.03.2014, accessed at: <http://www.dw.de/%D0%BF%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B4%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B2%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8-%D0%BE%D1%84%D0%B8%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BD%D0%BE-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%82%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BB%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8-%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%B4%D0%B0%D1%82-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D1%81%D0%B4%D1%81%D0%BC/a-17476530> (last visited on 10th March 2014).

Previously, the largest party of the ethnic Albanians, the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), announced in public that they will not promote their presidential candidate and were in favor of the idea for “consensual president”, i.e. president acceptable for all ethnic communities in Macedonia, who will “represent all citizens in Macedonia”⁸. In this way, DUI refused to support any of the nominated presidential candidates in the pre-election period, including the candidate of the coalition partner VMRO-DPMNE, Gjorge Ivanov.

After the two coalition partners, VMRO-DPMNE and DUI, did not succeed in finding a common solution in relation to the recommendation for a “consensual president” and after it became more probable that VMRO-DPMNE will support Gjorge Ivanov for a second presidential mandate, the parliamentary group of DUI filed a formal initiative to dissolve the Parliament on 1st March and to call for snap parliamentary elections.⁹ On the same day, at the party convention for election of a presidential candidate, the Prime Minister and president of VMRO-DPMNE, Nikola Gruevski, announced to the delegates, the members and the public that VMRO-DPMNE accepts the recommendations of DUI to organize snap parliamentary elections in Macedonia.¹⁰

As a consequence to these events on 5th March 2014 the Republic of Macedonia’s Parliament was dissolved, and the snap parliamentary elections were scheduled for 27th April, on the same day as the anticipated second round of the presidential elections. The Parliament was dismissed in unison with 117 votes “FOR” out of 117 MPs attending. With this,

⁸ DUI’s General Secretary, Abdulahim Ademi’s statement, DUI straight to the point: consensual president of the state, 24 News, 09.01.2014, accessed at: <http://24vesti.mk/dui-decidni-konsenzualen-pretседател-na-drzhavata> (last visited on 10th March 2014).

⁹ DUI with recommendation for snap elections, Deutsche Welle, Macedonian service, 01.03.2014, accessed at: <http://www.dw.de/%D0%B4%D1%83%D0%B8-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%81%D0%B5-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B3-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%BC%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8-%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%B8/a-17466769> (last visited on 10th March 2014).

¹⁰ VMRO-DPMNE in favour of snap parliamentary elections, Radio Free Europe in Macedonian, 04.03.2014, accessed at: <http://www.makdenes.org/archive/news/20140301/428/428.html?id=25281463> (last visited on 10th March 2014).

Macedonia will have the 8th parliamentary elections on 27th April 2014, which are third snap elections.

The presidential candidates filed their formal candidacies to the SEC in the assigned period of 30 days prior to the Election Day – Zoran Popovski, Iljaz Halimi, and Gjorge Ivanov on 12th March, and Stevo Pendarovski a day later, on 13th March.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

On 3rd March the State Election Commission (SEC)¹¹ adopted the timetable for the electoral activities for implementation the presidential elections.¹² In addition, the SEC supplements the municipal election commissions (MEC) with members to replace those whose mandate was terminated or whose dismissal was requested. According to the timetable, the MEC should inform the election boards (EB) latest by 22nd February 2014, and by then the SEC should establish the EBs in the DCMs.

The public inspection of the voters’ list in the regional offices of the SEC, on the website <http://izbirackispisok.gov.mk/>, as well as the DCMs (for the voting abroad) was open in the period between 16th February and 7th March 2014. The citizens, who will determine that they are not registered in the Voters List in this period, but fulfill the criteria to have the right to vote, can request to be registered. In the period from the call for elections to the closure of the public inspection of the voters’ list the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia living abroad who fulfill the criteria to vote abroad can register to exercise their right.

According to the deadlines determined by law and according to the SEC’s timetable for implementing the 2014 presidential elections, the election

¹¹ For more information on electoral organs see Chapter 3 – The Macedonian Electoral System for Presidential Elections, section: Electoral Organs.

¹² Timetable for conducting electoral activities in implementing the presidential elections in the Republic of Macedonia, State Election Commission, 13 April 2014, accessed at: <http://sec.mk/images/izbori2014/rokovnik.pdf> (last visited on 10th March 2014).

campaign for these elections will last from 24th March until 11th April 2014. According to the timetable, the financial reports of the organizers of the election campaign to the SEC, the State Audit Office (SAO), and the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, these are the assigned deadlines:

- On 3rd April for the incomes and expenditures in the first 10 days of campaign;
- On 12th April if there is no second round of voting or on 26th April if there is a second round, for the incomes and expenditures in the second part of the election campaign;
- The final financial reports are filed latest by 11th May in case the elections are in one round, or by 25th May, in case there is a second round (to 30 days after the conclusion of the elections).

4th March marked the start of the period assigned with Article 8-a of the Election Code which does not allow paying subsidies which are not part of regular monthly wages, nor organizing public events to initiate construction work of facilities for public use, or infrastructure financed by the Budget resources, public funds, as well as resources from the public companies with state capital.

In accordance with the timetable, the requests for monitoring the elections by national and international observers can be filed in the period between 1st February and 2nd April 2014.

LATEST CHANGES IN THE ELECTORAL LEGISLATION¹³

At the meeting between the Government and representatives of the political parties that took place on 15th January 2014 an agreement was achieved to amend the Election Code which would adopt the remarks from

¹³ Law amending and supplementing the Election Code, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia 14/2014. Accessed at: <http://www.pravo.org.mk/documentDetail.php?id=665> (last visited on 15th February 2014).

the monitoring reports by the OSCE/ODIHR¹⁴ and the opposition. The amendments in the Election Code were adopted in a shortened procedure on 23rd January 2014 with the support of all the political parties, except the DPA. The amendments are related to all the key remarks on the normative framework for the elections, with the exception of the electoral voting system and the distribution of mandates in the constituencies abroad. The political parties did not achieve consensus on this issue and further debate was arranged for the period before the next parliamentary elections. The amendments and supplements to the Election Code are related to the following key aspects of the election process:

I Separation of the state from the party

With further amendments¹⁵ of Article 8-a it is specified that from the day a resolution is made to call for elections until the conclusion of the election of the President of the Republic of Macedonia (this applies to the other elections as well) it is not allowed:

„- to spend resources from the Republic of Macedonia’s budget, the municipalities and the City of Skopje, as well as public funds, public companies, public facilities or legal entities managing state capital,

- to initiate construction work with resources of the budget or public funds or public companies and other legal entities managing state owned capital of new facilities or infrastructure such as roads, waterlines, transmission lines, sewage systems, sports playgrounds and other facilities for social activities like schools, kindergartens and other amenities, unless resources have been allocated for the purpose of their construction from the Budget

¹⁴ OSCE Office for democratic institutions and human rights. Republic of Macedonia, Local Elections 24th March and 7th April 2013, Final Report, Warsaw 9th July 2013. Accessed at: <http://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/103832> (last visited on 15th February 2014).

¹⁵ Previously, with amendments in the law adopted in November 2012 and February 2013 part of the OSCE/ODIHR’s remarks were addressed: Law on amending and supplementing the Election Code, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No.142/2012 and the Law supplementing the Election Code, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 31/2013.

in advance and they are part of a program enforced by a law adopted in the incumbent year and

- to pay salaries, pension incomes, social welfare or other payments and material compensation from budget resources or from public funds other than monthly incomes, i.e. all annual transfer and payments or single transfers from budget resources or public funds, neither sell state owned capital nor sign collective agreements.”

An additional change is that in the period of 20 days prior to the start of the election campaign until the conclusion of the elections it is not allowed:

„- to pay subsidies other than regular monthly incomes and

- to organize public events for initiating construction work of facilities for public use with resources from the Budget, or public funds, or public companies and other legal entities managing state owned capital, of infrastructure such as roads, waterlines, transmission lines, sewage systems, sports playgrounds or other facilities for social activities like schools, kindergartens and other amenities. The prohibition to organize public events does not apply exclusively on state officials or candidates for public office giving statements on public gatherings, interviews in the media, debates in the media, or responding to journalists’ questions.

From the day of the resolution to call for the elections until the conclusion of the elections for the President of the Republic of Macedonia (as well as the other elections) the Ministry of Finance is obliged to publish all data of budgetary payments, other than regular incomes, pensions and communal expenditures, publically on the internet page in a special database for budgetary expenditures in the election period.

The Ministry of Finance files a pre-electoral financial report two weeks prior to the call for the elections providing a comprehensive overview of

all planned and realized revenues and expenditures from the Budget in sections from the start of the fiscal year to the day of filing the report, which is published on the Ministry of Finance’s website.”¹⁶

Any violation of these regulations is considered a criminal offence in accordance with the Criminal Law. The Ministry of Finance published the budgetary expenditures in the pre-election period and the pre-election financial report on its website.¹⁷

II Complaints

In relation to deciding upon complaints, from now on the SEC will only pass a decision based on insight into the election material and other evidence (Article 31(2)), and the provision that compels the SEC to start a procedure if there are at least two complaints is removed.

III Electoral administration bodies

According to the latest amendments in relation to the electoral administration bodies:

- The SEC is obligated to publish its report on the elections and the financial overview on its internet page in a period of 45 days after the announcement of the final results from the elections.
- The members of the Election Boards who are appointed upon recommendations of the political parties can be replaced before any elections, i.e. the political parties before each election should forward new recommendations for members of the election boards and their deputies.

¹⁶ Election Code (Filtered text), Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 32/2014.

¹⁷ Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Macedonia. Pre-election Financial Report, 17th February 2014, accessed at: http://www.finance.gov.mk/files/u12/Predizboren_finansiski_izvestaj.pdf (last visited on 13th March 2014); Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Macedonia, Budget Expenditures in the pre-Election Period, accessed at: <http://www.finance.gov.mk/trosoci> (last visited on 13th March 2014).

- There are changes introduced in the composition of the election boards in the diplomatic-consular missions, i.e. the president of the EB is elected from the diplomats, employed in the specific DCM, by random choice for a period of four years, and his/her deputy as well as other members and deputies should comply with the conditions that apply to the members/deputies of the EB in the Republic of Macedonia.
- The SEC is obligated to publish the definite and single list of candidates for the election of the President of the Republic of Macedonia not later than 25 days, instead of 30 days, prior to the Election Day in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia.
- If the SEC should receive complaint for violation of any of the legal provision in relation to the timeframe and the forms of the election campaigns, the SEC is obligated to look into the matter and act accordingly in a period of 7 days after the complaints or appeals has been filed.

IV Voters' list

With the latest changes, besides the specific statement from the voters' lists prepared for the voting in the DCMs and the penitentiary institutions, there is another specific statement prepared for the voting in the State Election Commission for the members of the election boards for the voting in the DCMs, i.e. the consular offices.

The Ministry of Interior and the general courts which were obliged to file data to the SEC twice a year with insight into the voters' list, with the amendments they are obligated to do the same procedure four times a year in the periods between 1st to 10th February, 1st to 10th September, and 1st to 10th December.

The citizens temporarily working or living abroad during the elections, who have not filed a registration form for the voting in their corresponding DCM are not listed with an index mark in the voters' list any longer, but are registered in special statements of the voters' list for voting in the Republic of Macedonia.

There is an electronic system to confirm the personal identity of the voter at the polling station, and after the identification instead of using spray the voter is marked with a visible ink.

These amendments enable the members of the election boards for voting in the DCMs to vote at the State Election Commission three days prior to the Election Day in the Republic of Macedonia.

The period for public insight into the voters' list is extended to 20 days, instead of 15 days.

In addition, the political parties are granted the right to an insight and have the opportunity to file requests for registering, supplementing or deleting data from the voters' list after the public insight is concluded. The SEC is obligated to forward the voters' list to the political parties in a period of 5 days after the public insight is concluded. The political parties are also given a period of 5 days to forward their requests, and if they do so, the SEC should pass a decision not later than 3 days after receiving the request. After this, there is a period of 24 hours for the political parties to file complaints against the decisions of the SEC, which should be resolved by the Administrative Court.

V Candidates

With the latest amendments, the candidates are not obliged to forward written statements registered at the notary in accordance with the law that they have never cooperated with the state security bodies.

The presidential candidate lists, as well as the other lists of candidates for other elections, instead of 35 days prior to the elections, should be forwarded to the SEC or any other competent commission minimum 30 days prior to the Election Day by the official representatives of the recommenders.

VI Media Presentation

The Election Code stipulates the responsibility of the Public Broadcasting Service and the commercial radiobroadcasters to report in a balanced and unbiased manner, as well as to enable each participant in the election campaign equal conditions for access to any form of media presentation, which was regulated by the Rulebook of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (the former Radio Broadcasting Council).

The amendments set some rules on how to avoid giving privileges to a specific political body while reporting on regular activities of national and municipal bodies conducted by persons who are representatives of or are appointed by that political body. The editors, journalists and presenters are also enabled to participate in the pre-election activities and election campaigns. If these persons decide to participate in such activities, then their engagement in the programs of the radiobroadcasters should be put to rest.

The radiobroadcasters are compelled to record the broadcasting signal of their program from the day when the elections are called to their conclusion and should keep that material safely for a period of 30 days after the elections, as well as forward it to the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, if requested.

In the period from the call for the elections to the start of the election campaign, the radiobroadcasters and the printed media are not allowed to broadcast, i.e. to publish paid political advertising, except for adverts and announcements for collecting signatures for the support of candidacies by a group of voters. The latest amendments stipulate the regulations

related to the way and form of publishing the adverts and announcements for collecting signatures for the support of candidacies.

From the day the elections are called until their conclusion, the radiobroadcasters and the printed media are not allowed to broadcast and publish commercials financed by the Republic of Macedonia's Budget, as well as the budgets of the municipalities and the City of Skopje as well all other persons holding public office.

Besides the State Election Commission and the State Audit Office, the printed media are obliged to forward their pricelists for paid political advertising to the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, the radiobroadcasters, and the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services.

The length and the equal distribution of the time for the radiobroadcaster to report on the political parties in power and the political parties in opposition in the informative program, and the time allocated to each of the parties is distributed proportionally to the results of the previous parliamentary elections. It is stipulated in details when, in what order and to what degree the public service will broadcast free political presentation of the participants in the election process. At the same time, the free political presentation should be appropriately and visibly marked as "free political presentation" during all the time of broadcasting. The public radio broadcasting service is obliged to provide regular informing on the election process for the persons with hearing impairment.

During the election silence the media are not allowed to publish, or broadcast any kind of information, photographs, audio and audiovisual materials related to, or in which participants in the elections appear, or to conduct any kind of media informing which is directly or indirectly in favor of someone's election campaign and can affect the voters' opinion, or publish data that reveal the identity of the political entities or persons involved in incidents or other irregularities on the Election Day, as well

as statements by candidates in the election process, by the participants in the election campaign, by members of the political parties and state officials in the governmental bodies.

In addition, there is another provision that regulates the publishing of the results from public polls conducted on the Election Day, which stipulates that such results cannot be published before 19:00 hours, i.e. prior to the closure of the polling stations.

These amendments specify that the programs intended for the juvenile audience should not be used for electoral media presentation.

There are also penalty provisions and fines anticipated for violations of these provisions, and instead of the chief editor, the responsibility for applying and following the provisions from the Election Code is concentrated to the CEO of the radiobroadcaster or the printed medium.

VII Financing of the election campaign


The height of donations that legal entities can provide to finance the election campaign is altered from 5% of the overall income in the previous year to the amount of 50,000 EUR in MKD currency.

Another provision is introduced for the participants in the election campaign to file financial reports a day before the second round of voting takes place, for the incomes and expenditures on their transactional account for the election campaign for the second round of voting.

VIII Limitation to the size of the polling station

The amendments in the Election Code introduced limitations to the number of voters registered in a single polling station, which should not

exceed 1000. With this amendment there are 504 new polling stations established, which increased their number from 2976 to 3480.



HISTORY OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN MACEDONIA (1991-2009)

HISTORY OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN MACEDONIA (1991-2009)¹⁸

The first president of the independent Republic of Macedonia was Kiro Gligorov. He was elected by a secret vote in the Macedonian Assembly on 27 January 1991 with 114 MP votes “for”, from the total of 119 MPs present.¹⁹ All the subsequent presidential elections took place on general and direct elections where all citizens were enabled to participate with their right to vote if registered on the voters’ list.

The first direct presidential elections in Macedonia were held on 16 October 1994. There were only two candidates²⁰, who took part in the elections, thus the elections were held in a single electoral round with a repeated voting in certain polling stations due to determined irregularities.²¹

The president at the time, Kiro Gligorov²², won 52.55% (715,087 votes) of the votes of the total number of citizens registered in the voters’ list, and his opponent, the presidential candidate Ljubisa Georgievski 14.49% (197,109 votes). The turnout on the elections was 1,053,761 voters in total, or



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

¹⁸ All photos have been downloaded from the President of the Republic of Macedonia’s website: <http://www.president.gov.mk/> (accessed on: 11 February 2014).

¹⁹ The shorthand notes from the Fifth Session of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia’s Assembly, held on 27 January 1991. Skopje, 27 January 1991. Available at: <http://so-branie.mk/WBStorage/Files/05sed27jan91god.pdf> (Accessed on: 11 February 2014).

²⁰ The State Election Commission rejected the candidates Habit Shaban and Gjorgjija Atanasoski because of failing to reach the condition expressed in Article 6, paragraph 1 from the former Law on Presidential Election of the Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Macedonia’s Official Gazette, No.20/94. The Law stipulated support for candidacy of at least 10 000 voters or 30 MPs in the least.

²¹ The repeated voting took place on 30 October the same year in 7 electoral units, at 11 polling stations in total.

²² Kiro Gligorov on these elections was recommended as candidate of SDSM.

77.44% of the citizens registered in the voters' list.²³ One of the specifics of these elections was the fact that the State Election Commission invalidated a great many ballot papers – 130,820 votes were invalidated (12.41% of the ballot papers). Due to such a turn of events, the party Inner Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE), which nominated Ljubisa Georgievski for president, submitted a complaint to the State Election Commission (SEC), demanding the elections to be cancelled. The complaint was overruled, which made Kiro Gligorov the first President of the Republic of Macedonia appointed on general and direct elections. Kiro Gligorov was the Chief of State until 19 November 1999.²⁴



**Boris Trajkovski,
the Second President of the
Republic of Macedonia**

The second general and direct presidential elections took place in 1999. There were six candidates that took part in the elections: Boris Trajkovski (VMRO-DPMNE), Vasil Tupurkovski from Democratic Alternative (DA), Muarem Nexhipi from the Party for Democratic Prosperity of the Albanians (PDPA), Muhamed Halili from the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP), Stojan Andov from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and Tito Petkovski from the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM).²⁵

The first round was held on 31 October, and the second round on 14 November 1999. Due to determined irregularities in the election process in the second

²³ The State Election Commission, a report on the conducted presidential elections in the Republic of Macedonia from 1994. Number 30-282. 8 November 1994.

²⁴ President Kiro Gligorov recessed from this position in the period between 3 October 1995 and 10 January 1996. The reason was the recuperation of the President after the survived assassination, and the temporary leadership of the state was assumed by the former president of the Assembly – Stojan Andov.

²⁵ The State Election Commission's website on presidential elections from 1999: http://www.sec.mk/arhiva/1999_pretsedatelski/ (Accessed on: 11 February 2014).

round the voting was repeated on 5 December 1999 in 230 polling stations in total. Boris Trajkovski was elected President of the Republic of Macedonia. After the voting in the first round, 32.71% of the votes (343,606 votes) belonged to the candidate Tito Petkovski, 20.85% (219,098 votes) to Boris Trajkovski, 15.54% (163,206 votes) to Vasil Tupurkovski, 14.85% (155,978 votes) to Muarem Nexhipi, 10.66% (111,983 votes) to Stojan Andov, and 4.35% (45,731 votes) to Muhamed Halili. In total, 11,013 ballot papers were invalidated (0.68%). The turnout in the first round was 1,039,602 voters or 64.44% of the registered voters in the voters' list.²⁶ Only two candidates took part in the second round of the elections, Tito Petkovski and Boris Trajkovski.

After the second round and the repeated voting in certain polling stations, Boris Trajkovski won 53.4% of the votes (582,808 votes), and Tito Petkovski 46.18% (513,614 votes). In total, 16,821 ballot papers were invalidated (1.01%). The turnout in the second round was 1,096,422 voters in total, or 68.08% of the registered voters.²⁷

Boris Trajkovski was the President of the Republic of Macedonia from 15 December 1999 until 26 February 2004.²⁸

²⁶ According to the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. The Republic of Macedonia, Presidential Elections, 31 October and 14 November 1999, Final Report. Warsaw, 31 January 2000. Available at: <http://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/fyrom/15910> (last accessed on 11 February 2014). The results have been taken from the OSCE-ODIHR's report, which rely on official data published by the SEC. The website of SEC does not contain data on the results from the presidential elections in 1999.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ The President Boris Trajkovski died in a plane crash on 26 February 2004. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, in the period between 26 February and 12 May 2004, the position was temporarily held by Ljupco Jordanovski, the former President of the Republic of Macedonia's Assembly.



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

The presidential elections of 2004 were the third presidential elections since the Republic of Macedonia's independence. The citizens in the first electoral round, which took place on 14 April 2004, could choose among four recommended candidates: Branko Crvenkovski (SDSM), Gzim Ostreni from the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), Zudi Xhelili from the Democratic Party of the Albanians (DPA) and Sasko Kedev (VMRO-DPMNE). The turnout on the day of voting was 935,372 voters or 55.2% of the registered voters in the voters' list.

According to the statistics, 42.47% of the votes (385,347 votes) were won by Branko Crvenkovski, 34.07% (309,132 votes) by

Sasko Kedev, 14.79% of the total number of votes (134,208) were won by Gzim Ostreni, and 8.67% of the total number of valid ballots (78,714 in total) by Zudi Xhelili. In the second round held on 28 April 2004, Branko Crvenkovski won the majority of votes, who became the third President of the Republic of Macedonia. He won the trust of 550,317 voters i.e. 60.5% of the total number of votes, as opposed to Sasko Kedev who got the support of 329,179 voters, i.e. 36.2% of the total number of valid ballots²⁹. In the second round the turnout was 909,289 voters or 53.6% of the citizens registered in the voters' list.

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

²⁹ According to the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. The Republic of Macedonia, Presidential Elections, 14 and 18 April 2004, Final Report. Warsaw, 13 July 2004. Available at: <http://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/fyrom/35248> (last accessed on 11 February 2014). The results have been taken from the OSCE-ODIHR's report, which rely on official data published by the SEC. The website of the SEC does not contain data for the implementation and the results of the presidential elections in 2004.

The current President of the Republic of Macedonia, Gjorge Ivanov, was elected on the last presidential elections that were held in 2009. At these elections seven candidates, who fulfilled the conditions for appropriate candidacy, were running for president. In this cycle, there was a woman candidate running for president for the first time, Mirushe Hoxha, supported by DPA. After the first electoral round held on 22 March 2009, the first two best ranked candidates were Gjorge Ivanov supported by VMRO-DPMNE, who won 35.04% of the total number of valid ballots (345,850 votes) and the candidate supported by SDSM,

Ljubomir Danailov – Frckoski, winning 20.54% of the total number of valid ballots (202,691 votes). Imer Selmani from New Democracy (ND) won 14.95% of the votes (147,547 votes), followed by Ljube Boskoski from United for Macedonia (OM) with 14.88% (146,878), Agron Buxhaku (DUI) with 7.46% (i.e. 73,629 votes), Nano Ruzin (LDP) who won 4.06% of the total number of valid ballots (or 40,042 votes), while Mirushe Hoxha (DPA) was supported by 3.06% of the voters (30,225 votes).³⁰

The turnout in the first round was 1,019,258 voters, or 56.88% of the overall number of citizens registered in the Voters List (1,792,028 citizens with the right to vote).

The second electoral round took place on 5 April 2009. Gjorge Ivanov won 63.14%, i.e. 453,616 of the total number of valid ballots, while the presidential candidate Ljubomir Danailov Frckoski won 36.86%

³⁰ The State Election Commission. Presidential Elections 2009. Announcement of the collected results from the voting in the first round. Available at: http://www.sec.mk/arhiva/2009_pretsedatelskiIlokalni/2009/fajlovi/rezultati/konecni/PretsedatelDrzava.pdf (last accessed on 11 February 2014).



**Gjorge Ivanov,
the Fourth President of the
Republic of Macedonia
(2009 - 2014)**

of the overall number of voters, i.e. 264,828 votes.³¹ In the second electoral round the turnout was 764,039 voters, or 42.63% of the citizens registered in the voters' list.

³¹ The State Election Commission. Presidential Elections 2009. Announcement of the collected results from the voting in the second round. Available at: http://www.sec.mk/arhiva/2009_pretsedatelskiIlokalni/2009/fajlovi/rezultati2/konecnipret/Predsedatel_konecni.pdf (last accessed on 11 February 2014).

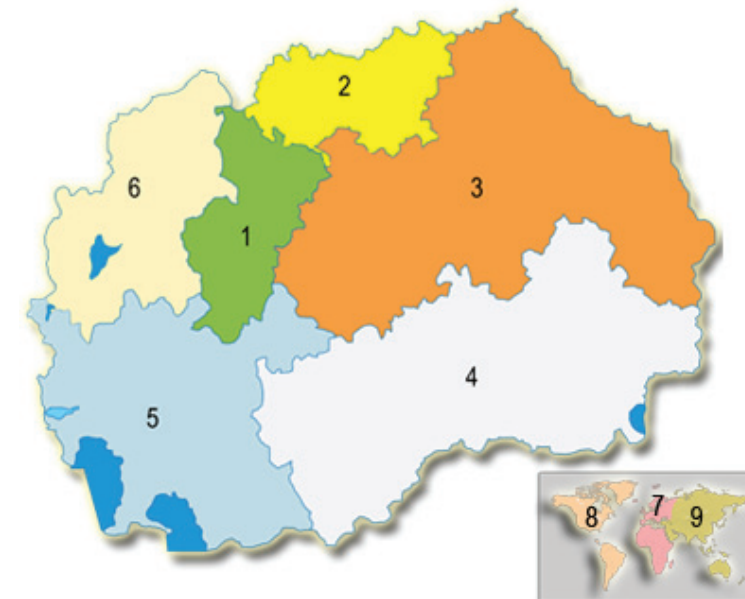


MACEDONIAN ELECTORAL SYSTEM FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

MACEDONIAN ELECTORAL SYSTEM FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS³²

ELECTORAL SYSTEM FOR THE PRESIDENT

The President of the Republic of Macedonia is elected in general, direct, and free elections, with a secret voting for a mandate of 5 years. The election of the President of the Republic of Macedonia is determined by the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia and the Election Code. Therefore, in order to change certain regulations related to the election of the president of the country, the Parliament should make a decision to introduce changes in the Constitution, which should be supported by two-thirds majority of votes from the total number of MPs.



Election Units

Source: State Election Commission

³² This chapter is prepared on the basis of regulations in the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia with amendments from 1 to 32, published on www.sobranie.mk, Election Code (filtered text), Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 32/2014, published on 12 February 2014, and the Law to Determine the Condition of Limitation for Public Office, Access to Documents and Announcement of Cooperation with the Organs of State Security, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 86/2012 published on 9 July 2012.

With the changes in the Election Code in 2009, besides the six Election Units on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, the voting for president (as well as the voting for the parliamentary elections) is conducted in the newly established Election Units abroad: Election Unit (EU) 7 for Europe and Africa, EU8 for North and South America, and EU9 for Australia and Asia. The whole territory of the Republic of Macedonia, including the EU 7, 8, and 9 are treated as one EU, and the president is elected by the majority model. In the first round the candidate with majority of votes of the total number of citizens registered in the voters' list will be elected. If there is only one candidate for president, and he/she does not have the required majority of votes in the first election round, the whole procedure will be repeated. If there are more candidates, and none of them wins the required majority of votes from the total number of voters, a second round is organized in a period of 14 days where only two candidates with the biggest number of votes in the first round will be voted. In the second election round the candidate with the majority of votes of those who voted will be elected. Again, if none of the candidates wins the required majority of votes or if the turnout is less than 40% from the total number of registered voters the election procedure will be repeated.

The election of the president should be completed in the final 60 days of the previous president's mandate, and if due to various reasons there is a termination of the president's mandate, then the election of the new president is conducted in a period of 40 days from the day of the termination of the mandate.

The termination of the presidential mandate could happen by the power of the Constitution or in case of death, resignation or a permanent impediment. Only the Administrative Court of the Republic of Macedonia could officially determine that the conditions for termination of the presidential mandate have been met. The Constitution does not allow any vacuum in the presidential functioning; therefore if the President is obstructed from holding this position, the Constitution stipulates that he/she should be substituted by the President of the Assembly, who could continue with his work in the Assembly during this period.

ELECTORAL BODIES

The State Election Commission (SEC), together with the Municipal Election Commissions (MEC), the Election Boards (EB) for voting within the country and the Diplomatic-Consular Missions (DCM) of the Republic of Macedonia are the electoral organs responsible for implementing the presidential elections. The State Election Commission comprises of seven members elected by the Republic of Macedonia's Assembly with a 4-year mandate. The members of the SEC are elected in a period of 60 days after the constitutional session of the Assembly is held. The president of the SEC and two of its members are elected upon recommendations of the political parties in opposition, while the vice-president and three members of the SEC are elected upon recommendation of the governing political parties. The SEC holds an experts' office conducting administrative, organizational and technical work professionally.

The Municipal Election Commissions (MEC) are established within each municipality, and are responsible for implementing the elections on the territory under their auspices and monitoring the work of the election boards. They comprise of five members, one of which is the president, and each of the members has a deputy. The members and the deputies of the MEC are elected from the employees in the state, public, and municipal administration, with high qualifications, for a mandate of five years. Their selection is conducted by the SEC.

The Election Board is a body established for each polling station, comprising of five members, one of which is the president, and deputies for each of the members. The president of the Election Board and his deputy, two members and their deputies are selected from the employees in the state, public and municipal administration, by random choice for a period of four years. One member of the EB and his/her deputy are nominated upon the recommendation of the political parties in opposition with the biggest number of votes in the previous parliamentary elections, and the others upon the recommendation of the governing political parties with

the majority of votes in the previous parliamentary elections. The random selection of the members of the Election Boards (from the employees in the administration) is conducted by the MEC and the City of Skopje's Election Commission for their areas of responsibility, upon SEC's request. The number of polling stations in the country for the presidential elections is 3,480, i.e. there are 504 more polling stations than the previous elections. For the voting abroad there are 47 polling stations in the DCMs, but the elections will be organized only in those DCMs where there are minimum 10 voters registered.

THE RIGHT AND PROCEDURE FOR NOMINATING PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACIES

Individuals running for presidency in the Republic of Macedonia should fulfill the following conditions:

- They should be citizens of the Republic of Macedonia;
- They should be over 40 years old on the day of the elections;
- They should have been citizens of the Republic of Macedonia for minimum 10 years in the last 15 years;
- They should not be elected presidents twice in a row;
- They should not be secret collaborators, operation liaisons, or confidential informants in operational collection of reports and data in the period from 2 August 1944 until the day of the enforcement of the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance as stipulated in the Law to Determine the Condition of Limitation for Public Office, Access to Documents and Announcement of Cooperation with the Organs of State Security.

The presidential candidate should be recommended minimum by 30 MPs or 10,000 voters. The candidate lists can be filed by political parties, party coalitions registered in the State Election Commission, groups of voters

and MPs. The collecting of signatures by a group of voters should last 15 days. One voter can give his/her signature to one presidential candidate's list only, and the signatures are collected in the municipalities and the regional units of the State Election Commission with a form, witnessed by a public servant. The voters filing the list should be eligible to vote and permanent residents in the Republic of Macedonia.

The Republic of Macedonia's presidential candidacy should be filed by the official representative of the candidate to the State Election Commission, which should determine whether it meets the deadline and whether it is in accordance with the electoral provisions. If any irregularities are determined, the SEC will summon the official representative of the candidate filing the list to eradicate them in a period of 48 hours. When the list meets all provisions or the determined irregularities are eradicated in the given timeframe, then the SEC will sustain it, but if the determined irregularities are not eradicated in the given timeframe, the SEC will reject it in a period of 24 hours. In case of rejection, the representative of the candidate filing the list can complain against the SEC's decision at the Administrative Court. The complaint should be forwarded in a period of 24 hours, and the Administrative Court is obliged to decide on it in a period of 24 hours. The candidate files a written statement for candidacy, which is irrevocable.

The SEC is obliged to publish the list of the Republic of Macedonia's Presidential Candidates in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, minimum 25 days prior to the elections.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The Election Campaign represents public presentation of the candidates confirmed by the competent electoral organs and their programs in the pre-election period, i.e. public gatherings and other public events organized by

the campaign manager, public display of posters, video presentations in public places, election media and internet presentation and distribution of printed materials. The organizer of the election campaign is responsible for its implementation as well as its legitimacy, including the campaign activities carried out by other people authorized by him/her.

The election campaign for presidential elections starts 20 days prior to the days of elections and ends one day before the elections. The day before the first and second voting round is the day of pre-electoral silence, i.e. the day when there should not be any election campaign.

For the purposes of the election campaign, the organizers of the election campaign open a separate bank account and the campaign can be financed only with resources from this account. The donors can be natural or legal persons from the Republic of Macedonia, where the natural persons can donate an amount up to 5,000 EUR, and the legal persons up to 50,000 EUR in MKD currency. The donation can comprise of money, goods, and services, but their value should not surpass the determined amounts. The election campaign can be financed from the political party's membership fee as well.

The election campaign cannot be financed with means deriving from public corporations and public institutions, associations of citizens, religious communities, religious groups and foundations, foreign governments, international institutions, organs and organizations of foreign states and other foreign persons, proprietries with mixed capital where the foreign capital is dominant, as well as from unidentified sources. The election campaign cannot be financed from the Republic of Macedonia's Budget, the municipal budgets and the budget of the City of Skopje, except from the compensations for election expenditures which are in possession of the election campaign organizers.

The organizers of the election campaign whose candidate is elected president of the Republic of Macedonia have the right to a compensation

for the expenditures of the elections, while the organizers of the campaign whose candidate is not elected president of the country have the right to a compensation if their candidate won 1.5% of the total number of votes from the citizens who voted on national level. The compensation amounts to 15 MKD per vote.

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

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC MEDIA

During the election campaign the public radio broadcasting service and the commercial radiobroadcasters when informing about the elections are obliged to do it in a just, balanced, and unbiased manner.

The Election Code clearly states which contents are considered to be suitable for elections media presentation, and which contents should not be broadcast before the start of the election campaign, as well as the way of conduct of the broadcasters from the day when the elections are called until the day determined for the start of the election campaign.

The Election Code obliges the radiobroadcasters to secure balanced media coverage of the elections and to apply the principle of equality in all forms of elections media presentation in the following way for the presidential candidates in the first and second round. The paid political advertising is extracted from the principle of proportional representation, i.e. equality.

In a period of 5 days after calling the elections, the radiobroadcasters and the printed media are obliged to determine their pricelists for paid political advertising of the participants in the election process. These pricelists should be announced publically at least twice before the start

of the election campaign, and should not be altered during the election campaign. In cases when the media provide discounts for the paid political advertising, the discounts are considered as donations in monetary value, not exceeding 50,000 EUR in MKD currency.

The paid political advertising should be appropriately and visibly labeled as “paid political advertising”, there should be a clear indication who commissioned the advertisement, and it should be clearly separated from the other contents of the medium. The paid political advertising should not be broadcast as part of the news, special informative programs, educational programs, programs for children, and reports on religious, sports, cultural, entertainment and other types of events. Minors are not allowed to participate in paid political advertising.

The Macedonian Radio Television (MRTV) as a public radio broadcasting service should not broadcast paid political advertising. MRTV is obliged, in cooperation with the State Election Commission, to inform the citizens on the voting technicalities without any financial compensation, and should broadcast other information related to the election process. It is also obliged to broadcast free political presentations of the participants in the election process in accordance with the Election Code.

Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (AAAMS)³³ is the organ competent for monitoring the elections and voting media presentation and the program service from the day of the call for the elections until the end of the voting on the Election Day. If the AAAMS determines any irregularities, it should press charges against the radiobroadcaster that have violated the regulations. The organs of the AAAMS³⁴ are the Council and the Director. The Council comprises of seven members appointed by the Republic of Macedonia’s Assembly upon recommendations by competent referees. Competent referees to members of the council are: the Majority

³³ The organ of competence was previously the Broadcasting Council, which was renamed into Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services with the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia 184/2013.

³⁴ Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia 184/2013. Accessed at: <http://www.avmu.mk/images/zakonotMKD.pdf> (last visited on 26th March 2014).

Association of Journalists, the Inter-University Conference, the Bar Association of the Republic of Macedonia, the Trade Union of Macedonia, the Commission on issues related to elections and the appointments by the Republic of Macedonia’s Assembly, as well as the Association of the Units of Local Self-government. All competent referees recommend one member to the Agency, except for the Commission on issues related to elections and appointments by the Republic of Macedonia’s Assembly that recommend two members. The members of the Council are appointed to a period of seven years without the right to be nominated again. The Council selects the Director of the AAAMS through a public announcement. The director’s mandate is seven years.

When announcing results from public opinion polls the media are obliged to provide information about the person commissioning and financing the poll, the institution conducting the survey, the applied methodology, the scope and structure of the respondents, and the period of conducting the survey. This information should not be published in the last five days prior to the Election Day, for the first and second round of voting.

After the end of the election process, more precisely 15 days after the campaign is concluded, the radiobroadcasters and the printed media are obliged to file a report on the advertising space used by each of the election campaign organizers and the amounts paid or requested in this regard. This report should be forwarded to the SEC, the State Audit Office, and the State Commission for Prevention against Corruption, which are obliged to publish it on their internet websites.

For any irregularities in relation to the media presentation and political advertising, the radiobroadcasters and printed media will be fined with 1,500 to 5,000 EUR depending on the offence. The AAAMS should start a settlement procedure and if it is not successful, infringement proceedings are initiated at the competent general court.

LIMITATIONS FOR THE CURRENT STATE OFFICIALS

From the day a decision is made to call for elections until the end of the elections it is forbidden to:

- administer the Republic of Macedonia's Budget, and the resources from the municipality budgets as well as that of the City of Skopje, public funds, public properties, public institutions, or legal persons who own state capital, unless it is otherwise determined by law which regulates the financing of election campaigns of the political parties;
- initiate construction work with budget resources, public funds, public properties and other legal persons which own state capital, of new objects in the infrastructure such as roads, water conduits, transmission lines, sewage systems, sports playgrounds, and other facilities, or facilities for social activities – schools, kindergartens, and other facilities, unless there are already budget resources allocated to that goal, i.e. the construction work is part of a program set by a law introduced in the previous year;
- provide irregular payment of salaries, retirement incomes, social welfare;
- or any other payments from the budget, or the public funds;
- sell state capital;
- sign collective agreements.

If a certain minister or deputy minister violates these regulations he/she will be fined between 500 to 1000 EUR in MKD currency.

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

THE MANDATE OF THE PRESIDENT OF REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

The mandate of the President of the Republic begins with the signing and delivering of the Solemn Oath of Office at the Republic of Macedonia's Assembly, which should occur 10 days after the final results are announced, but not earlier than the termination date of the previous president's mandate. The Solemn Oath is as follows:

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

By assuming duties of office, the president receives a mandate:

- to represent the country;
- to be a chief commander of Macedonia's armed forces;
- to determine the mandate for constituting the Republic of Macedonia's Government;
- to appoint and revoke with decree the ambassadors and representatives of the Republic of Macedonia abroad;
- to receive the letters of credence and revocation of the foreign diplomatic representatives;
- to recommend two judges in the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Macedonia;
- to recommend two members of the Judicial Council of the Republic of Macedonia;
- to appoint three members of the Security Council of the Republic of Macedonia;
- to appoint and dismiss other state officials and public servants as determined by the Constitution and the laws;
- to award honors and recognitions in accordance with the law;

- to grant a pardon in accordance with the law, and
- to conduct other functions determined by the Constitution.

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

The position of the president of the country is detached from any other public, political or professional function. The president enjoys immunity in conducting his/her function, but if he/she infringes the Constitution or the laws during his/her term of office, he/she is held responsible. The procedure for determining such a responsibility should be initiated by the Assembly with two-thirds majority of votes from the overall number of MPs, but it does not have the right to decide upon the president's responsibility. The Administrative Court brings the decision for the president's responsibility with two-thirds majority of votes from the overall number of judges, and can decide to revoke the president's immunity with two-thirds majority of votes from the overall number of judges.

MONITORING THE ELECTIONS

The observers with accreditations issued by the SEC have the right to monitor the elections. The accreditation for observers can be issued to national citizen organization registered at least a year prior to the elections, and have incorporated the principle for protection of the human rights in their statute. The international organizations and the foreign representatives can also monitor the elections. The official representatives of the presidential candidates have the right to appoint their representative to monitor the work of the electoral organs.



PARTICIPANTS OF THE 2014 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

PARTICIPANTS OF THE 2014 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Gjorge Ivanov³⁵



Gjorge Ivanov is the current President of the Republic of Macedonia, elected on the 2009 Presidential Elections. On these elections he will run for the Macedonian citizens' trust again, as a candidate of the ruling party, VMRO-DPMNE.

Prior to his position as a President of the state, Gjorge Ivanov was known to the Macedonian public as a university professor. Between 2004 and 2008 he was a Pro-Dean of the Law Faculty at the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, as well as Head of the Political Studies Department, and a professor of political studies prior to that. He started working as an assistant professor at the Law Faculty in 1995, and in 1998 he was appointed a docent. Before his academic engagement, he worked as a journalist and editor of the third channel of the Macedonian Radio Television broadcasting service (1988-1995). In 2000 he became a lecturer at the master program in Southeast European Studies at the University of Athens.

Gjorgje Ivanov has graduated in legal studies from the Law Faculty Iustinianus Primus in Skopje, and has obtained his M.A. and Ph.D. in political studies. He obtained his Master's degree in 1994 in the topic: "Civic Society – the New Contradictions of the Old Dispute", and has obtained his Doctor's degree in 1998 in the topic: "Democracy in Divided Societies: the Macedonian Model".

³⁵ The photograph has been taken from: <http://www.president.gov.mk/mk/galerija/dekempri-2012/1799.html> (accessed on 11.03.2014).

During his academic engagement, Gjorge Ivanov published two books, and was a co-author in three other titles, as well as numerous academic papers in the area of political studies. He is the founder and the president of one of the first analytics centers in the area of social sciences in the Republic of Macedonia, the Institute for Democracy, Solidarity and Civic Society. He is also one of the founders of Political Thought, a publication dedicated to political studies, with a circulation for more than 10 years now.

Gjorge Ivanov is currently 53 years old, he was born on 2nd May 1960 in Valandovo. He is married to Maja Ivanova and is a father of one son.

Iljaz Halimi³⁶



Iljaz Halimi has graduated in philosophy, and he is the founder, long-term member and party official of the DPA. He will run for presidency on the forthcoming 2014 Presidential Elections as the only ethnic Albanian candidate.

He is a former deputy Minister of Defense in the Republic of Macedonia's Government (2006-2008) and member of the Republic of Macedonia's Parliament for two mandates (1998-2002, and 2002-2006). During his first mandate as an MP (1998-2002) he was positioned as a vice-president of the legislative body. He was also a member of the Security Council of the Republic of Macedonia in the period between 1998 and 2001. Previously (1979-1998), he was a sociology professor, and a deputy principal of the High School "Kiril Pejčinović" in Tetovo. In the period between 2009 and 2013 he has worked as the head of the Public Affairs Sector at the municipality of Tetovo.

³⁶ The photograph has been taken from: <http://www.novini.mk/read/650169/ilijaz-halimi-pretsedatelski-kandidat-na-dpa> (accessed on 11.03.2014).

From 1990 to 1997 Iljaz Halimi was the president of the National Democratic Party (NDP) that merged with the Party for Democratic Prosperity of the Albanians (PDPA), which marked the founding of the DPA. In the period from 1997 to 2007, Halimi was the vice president of the DPA. He has been a member of the Central Presidency of the DPA since 2011.

Iljaz Halimi has completed his undergraduate studies in philosophy at the Philosophy Faculty, University of Pristina. He is currently 60 years old, and he was born on 7th February 1954 in the village of Sushice, Kosovo. He is married to Zejna Halimi and is a father of one son.

Stevo Pendarovski³⁷



Stevo Pendarovski works as a university professor in the Faculty of Political Studies at the University American College in Skopje (UACS), as an associate professor of International Security, Foreign Policy and Globalization. He will run for presidency on the

forthcoming 2014 Presidential Elections as a candidate from the party in opposition, SDSM.

In the period between 2001 and 2004, Stevo Pendarovski worked as a national security advisor at the President Boris Trajkovski's Office, and in the period between 2005 and 2009 he was a foreign policy adviser at the President Branko Crvenkovski's Office. He was the Chairperson of the State Election Commission, in the period between 2004 and 2005. Previously, between 1998 and 2001, he was an assistant Minister at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as well as the head of the Analytics and Research Department within the same ministry.

³⁷ The photograph has been taken from: <http://www.makdenes.org/content/article/25286074.html> (accessed on 11.03.2014).

Stevo Pendarovski holds a Ph.D., and has obtained his doctor's and master's degree from the Institute for Sociological, Political and Legal Research, University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. He has obtained his M.A. in the topic: "New Geopolitics of the Republic of Macedonia: Contradictions of the Communist and Transitional Matrices", and has obtained his Ph.D. in the topic: "Foreign and Security Policy of the EU and the Small States: the Framework of the National Discourse". He has graduated from the Law Faculty in Skopje in the area of legal studies.

He is the author of several books and academic papers published in Macedonia and abroad, as well as a participant on many academic conferences, public debates and discussions.

Stevo Pendarovski is currently 51 years old, he was born on 3rd April 1963 in Skopje. He is married to Elizabeta Gjorgievska and is a father of one son.

Zoran Popovski³⁸



Zoran Popovski is a university professor, Head of the Biochemistry and Genetic Engineering department at the Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences. He is a member of the Council of the Karposh municipality, after being elected on the local elections in 2013. He runs for presidency on the 2014 Presidential Elections as a candidate of GROM, a party which after being established in 2013 enters the general and direct elections for the first time.

In the period between 2002 and 2006 he was a state secretary at the Ministry of Education. He has worked at the Faculty of Agriculture and

Food Sciences since 1992, and he is also a lecturer at the Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy and the Faculty of Pharmacy in Skopje.


Zoran Popovski has graduated in biology at the Faculty of Natural Sciences in Skopje. He has obtained his Master's degree in biochemistry at the same faculty in 1999, and in 2002 he has obtained his Ph.D. in applying modern DNA methods in animal biotechnology from the Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences.

He has participated in several international and national commissions and working bodies dealing with educational policies and reforms. He has participated in the drafting of the National Program for Educational Development between 2005 and 2015. He is an author of more than 100 academic papers and publications, and has participated in many national and international conferences and events.

Zoran Popovski is currently 51 years old, he was born on 8th September 1962 in Skopje. He is married to Zlatka Stamboliska – Popovska and is a father of two children – a son and a daughter.

³⁸ The photograph has been taken from: <http://grom.mk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/sovetnik-dr-zoran-popovski.jpg> (accessed on 11.03.2014).

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA 2014 - RESULTS, CAMPAIGN, FINDINGS



PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA 2014 - RESULTS, CAMPAIGN, FINDINGS

ABBREVIATIONS

Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services - AAAMU

Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for
Macedonian National Unity – VMRO-DPMNE

Civil Alliance for Macedonia - GROM

Democratic Party of the Albanians - DPA

Democratic Union for Integration - DUI

State Audit Office - DZR

State Election Commission - DIK

State Commission for Prevention of Corruption - DKSK

Macedonian Radio Television - MRT

Municipal Election Commission - OIK

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe/ Office for Democratic
Institutions and Human Rights – OSCE/ODIHR

Socialdemocratic Union of Macedonia - SDSM

INTRODUCTION

The fifth presidential general elections in the Republic of Macedonia took place on 13 (first round) and 27 April (second round). In both rounds the candidate of the ruling political party Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) and current president of the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Gjorge Ivanov, won. Also running in the first round of the elections were Mr. Stevo Pendarovski (candidate of the opposition Socialdemocratic Union of Macedonia - SDSM), Mr. Iljaz Halimi (candidate of the opposition Democratic Party of Albanians – DPA) and Mr. Zoran Popovski (candidate of the non-parliamentary party Civil Option for Macedonia – GROM). Only Gjorge Ivanov and Stevo Pendarovski entered the second round. A total of 1,779,572 voters were registered to vote at the fifth Presidential elections, the turnout in the first round was 869,617 (48,86%) and in the second round was 967,676 (54,38%) voters.

The presidential Elections were called on 1st February 2014 and the election campaign started on 24th March 2014. During the pre-election period of the presidential elections and due to disagreement between the coalition partners VMRO-DPMNE and DUI for nominating common consensual candidate for President of the Republic of Macedonia, DUI raised initiative for self-dissolving of the Parliament and calling of early parliamentary elections which was accepted by all members of the Parliament. As a result of these political events, the early Parliamentary elections were also called and organized on 27 April 2014, simultaneously with the second round of the presidential elections. The parliamentary elections campaign started on 5 April and was run in parallel with the campaign for the presidential elections. DUI did not nominate a candidate for President and run a campaign among the ethnic Albanians to boycott the Presidential elections which resulted in significant reduction in the turnout for the Presidential elections in the municipalities where Albanians are majority.

The Presidential elections were observed and monitored by 9,917 local and 489 foreign observers (the first round) i.e. by 10,013 local and 610 foreign observers (the second round). The general assessment of the Presidential elections was that they were efficiently implemented, the candidates were able to freely run their campaign and the rhetoric and the actual campaign became harsher in the second half of the campaign i.e. with the start of the campaign for the early parliamentary elections. The key remarks of the observers were about the behavior of the political parties during the parliamentary elections campaign. This Handbook provides detailed overview of the election campaign, the revenues and expenditures of the presidential campaigns, the media coverage, the election results, the respect of the election rights, the evaluation of the elections by the political party observers and the conclusions about the overall election cycle.

THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND FINANCING OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

The presidential campaign commenced on 24 March 2014 and in most part included positive promotion of the candidates, however, it also included verbal attacks through which the opposing candidates tried to show themselves as antipodes of their main opponents. The campaign of all the candidates was mainly about organizing direct meetings with the citizens and rallies, promotion of TV spots as well as Internet campaign. All four presidential campaigns organized 62 rallies and 8 meetings with citizens. The campaign was peaceful and the Ministry of Interior ascertained that, in comparison to previous election cycles, only minor incidents and disturbances of the public peace and order were detected – 9 incidents and disturbances of the public peace and order which included small and insignificant material damage.³⁹

³⁹ Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Macedonia, 25.04.2014 Operational Headquarters of the Ministry of Interior for the Elections; the least number of incidents and disturbances of the public order and peace in comparison to previous elections <http://www.mvr.gov.mk/ShowAnnouncements.aspx?ItemID=13451&mid=1367&tabId=358&tabindex=0> (accessed on 25 April 2014)

The campaign of the incumbent President and candidate of VMRO-DPMNE, Mr. Gjorge Ivanov, promoted the message "The State Above All". Other slogans in his campaign were "Gjorge Ivanov for President", "Holding Firmly to Our Roots", "Firmly and Securely", "Heritage and Tradition", "Proudly and with Dignity". The campaign of Mr. Ivanov was initiated by a group of celebrities who called themselves "Team Macedonia" and run the election activities together with VMRO-DPMNE. On 14 March Mr. Ivanov published the "Accountability Report of the President Gjorge Ivanov for the 2009-2014 Mandate" which provides overview of the activities carried out during the first mandate. The State Election Commission assessed this as early start of the election campaign, before the official date for start of the campaign, and decided to press misdemeanor charges against the organizer of the election campaign.⁴⁰ The outcome of this action is still pending but if guilt is ascertained the organizer of the election campaign of Mr. Ivanov would have to pay a fine on the amount from 3,000 to 5,000 euros in denars equivalent. In his speeches Mr. Ivanov was emphasizing that there should cooperation and unity between the state institutions stating as best example the cooperation between his work and the Government, which provided results. He was emphasizing that he will not accept changes to the Constitution in order to change the name of the country nor any other proposals that would endanger the Macedonian national identity. Furthermore, he was stipulating that all the projects foreseen in the first mandate were implemented and that he will continue to implement projects for cooperation with the business community, opening towards the citizens, promotion of the science, education and sports.

The Internet campaign of Mr. Ivanov was carried out through dedicated websites: www.ivanov.mk and www.timmakedonija.mk, including the VMRO-DPMNE's website. Before the first round of the presidential elections, Mr. Ivanov had 90,171 followers on his Facebook profile and in the second round this number reached 100,517 followers.⁴¹ During these

⁴⁰ State Election Commission, Announcement No.78, session of the State Election Commission <http://217.16.84.23/index.php?limitstart=32&lang=mk>

⁴¹ GJORGE IVANOV, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, <https://www.facebook.com/macedonianpresident> (accessed on 11 April 2014 and 27 April 2014)

elections, contrary to the presidential elections in 2009,⁴² Mr. Ivanov did not have Twitter profile.

The slogan of the SDSM candidate, Mr. Stevo Pendarovski was "Macedonia Deserves a President". The campaign had three key aspects. First, it introduced Mr. Pendarovski as candidate who is opposite of the current President Ivanov i.e. as president who would provide the checks and balances on the government policies and would have active role on the political stage. Secondly, Mr. Pendarovski tried, through the campaign, to get closer to the voters through the additional slogan "Stevo, My President". The third aspect of the campaign was the targeting of young voters and voters from other ethnic communities, with greatest emphasis on the Albanian voters. Mr. Pendarovski was emphasizing that, when it comes to the name issue, he is in favor of a national standpoint and consensus of all relevant political stakeholders, where the solution must not touch a single vital component of the national identity. Until the start of the parliamentary elections campaign Mr. Pendarovski was not accompanied by the leaders and the President of SDSM, Zoran Zaev. As soon as the parliamentary elections campaign began, they started to carry out the electoral activities together.

Mr. Pendarovski had active Internet campaign through Facebook - in the first round he was followed by 64,823 people and in the second round this number grew to 67,445 people.⁴³ By the end of the second round his Tweeter profile had 1,945 followers.⁴⁴ Mr. Pendarovski did not have special website for the campaign and the campaign videos were promoted through the YouTube channel and the SDSM website.

The only presidential candidate who was ethnic Albanian, Mr. Iljaz Halimi, nominated by DPA, based his entire campaign on trying to win the voters along the ethnic line, hence his slogan "For Albanian President", including

⁴² <https://twitter.com/gjorgeivanov> (accessed on 11 April 2014)

⁴³ Stevo Pendarovski <https://www.facebook.com/SPendarovski> (accessed on 11 April 2014 and 27 April 2014)

⁴⁴ <https://twitter.com/SPendarovski> (accessed on 27 April 2014)

the additional "Vote for Number 2" slogan. Mr. Halimi's campaign was carried out in Albanian language only, although the candidate was saying that, if elected, will be president of all ethnic communities. Regarding the name issue Mr. Halimi said that he will be implementing active policy towards resolving this issue, will involve all political parties and will aim towards compromise that will not endanger the identity of the ethnicities living in Macedonia. The key role in the campaign was played by the DPA leader, Mr. Menduh Tachi who, together with Halimi, had central role on the DPA rallies.

Iljaz Halimi was less present on the Internet where he had a special presidential profile only on Facebook. Until the first round of elections Mr. Halimi had 2,281 followers on Facebook.⁴⁵ The rest of the Internet presence was through the website, the YouTube channel and the Facebook page of DPA.

The candidate of GROM, Mr. Zoran Popovski, carried out the campaign under the "Brave Person, Proud Country" slogan, including the "Be Brave for Macedonia" slogan which was also the slogan of the political party during the parliamentary elections. Popovski presented himself as president who will not allow for irresponsible spending of people's money, who will promote better conditions for the local businesses and youth and one who will be true advocate of the citizens. Regarding the name issue, Popovski said that he will not concede from the red lines that are already defined in the public i.e. retention of the constitutional name and the national identity of the citizens, but he also said it should be necessary to consider the double formula and lobby for opening of EU accession negotiations without resolving the name issue.

There were 1,600 followers on his Facebook profile,⁴⁶ and 333 on his Twitter profile.⁴⁷ The videos from the campaign were streamed on the GROM's YouTube channel.

⁴⁵ Iljaz Halimi Per President <https://www.facebook.com/iljazhalimiofficial> (accessed on 11 April 2014)

⁴⁶ Zoran Popovski, candidate for President of Macedonia <http://goo.gl/VN2yMa> (accessed on 11 April 2014)

⁴⁷ <https://twitter.com/popovskiz> (accessed on 11 April 2014)

In parallel with the election campaigns for president, DUI was campaigning among the ethnic Albanians under the "No for Unilateral President" slogan, urging them not to vote during the presidential elections. DUI organized meetings and rallies with the ethnic Albanian citizens explaining them the purpose of the campaign, starting in Kichevo. DUI promoted the idea that the president of the state should be elected in the Parliament and must have the support from all political parties of all ethnic communities in the country. The DUI campaign was successful among their supporters – most of the people in the municipalities with Albanian majority did not cast their vote on the day of the elections.

Regarding the costs the presidential candidates had in the election campaign, they are obliged to submit three financial reports (if they participate only in the first round) i.e. four financial reports (if they also participate in the second round of the vote). The first report which is about the first ten days of the campaign the candidates were obliged to provide on the 11th day of the campaign i.e. on the 3rd of April. The candidates were obliged to provide the second report one day after the end of the campaign i.e. on the 12th of April and it is about the second half of the campaign. All candidates filed the first two reports in timely manner.

The presidential candidates Ivanov and Pendarovski, who also participated in the second round, were also obliged to submit third financial report on the 26th of April, one day before the second round took place, which is about the election campaign in the second round of voting.⁴⁸ Both candidates submitted these financial reports within the deadlines. All the candidates are obliged to provide the last overall financial report immediately, or no later than 25th of May 2014 i.e. 30 days after the second round of voting. All the financial reports are submitted to the State Election Commission, State Commission for Prevention of Corruption and the State Audit Office, while the overall financial report is also submitted to the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia. Each organizer of election campaign is entitled to

⁴⁸ State Election Commission, Presidential Elections 2014, Financial Reports of the candidates for President of the Republic of Macedonia http://217.16.84.23/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=305:fin_izv&catid=29&Itemid=1278&lang=mk (accessed on 27 April 2014)

spend 180 denars per registered vote i.e. a total of 320,322,960 denars for its respective election campaign (5,164,340 euros).⁴⁹ Each organizer of election campaign who won at least 1,5% of the total number of votes (those who voted) is entitled to compensation in the amount of 15 denars per vote that was won, which is compensated from the Budget of the Republic of Macedonia.⁵⁰ If the organizer of the election campaign raised more money compared to money that was actually spent, he is obliged to donate this surplus of money to charity.

According to the financial reports submitted, the most expensive election campaign was the campaign of Mr. Ivanov who spent a total of 47,394,082 denars (766,895 euros) by the end of the second round. By 26th of April he raised less money compared to the money spent – he raised 29,832,462 denars (482,726 euros). In order to compensate for these differences, the donations can be collected by the candidates no later than 30 days after the second round (25th of May), when they must submit the overall financial report.

His opponent, Mr. Stevo Pendarovski spent a total of 9,392,108 denars (151,976 euros) by the end of the second round and in the same time period he raised 9,880,742 (159,883) i.e. 488,634 denars (7,907 evpa) more compared to how much was spent.

The two candidates who failed to enter the second round (Halimi and Popovski) spent less money compared to the two above mentioned presidential candidates Ivanov and Pendarovski. Halimi reported he spent 509,226 denars (8,240 euros) and by 12th of April he raised less donations in comparison to the money spent. The revenues in his campaign are 200,000 denars (2,236 euros) meaning that by the end of the first round he had less revenue (by 309,226 denars i.e. 5,004 euros) compared to the expenditures.

⁴⁹ The calculations in euros were done using the middle exchange rate of 61,8

⁵⁰ Electoral Code of the Republic of Macedonia (clean text), 2014, State Election Commission <http://217.16.84.23/files/IzborenzakonikzaWEB1.pdf> (accessed on 10 April 2014)

The only candidate who reported raising amount of money that was almost identical to the amount of money actually spent was Mr. Zoran Popovski. He reported total expenditures by 25th of April in the amount of 830,000 denars (13,430 euros) and revenues in the amount of 830,030 denars (13,431 euros).⁵¹

	Gjorge Ivanov		Iljaz Halimi		Stevo Pendarovski		Zoran Popovski	
	Revenues	Expenditures	Revenues	Expenditures	Revenues	Expenditures	Revenues	Expenditures
First Report (24 March – 2 April) with deadline till 3 April	14.306.396	31.149.203	0	0	6.129.211	5.663.790	500.000	500.000
Second Report (3–11 April) with deadline till 12 April	15.031.526	10.229.668	200.000	509.226	509.198	487.829	0	0
Total for the first round	29.337.922	41.378.871	200.000	509.226	6.638.409	6.151.619	500.000	500.000
Third Report (14– 25 April) with deadline till 26 April	494.540	6.015.211	/	/	3.242.333	3.240.489	330.030	330.000
Total (denars)	29.832.462	47.394.082	200.000	509.226	9.880.742	9.392.108	830.030	830.000
Total (euros)	482.726	766.895	3.236	8240	159.883	151.976	13.431	13.430
Difference (denars)	-17.561.620		-309.226		488.634		30	
Difference (euros)	-284.168		- 5.004		7.907		0,485436893	

⁵¹ On 25 April 2014 the organizer of the election campaign of Mr. Zoran Popovski submitted financial report for the period from 12 to 25 April although he did not have legal obligation to do so because his candidate did not have a campaign for the second round.

⁵² The review of the financial reports was done using the financial reports submitted by the organizers of the campaigns to the relevant state bodies by 8 May 2014. Till this date no overall financial reports for the presidential election campaigns were submitted thus the overview does not include in full the donations and costs of the campaign.

MEDIA

The monitoring of the media during the first and second round of the presidential elections campaign carried out by OSCE/ODIHR⁵³ identified “absence of analysis and independent reporting” of the activities of the presidential candidates. In general, the OSCE/ODIHR mission noted in the reports that the media adhered to the legal requirements when it comes to the quantity aspect but the picture is opposite when it comes to qualitative aspect. This is mainly to the fact that the largest media are “under indirect control of the ruling political part due to the position of the Government as being the largest single client for commercials”.⁵⁴

The reports noted self-censorship among the media, clear partial reporting in favor of the presidential candidate Gjorge Ivanov and the VMRO-DPMNE coalition and negative reporting towards the presidential candidate Stevo Pendarovski and the opposition party SDSM. Furthermore, the public broadcasting service MTV1 presented the activities of the ruling VMRO-DPMNE party and the candidate Gjorge Ivanov in positive light and other political parties and candidates were portrayed in neutral light. In similar way the public service MTV2 (which broadcasts TV programs in the languages of the minorities) had affirmative reporting about the boycott of the presidential elections initiated by the coalition partner in the Government, DUI. The OSCE/ODIHR monitoring included the following electronic media: MRT1, MRT2, TV Sitel, TV Kanal 5, TV Alfa, TV Telma and TV Alsat-M; and the following printed media: Dnevnik, Nova Makedonija, Sloboden Pечат and Koha.

⁵³ Please refer to the OSCE/ODIHR statements that include the initial findings and conclusions about the elections: OSCE/ODIHR, International Observing Mission for the Elections in the Republic of Macedonia, Presidential Elections 13 April 2014. (2014) Statement on preliminary findings and conclusions. Skopje, April, available at: <http://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/117647?download=true> (accessed on 13 May 2014); and OSCE/ODIHR, International Observing Mission for the Elections in the Republic of Macedonia, Presidential and early Parliamentary elections 27 April 2014. (2014) Statement on preliminary findings and conclusions. Skopje, April, available at: <http://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/fyrom/118079?download=true> (accessed on 13 May 2014).

⁵⁴ Quote from the OSCE/ODIHR Statement about the initial findings and conclusions – first round of presidential elections, page 10.

OSCE/ODIHR also have comments about the media monitoring reports developed by the Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services (AAAMU) which is a body in charge of monitoring of the media reporting in the election period. The AAAMU reports were mainly focused on the quantitative aspects of the media reporting and neglected the qualitative aspects, this preventing the Agency to “identify potential violations of the legal requirements that require from all public broadcasters to ensure fair and impartial coverage”.⁵⁵

According to the Electoral Code, the media are obliged to report about the presidential candidates in fair, balanced and impartial manner. Furthermore, new rules for media reporting in the news of the public broadcasting service – Macedonian Radio Television (MRT) were introduced with the most recent changes in the Electoral Code in February 2014. According to these changes, the public broadcasting service is obliged to allocate the reporting time as follows: one third to report about the daily events in Macedonia and abroad; one third to report about the campaign of the political party candidates and one third to report about the opposition political party candidates. The time allocated for each candidate depends on the results and seats won during the last parliamentary elections. As it is mentioned in the OSCE/ODIHR Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions for the presidential and early parliamentary elections, this allocation of the time is not compliant to Paragraph 7.8 of the OSCE Copenhagen Criteria because it creates obstacles for allocation of time for media reporting about the non-parliamentary party candidates. Nevertheless, the MRT also allocated time, beyond the above mentioned ‘thirds’, for the representatives of the non-parliamentary parties on the basis of the AAAMU recommendation.

The MRT time allocation to report about the first round, and on the basis of the most recent changes in the Electoral Code, was as follows: one third went to report about the VMRO-DPMNE candidate, Gjorge Ivanov (the ruling party DUI did not have presidential candidate) and the second third

⁵⁵ Refer to the OSCE/ODIHR Statement about the second round of the presidential elections and the early parliamentary elections, page 10.

was allocated to report about the candidates of the opposition political parties SDSM and DPA, Stevo Pendarovski and Iljaz Halimi, whereas the SDSM candidate was allocated larger percentage of the time. The GROM candidate, Zoran Popovski, was present in the information programs beyond the foreseen 'thirds' for reporting, intended for the parliamentary parties.

Regarding the second round of the presidential elections, the candidates of VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM, Gjorge Ivanov and Stevo Pendarovski had equal presence in the information programs of the MTV, each in the frames of its third which included their personal activities but also the activities of the political parties in power and in opposition due to the overlap of the second round of the parliamentary elections with the early parliamentary elections.

As a body in charge of monitoring of the media reporting during the election period, the AAAMU published a final report which says that the public broadcasting service adhered to the legal obligations when it comes to media coverage of the candidates in the information programs in the first round. The report further says that there was proper allocation of the time into thirds between the news from the country and abroad, news about the candidates of the ruling party and the news about the candidates of the opposition. In the frames of the 'thirds' the candidates were covered in accordance with the results achieved during the last parliamentary elections. MRT also allocated time for media coverage of the presidential candidate of GROM.⁵⁶

Regarding the second round of the presidential elections, where the campaign was run in parallel with the early parliamentary elections campaign, AAAMU also said the reporting about the activities of Gjorge Ivanov and Stevo Pendarovski was compliant to the legal requirements. These conclusions in the AAAMU report cover both rounds of the

presidential elections and apply to all the media of the public broadcasting service: MRT1, MRT2 – Program in Albanian language; MRT – Program in Turkish language and the program services of the Macedonian Radio. MRT also provided free-of-charge political presentation of the candidates in the frames of its legal obligations.

The AAAMU monitoring also includes the time allocated for direct addressing of the presidential candidates in the information programs of the public service. In the first round, most of the time was allocated to the addresses of Gjorge Ivanov and Stevo Pendarovski. Iljaz Halimi was present more (in the terms of time allocated) on the MRT2 program service and the Macedonian Radio 3 that air programs in Albanian language. Gjorge Ivanov was also significantly present, with direct addresses, in the Albanian language services, contrary to Stevo Pendarovski who was much less present in these services. Iljaz Halimi and Zoran Popovski were significantly less present on MRT 1 in comparison to the time allocated to Gjorge Ivanov and Stevo Pendarovski. Regarding the total presence of the candidates in the MRT program services in the first round, most present was Gjorge Ivanov with 74 direct addresses, with total duration of 1 hour, 22 minutes and 35 seconds, followed by Stevo Pendarovski with 65 addresses with total duration of 57 minutes and 31 seconds, Iljaz Halimi directly addressed the voters through the public broadcasting service 69 times with total duration of 51 minutes and 21 seconds (45 minutes and 50 seconds of those addresses were also broadcasted in the Albanian language services) and least present was Zoran Popovski with 56 direct addresses with total duration of 24 minutes and 29 seconds (Table 1, page 66).

⁵⁶ Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services (2014) Report from the Monitoring of the Media Coverage During the Presidential and the Early Parliamentary Elections. Skopje, May, available at: http://www.avmu.mk/images/Finalen_Izvestaj_Izbori_2014_-_nacionalni_mediumi.pdf (accessed on 13 May 2014).

Table 1: Direct addresses of the presidential candidates in the information programs of the public service (first round).
Source: Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services (2014)

Medium	Gjorge Ivanov		Stevo Pendarovski		Iljaz Halimi		Zoran Popovski	
	Addresses	Duration	Addresses	Duration	Addresses	Duration	Addresses	Duration
MRT 1	18	0:13:50	19	0:19:40	14	0:02:22	12	0:01:58
MRT 2	18	0:27:47	12	0:07:29	18	0:25:08	12	0:07:29
Macedonian Radio 1	20	0:24:26	18	0:22:07	19	0:03:00	18	0:10:04
Macedonian Radio 3 – Albanian language	18	0:16:32	16	0:08:15	18	0:20:51	14	0:04:58
Total	74	1:22:35	65	0:57:31	69	0:51:21	56	0:24:29

In the second round the time allocated for addresses of the presidential candidates, including their frequency, was significantly reduced and this is mainly due to the parallel running of both campaigns – presidential and the early parliamentary elections. Both in the first and the second round Gjorge Ivanov was again more present in the Albanian language media. Regarding the total number of direct addresses and their duration, Gjorge Ivanov had 32 addresses with duration of 13 minutes and 25 seconds and Stevo Pendarovski had 24 addresses with duration of 10 minutes and 32 seconds.

Table 2: Direct addresses of the presidential candidates in the information programs of the public service (second round).
Source: Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services (2014)

Medium	Gjorge Ivanov		Stevo Pendarovski	
	Addresses	Duration	Addresses	Duration
MRT 1	4	0:00:37	7	0:03:12
MRT 2	8	0:02:55	5	0:01:40
Macedonian Radio 1	10	0:05:53	7	0:04:10
Macedonian Radio 3 – Albanian language	10	0:04:00	5	0:01:30
Total	32	0:13:25	24	0:10:32

When it comes to commercial media, the AAAMU Report ascertains there is “relatively balanced” reporting about the activities of the presidential candidates, with special emphasis of the candidates of the two biggest political parties in the first round. The candidates were also presented in a balanced manner when it comes to direct addresses. However, AAAMU ascertains there is negative framing of the media reporting about specific candidates in some media (for example, TV Alfa in several occasions when reporting about Pendarovski and SDSM) as well as explicit negative reporting about the activities of the political entities (for example, TV Sitel about Pendarovski and SDSM). The negative media reporting was mainly aimed towards the opposition political party SDSM and its presidential candidate. The AAAMU monitoring included six commercial televisions: TV 24 Vesti, TV Alsat-M, TV Alfa, TV Kanal 5, TV Sitel and TV Telma.

During the first round campaign most of the commercial media monitored allocated most of the reporting time to the candidates of the two biggest political parties, Gjorge Ivanov and Stevo Pendarovski. TV Alsat-M allocated more time to report about the activities of Iljaz Halimi, compared to the other candidates. TV Sitel allocated, in non-balanced manner, more time to report about the activities of Gjorge Ivanov in comparison to other candidates – he was present a whole one hour more in the information programs compared to Stevo Pendarovski. TV Telma allocated more time to report about the activities of Stevo Pendarovski compared to other candidates. Overall, during the first round campaign Gjorge Ivanov was present with 3 hours, 43 minutes and 51 seconds in all six commercial media, Stevo Pendarovski with 3 hours, 41 minutes and 11 seconds, Iljaz Halimi with 2 hours, 31 minutes and 44 seconds and Zoran Popovski with 2 hours, 18 minutes and 47 seconds (Table 3, page 68).

Table 3: Reporting about the candidates in the information programs by the 6 commercial media (first round).
Source: Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services (2014)

Medium	Gjorge Ivanov	Stevo Pendarovski	Iljaz Halimi	Zoran Popovski
TV 24 Vesti	0:44:16	0:47:36	0:29:15	0:32:15
TV Alsat-M	0:36:59	0:39:29	0:49:10	0:32:58
TV Alfa	0:28:28	0:27:20	0:14:41	0:12:37
TV Kanal 5	0:57:26	0:38:08	0:20:50	0:23:48
TV Sitel	1:33:58	0:32:32	0:20:22	0:20:46
TV Telma	0:25:44	0:36:06	0:17:26	0:16:23
Total	3:43:51	3:41:11	2:31:44	2:18:47

In the second round, again, most of the monitored commercial media allocated equal time for both candidates (except TV Kanal 5 who allocated twice more time for Gjorge Ivanov and TV Sitel who allocated 1 hour, 2 minutes and 52 seconds for Gjorge Ivanov and only 8 minutes and 41 seconds for reporting about Stevo Pendarovski). Furthermore, TV Alfa allocated a bit more time to report about Gjorge Ivanov and, overall, the activities of Gjorge Ivanov were reported in the commercial media in a total duration of 1 hour, 39 minutes and 25 seconds and the activities of Stevo Pendarovski in a total duration of 1 hour, 17 minutes and 31 seconds (Table 4).

Table 4: Reporting about the candidates in the information programs by the 6 commercial media (second round).
Source: Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services (2014)

Medium	Gjorge Ivanov	Stevo Pendarovski
TV 24 Vesti	0:14:04	0:14:08
TV Alsat-M	0:21:29	0:17:57
TV Alfa	0:15:55	0:09:42
TV Kanal 5	0:34:20	0:15:13
TV Sitel	1:02:52	0:08:41
TV Telma	0:10:45	0:11:50
Total	1:39:25	1:17:31

Regarding the presence of the candidates in the commercial media with direct addresses in the information programs during the first round campaign the biggest misbalance was identified in the reporting by TV Sitel, in favor of Gjorge Ivanov. The rest of the media, in general, had balanced approached towards all the candidates when it comes to direct addresses. Overall, Gjorge Ivanov was present in the commercial media with 169 addresses in total duration of 1 hour, 52 minutes and 13 seconds, Stevo Pendarovski with 146 addresses in total duration of 1 hour, 41 minutes and 57 seconds, Iljaz Halimi with 135 addresses in total duration of 1 hour, 9 minutes and 27 seconds, and Zoran Popovski with 124 addresses in total duration of 1 hour, 4 minutes and 53 seconds.

Table 5: Direct addresses of the presidential candidates in the information programs of the 6 commercial media (first round).
Source: Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services (2014)

Medium	Gjorge Ivanov		Stevo Pendarovski		Iljaz Halimi		Zoran Popovski	
	Обраќања	Време	Обраќања	Време	Обраќања	Време	Обраќања	Време
TV 24 Vesti	24	0:16:32	20	0:18:19	21	0:13:02	20	0:12:05
TV Alsat-M	33	0:16:20	32	0:19:45	35	0:20:51	27	0:14:27
TV Alfa	26	0:13:36	27	0:15:15	19	0:07:10	16	0:06:41
TV Kanal 5	39	0:21:07	36	0:20:24	26	0:12:25	31	0:12:14
TV Sitel	30	0:30:29	15	0:07:30	19	0:05:58	15	0:06:20
TV Telma	17	0:14:09	16	0:20:44	15	0:10:01	15	0:13:10
TOTAL	169	1:52:13	146	1:41:57	135	1:09:27	124	1:04:53

During the second round campaign, the commercial media had mostly balanced reporting of the direct addresses of the candidates, with the exception of TV Sitel who allocated 19 minutes and 41 seconds for the addresses by Gjorge Ivanov and 1 minute and 3 seconds for Stevo Pendarovski. Overall, Gjorge Ivanov was present with 60 addresses with total duration of 54 minutes and 21 seconds, and Stevo Pendarovski with 52 addresses with total duration of 29 minutes and 14 seconds (Table 6). The AAAMU Report does not include the number of addresses on TV

Alfa and TV Sitel but includes information about the duration of those addresses.

Table 6: Direct addresses of the presidential candidates in the information programs of the 6 commercial media (second round).
Source: Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services (2014)

	Gjorge Ivanov		Stevo Pendarovski	
Medium	Addresses	Duration	Addresses	Duration
TV 24 Vesti	15	0:07:49	13	0:06:59
TV Alsat-M	20	0:10:30	14	0:06:52
TV Alfa	/	0:03:46	/	0:02:55
TV Kanal 5	16	0:07:48	15	0:06:15
TV Sitel	/	0:19:41	/	0:01:03
TV Telma	9	0:04:47	10	0:05:10
TOTAL	60 (excl. TV Alfa and TV Sitel)	0:54:21	52 (excl. TV Alfa and TV Sitel)	0:29:14

It is worth to mention that the only debate that included all the presidential candidates was aired on the 5th of April, during the first round campaign. The debate was aired by MRT 1 as recorded program. On 10th of April TV 24 Vesti broadcasted another debate between the presidential candidates that included all the presidential candidates except the candidate of VMRO-DPMNE Gjorge Ivanov. Most commercial televisions also broadcasted special interviews with the presidential candidates.

During the election campaign AAAMU received 60 media-related objections from SDSM, all of them rejected as ill-founded. The Agency also pressed 12 misdemeanor charges against 8 broadcasters mainly due to violation of the rules for commercial political advertising.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ OSCE/ODIHR, International Observing Mission for the Elections in the Republic of Macedonia, Presidential and early Parliamentary elections 27 April 2014. (2014) Statement on preliminary findings and conclusions. Skopje, April, page 11, available at: <http://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/fyrom/118079?download=true> (accessed on 13 May 2014)

RESULTS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

VMRO-DPMNE's candidate and the current president, Gjorge Ivanov, won the majority of votes in both election rounds and gained victory on the 2014 presidential elections. In the first round of the presidential elections Ivanov won 449,442 votes, i.e. 51.69% of the total votes, while SDSM's candidate, Stevo Pendarovski, won 326,164 votes, i.e. 37.51% of the total votes. In the first round none of the candidates won the majority of votes from the registered voters, i.e. Ivanov won 25.26%, and Pendarovski 18.33% of the total number of registered voters in the Voters List, which led to the second round of the presidential elections.

The candidates of DPA and GROM did not enter the second round. DPA's candidate, Iljaz Halimi, won 38,966 votes, i.e. 4.48% of the votes, and GROM's candidate, Zoran Popovski, 31,368 votes, i.e. 3.61% of the votes. The number of voters who annulled their votes in the first round reached 23,667 i.e. 2.72% of the voters annulled their votes. Less than half of the registered voters turned out on the first round of the presidential elections, i.e. 869,617 citizens, which is 48.86% of the total number of 1,779,572 citizens with the right to vote.

First round⁵⁸	Gjorge Ivanov	Iljaz Halimi	Stevo Pendarovski	Zoran Popovski	Annulled ballots	Total
Registered voters						1.779.572
Voters who turned out	449.442	38.966	326.164	31.368	23.677	869.617
% of the voters who turned out	51,69%	4,48%	37,51%	3,61%	2,72%	100%
% of the registered voters	25,26%	2,19%	18,33%	1,76%	1,33%	48,86%

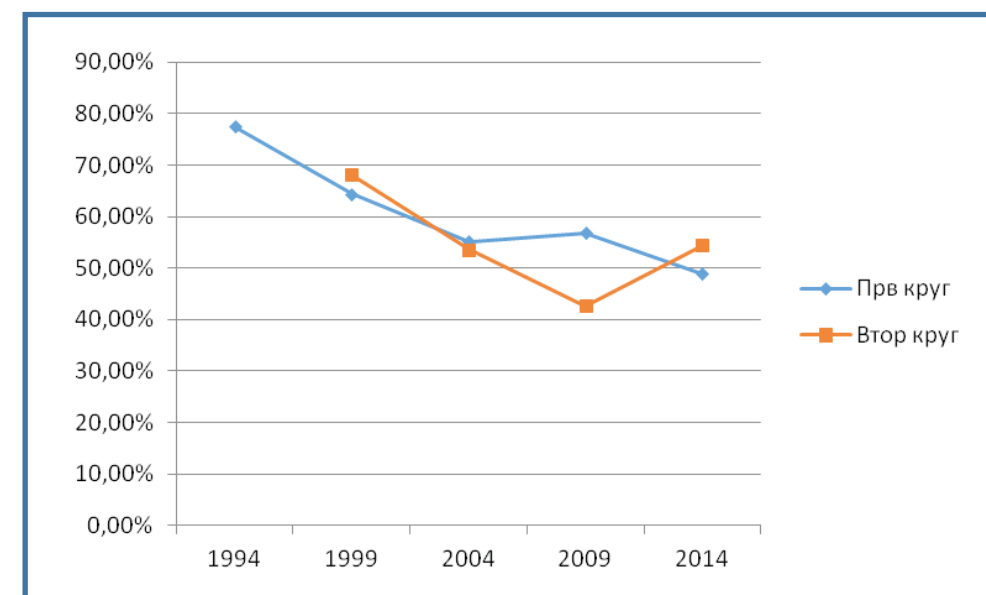
⁵⁸ State Election Commission, 2014 Early Parliamentary Elections and Presidential Elections, Presidential Elections - first round <http://rezultati.sec.mk/President/Results?cs=mk-MK&r=1&rd=r&eu=All&m=All&ps=All> (accessed on 15th april 2014)

In the second round, Ivanov won 534,910 votes, i.e. 55.28% of the total votes, SDSM's candidate Stevo Pendarovski won 389,077 votes, i.e. 41.14% of the total votes. In the second round 34,707 votes annulled their votes, which is 3.58% of the total votes. The voters turnout in the second round was 54.38% i.e. the turnout was 967,676 out of 1,779,572 registered voters. The same voting day for the early parliamentary elections and the presidential elections brought 100,000 more voters in the second round than in the first round.

Second round ⁵⁹	Gjorge Ivanov	Stevo Pendarovski	Annulled ballots	Total
Registered voters				1.779.572
Voters who turned out	534.910	398.077	34.707	967.676
% of the voters who turned out	55,28%	41,14%	3,58 %	100%
% of the registered voters	30,06%	22,37%	1,95%	54,38%

The interest of the voters to turn out on the presidential elections is diminishing every election cycle. Thus, while the turnout on the first presidential elections that took place in 1994 was 77.44% of the voters, the turnout in 2014 was 30% lower in relation to the 1994 elections, more precisely 48.86% of the total number of registered voters. The same voting day for the presidential elections with other elections, as in 2009, at the same time with the local elections, and this year when the second round of the presidential elections was held with the early parliamentary elections, which as a result had much higher turnout on the presidential elections as well.

⁵⁹ State Election Commission, 2014 Early Parliamentary Elections and Presidential Elections, Presidential Elections – second round http://rezultati.sec.mk/President/Results_R2?cs=mk-MK&r=3&rd=r&eu=All&m=All&ps=All (accessed on 29th April 2014)



The turnout on presidential elections in Macedonia from 1994 to 2014⁶⁰

For the first time, the Republic of Macedonia's citizens living abroad were enabled to vote on the presidential elections. However, the interest for the voting abroad was very low, and the number of voters who turned out was only 8,062 voters, which makes 44.01% of the registered voters. In the second round the turnout was 4,683 of the registered voters abroad, i.e. 52.42%.

⁶⁰ State Election Commission of the Republic of Macedonia <http://217.16.84.23/index.php?lang=mk>

VOTERS' RIGHTS PROTECTION

The Election Code guarantees the protection of the voters' rights as well as the applicants of presidential candidate lists. The legal framework offers mechanisms according to which the voters and the applicants of lists can be protected from violations of the voters right, as well as sanctions for the offenders.

The representatives of the lists applicants in the polling stations have the right to react to possible irregularities during the preparations and the voting, in order to eliminate them. In such cases, all remarks that the applicants have should be listed in the voting records wherefrom they can be further processed in case of violations of the voters rights. If the remarks are not listed in the records, the applicants have the right to file the same remarks to the Municipal Election Commissions (MEC) in a period of 5 hours after signing the records. The representatives of the list applicants in the polling stations can react to irregularities when transferring and validating the election material, when determining the conditions in the polling stations prior to the voting, as well as in relation to the work of the election boards during the voting. The representatives of the lists applicants in the MEC have the right to file remarks in relation to irregularities while calculating and determining the results from the polling stations. These remarks are listed in the MEC's records and represent the basis for further procedures in case of violation of the voters' rights.

The procedure for protection of the voters rights is urgent. Each list applicant can file an objection to the State Election Commission (SEC) in relation to the voting procedure, and the calculation of the results in a period of 48 hours after the end of the voting, i.e. the publishing of the election results. The SEC is obliged to bring a decision in a period of 48 hours after receiving the objection, and the list applicant can complain against SEC's decision to the Administrative Court in a period of 48 hours.

The voters can file their objections to the SEC for violations of the voters' rights in the voting procedure in a period of 24 hours after the end of the

voting. The SEC is obliged to decide on such objections in a period of 4 hours after receiving it. The voter has the right to complain against SEC's decision to the Administrative Court in a period of 24 hours after receiving the decision. If the voter files an objection against the activities of the election board during the voting and if the SEC sustain the objection, the voter will be enabled to fulfill his/her voter's right.

The Administrative Court is the final stance to decide upon the objections for protection of the election law. The Court's decision is brought in a period of 48 hours after receiving the complaint.

There were no objections filed to the SEC during the period of 48 hours assigned for filing objections by lists applicants for presidential candidates for the first and the second round. Similarly, in the period of 24 hours assigned for filing objections by the voters there were no objections filed to the SEC for violation of the voters rights during the first and the second round of the presidential elections.⁶¹

⁶¹ There are no objections to the SEC for the first round of the elections. Radio Free Europe in Macedonian Language, 16th April 2014, <http://www.makdenes.org/content/news/25351553.html> (accessed on 7th May 2014); Ivanov has officially won the second presidential mandate. MRT1, 30th April 2014, <http://www.mrt.com.mk/node/8362> (accessed on 7th May 2014).

ELECTIONS ASSESSMENT BY OBSERVERS

In the first round of the presidential elections there were 9,197 national and 489 international accredited observers, and for the second round of the presidential elections which took place on the same day with the early parliamentary elections the number of national observers increased to 10,013, while the number of the international observers increased to 610.⁶²

The Association for Humanitarian Activities SYNERGY monitored the elections in both rounds with the largest number of observers, 4,970 in the first and 5,090 in the second round. Next in line, in the first round was the Association of Citizens for Democratization and Raising Collective Awareness "VEPRO Movement"-Struga which had 2321 observers in both rounds. The Civic Association MOST in the first round participated with 1,815 observers, and in the second round it held the second largest monitoring mission with 2,413 observers. CIVIL – Centar for Freedom in the first round participated with 76 observers, and in the second with 113 observers. In the second round, a small number of observers were present by the Association PLOSTAD SLOBODA with 33 observers, Institute for Economic Strategies and International Relations OHRID from Skopje with 28 observers, and the Association of Citizens Centar for Media Development Skopje participated with 9 observers in both rounds, as well as Macedonian Center for Culture with 6 observers in both rounds.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe/ Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) which participated with 202 in the first and 252 observers in the second round, in cooperation with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe which participated with 21 in the first and 27 observers in the second round carried out the largest international elections observation mission. The

⁶² State Election Commission, 2014 Presidential Elections, 2014 Early Parliamentary Elections http://217.16.84.23/files/izbori2014/2_tabela_akreditirani_nabljuduvaci.pdf and http://217.16.84.23/files/izbori2014/21Tabela_na_akreditirani_nabljuduvaci.pdf Accessed on 24th April 2014.

OSCE's mission in Skopje, individually, participated with 91 observers in the first round and 103 observers in the second round, and the Embassies of the USA, Slovenia, Sweden, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Croatia, Poland, The Kingdom of Holland, Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, China, Slovakia, Germany, Austria, Turkey, Cathar, Spain, Italy, France, Switzerland, and the Delegation of the European Union in Macedonia also observed the elections with less observers. In the second round the number of observers from other countries was supplemented with representatives from the Embassy of the Russian Federation, NATO's Office, the Central Election Commission of Gorgia, The Electoral Commission for Complaints and Objections (ECAP) of the Republic of Kosovo, the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Kosovo, the Embassy of Albania and the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Albania. The Danish organization SILBA in cooperation with the Association for Progress, Education and Lobbying NEL – Skopje participated in the first round only with 31 observers.

The first round of the elections was monitored by 28 international journalists, i.e. journalists from the Focus agency and Radio Focus from Bulgaria, Al Jazeera Balkan, Turkish Radio Television Turk, ARD German Radio and TV Reuters – Serbia. In the second round, the number of journalists increased to 42, i.e. there were additional accredited journalists from Top Channel – Tirana, Radio Television of Turkey, France-Press Agency, Koha Vision Television Pristina, and Radio Television Serbia.

The general assessment of the OSCE/ODIHR's mission for both rounds of the presidential elections⁶³ was that the elections were carried out efficiently, and the candidates were able to run their campaigns freely. On the press conference held by the monitoring mission of OSCE/ODIHR after the second round of the presidential elections and the early parliamentary elections representatives of the mission pointed out that the boycott

⁶³ BSee both reports of the OSCE/ODIHR's mission: International Monitoring Mission for Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's Elections, Presidential Elections, 13th April 2014. Statement on initial finds and conclusions. Accessed on 14th April 2014 <http://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/117647?download=true> and: International Monitoring Mission for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's Elections, Presidential and Early Parliamentary Elections, 27th April 2014. Statement on initial finds and conclusions. <http://www.osce.org/mk/odihr/elections/fyrom/118079?download=true> Accessed on 28th April 2014;

announced by the opposition right after the conclusion of the elections is not a democratic instrument and that the political parties should apply political means.⁶⁴

The Voting Day was assessed by OSCE/ODIHR as positive and well organized for both rounds of the presidential elections for the polling stations they observed. The OSCE/ODIHR's report notes that in the first round in all the municipalities they visited the voting and calculating of votes was transparent and organized, except in the municipality of Suto Orizari where certain irregularities were registered. The report for the second round states that the main irregularity which was registered was group voting. It is noted that for the second round the election boards did not follow the SEC's instructions to point to the voters that they can vote for one or both elections, while in the areas mostly populated with ethnic Albanians the election boards point out to the voters not to take the ballot for the presidential elections. The OSCE/ODIHR noted that in both rounds there were cases when some convicts despite having valid IDs were not registered in the Voters List which prevented them from voting.

MOST⁶⁵ evaluates that the voting day in both rounds was peaceful and that there was an improvement in the way of implementing the procedures for opening the polling stations, the voting and the counting of votes. For the voting in the first round MOST recorded repetition of the same practice of the election boards to read aloud the names of the voters, which violates the secrecy of the vote, as well as the presence of people who registered the attendance of voters in front of the objects where the polling stations were located, but also fewer cases of family voting in relation to the previous election cycles. MOST noted that in the first round 1,268 persons could not be found in the Voters List. For the second

⁶⁴ Radio Free Europe, OSCE – Efficiently conducted elections, but the problems remain, Wednesday, 30th April 2014. <http://www.makdenes.org/content/article/25365682.html> Accessed on 28th April 2014.

⁶⁵ See both preliminary reports of MOST: Preliminary statement 12.30-14.04.2014. <http://www.most.org.mk/index.php/mk/ongoing-projects/-2014/307--1230-14042014> Accessed on 14th April 2014. Civic Association MOST, Presidential and Early Parliamentary Elections 2014, Preliminary statement 28.04.2014, Skopje http://most.org.mk/images/MOST/Preliminarna%20izjava_vtor%20krug_28%2004%202014_MKD.pdf Accessed on 28th 2014.

round MOST noted that in relation to the first round, there were more cases of group and family voting, there was pressure on the voters to turn out to vote, as well as agitation and registering attendance of voters. Both OSCE/ODIHR and MOST noted that in the second round the election boards influenced the voters which elections to vote for.

The OSCE/ODIHR's mission assessed the campaign as active and inclusive. The main remark to the campaign of the presidential candidate Ivanov was that there was clear and visible support by the Government which violated the article 5.4 from the OSCE Copenhagen Document from 1990 and the Council of Europe's standards which impose separation of the party from the state. The report also notes that all campaigns were oriented towards voters from their own ethnic communities, except for the campaign of the candidate Pendarovski which was directed towards the Albanian ethnic community as well, and on the public gatherings the predominant participants were men. The language used in the campaign was assessed as moderate and civilized, with the raise of the negative tone at the end of the campaign. The OSCE/ODIHR's mission registered a certain number of cases when pressure was put on the employees in the public administration to attend certain events during the campaign, promises and threats were made in relation to employment, the state officials were demanded to secure lists of voters that would vote for the governing party and the like, which the mission considers plausible.

In relation to the campaign, MOST's main remark was that the campaign started earlier and that minors were used in the campaigns of all political subjects. The positive remarks for the first round of the presidential elections are noted in the report as reduced intensity of the negative campaign and reduced use of official state vehicles. For the campaign running for the second electoral round MOST noted the use of state official vehicles for public gatherings, sharpening the campaign, running negative campaign, mobilization of voters on ethnic grounds, demolition of 4 party headquarters and incidents among party activists.

The work of the State Election Commission was assessed by the OSCE/ODIHR's mission as efficient and transparent, although there were some sessions to which the SEC did not invite the media and the observers to attend. The main remark was that there was visible division among the members of the SEC from the different political parties and there was voting on party grounds for all issues with political gravity, which was noted by MOST in their remarks that in this election cycle the SEC was less transparent in relation to previously. The OSCE/ODIHR's report criticizes the weak communication of the SEC with the municipality election commissions during both election rounds which created certain confusions in relation to the procedures. MOST highlighted the fact that the SEC had not published the data for public insight of the Voters List for both election cycles, so that MOST filed a request to access the public information, but had not received any reply by the time the report was published.

Monitoring the media by the OSCE/ODIHR showed that there was difference between the quantitative and qualitative informing about the participants in the election campaign by the media, lack of analysis, lack of independent informing and biasness towards the governing VMRO-DPMNE and the candidate Ivanov, while negative attitude towards SDSM and the candidate Pendarovski, and among the media in Albanian language biasness towards DUI. They concluded that the public service through its programs MRT1 and MRT2 was inclined towards the candidate Ivanov, and neutral towards the other candidates, while in the program of MRT2 there was huge space allowed for DUI's activities and their campaign not to vote. The report also assesses that the broadcasting services Sitel, Kanal 5, and Alfa were positive or neutral when reporting on Ivanov, and negative when reporting on the candidate Pendarovski. It was also noted that these three media publish certain topics with similar contents against SDSM and the interpretation is that the information comes from unidentified or anonymous sources. The television services Telma, Vesti 24 and Alsat-M are assessed as more balanced in their reporting, neutral and with similar attitude for the main candidates.

The Delegation of the European Union and the USA Embassy in the Republic of Macedonia made a joint statement providing assessment and commentary for the elections.⁶⁶ The statement conveys a recognition for the citizens who used their right to vote and confirmation of the OSCE/ODIHR's assessment in relation to the efficiency of the elections, the media biasness, merging state and party activities. The representatives of the EU and the USA expressed their expectations for the future government to address these remarks, as well as expectations for all political leaders to be more constructive in their approach towards the reforms for the Euro-Atlantic integration of the country.

⁶⁶ The Embassy of the United States of America, Skopje, Macedonia, Press Release 2014, Joint Statement of the Delegation of the EU and the USA Embassy, 29th April 2014. <http://photos.state.gov/libraries/macedonia/8573/ArchivePDFsApril2014/pr04292014mac.pdf> Accessed on 2nd May 2014.

ASSESSMENT OF THE ELECTIONS BY THE POLITICAL PARTIES

In relation to the first round of the presidential elections, the assessments of the voting day and the pre-election period that the competing political parties and the candidates themselves announced in public were diverse. The ruling VMRO-DPMNE assessed the elections as peaceful, fair and democratic, while the oppositional SDSM made accusations of "systematic theft of votes". DPA criticized the low turnout of the Albanian electorate, assigning it to the pressure on the citizens made by the largest party of the ethnic Albanians, DUI. The party GROM, which participated on these elections for the first time, assessed the first round as "relatively fair and democratic", however, they expressed their doubts that there was a great number of annulled ballots.

VMRO-DPMNE assessed the elections in the first round as peaceful, fair and democratic. The party expressed its appreciation for the achieved results and asked the citizens for even greater support in the second round. The leader of VMRO-DPMNE, Nikola Gruevski, after closing the polling stations, announced that the election results from the first round give hope that on 27th April, besides the victory on the presidential elections in the second round, the party will succeed in winning 62 MP seats on the early parliamentary elections.⁶⁷ The current President of the Republic of Macedonia and the candidate on the elections supported by VMRO-DPMNE, Gjorge Ivanov, expressed his gratitude to the voters and announced that after the first round of the elections "Macedonia is the greatest winner". On his press conference, Ivanov emphasized that the elections were peaceful, fair and democratic.⁶⁸

Contrary to this, the party in opposition SDSM assessed the elections in the first round as unfair and undemocratic. The leader Zoran Zaev stated that the election results according to the party, and in their opinion for

many citizens, was unexpected, as well as that there was a "systematic theft of votes".⁶⁹ The presidential candidate Stevo Pendarovski expressed his conviction that even in a state of systematic pressures, threats, and blackmailing, victory can be achieved in the second round.⁷⁰ The largest party in opposition addressed the citizens with a message to continue the fight against the current government in the second round of the presidential elections.

DPA, which supported the only ethnic Albanian candidate in the presidential race, Iljaz Halimi, expressed its appreciation for the number of votes received, but also criticized the low turnout of the Albanian electorate. The leader of DPA, Menduh Taci, explained that the low turnout was due to the pressure by DUI on the Albanian voters not to turn out to vote, announcing that "zero turnout" at some polling stations is a "feature of dictatorship". The presidential candidate Iljaz Halimi stated that he respected the Albanian voters who did not turn out on the elections because he understands "the reasons and everything done upon them".⁷¹

The party GROM, which supported the candidate Zoran Popovski, just after the closing of the voting day in the first round, assessed the elections as "relatively fair and democratic".⁷² The leader of GROM, Stevce Jakimovski, assessed the election campaign as "proper", although he reacted to the fact that there were great many annulled ballots on which, as he claimed, their candidate had been circled.⁷³ The candidate Zoran Popovski, announced that with the presidential elections GROM proved

⁶⁹ Zaev: This is not the people's will, they'll see on 27th April. A statement, 13th April 2014, available on SDSM's website: <http://sds.org.mk/default.aspx?mId=55&agId=5&articleId=10456> (Accessed on 7th May 2014).

⁷⁰ Pendarovski: The fight is not over. A press release, 13th April 2014, available on SDSM's website: <http://sds.org.mk/default.aspx?mId=55&agId=5&articleId=10455> (Accessed on 7th May 2014).

⁷¹ Taci: Zero turnout at some polling stations is a feature of dictatorship. The Utrinski Vesnik newspaper, 13th April 2014: <http://www.utrinski.mk/default.asp?ItemID=A18BD7D10D49B6458CE36841CBFE657B> (Accessed on 7th May 2014); DPA: We continue with activities for the victory on the parliamentary elections. MRT1, 14th April 2014, <http://www.mrt.com.mk/node/7569> (Accessed on 7th May 2014).

⁷² GROM: Relatively fair and democratic elections. Alfa TV, 13th April 2014, <http://www.alfa.mk/News.aspx?ID=74995#.U2oJD1cj7To> (Accessed on 7th May 2014).

⁷³ GROM: The annulled ballots - a stain to the elections. Lokalno.mk, 14.04.2014, <http://lokalno.mk/grom-damka-na-izborite-se-nevazhechkite-livchinja/> (Accessed on 7th May 2014).

⁶⁷ Gruevski: The people have shown the values they support. MRT1, 13th April 2014, <http://www.mrt.com.mk/node/7544> (Accessed on 7th May 2014).

⁶⁸ Ivanov: Macedonia is the greatest winner. Gjorge Ivanov's elections website, 14th April 2014: <http://ivanov.mk/web/?p=949> (Accessed on 7th May 2014)

to be an actor on the political stage.⁷⁴ Both the party and the leader congratulated Ivanov and Pendarovski for their success in the first round of the presidential elections.⁷⁵

The two largest political parties, VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM, which candidates ran for presidency in the second round of the presidential elections, announced in public their radically opposing assessments for the second round of the electoral race as well. The overlapping of the second round of the presidential elections with the parliamentary elections enabled the parties' assessment regarding the two distinct competing fields to overlap to a great extent as well. According to the ruling coalition "For better Macedonia" led by VMRO-DPMNE and the presidential candidate Gjorge Ivanov the elections were peaceful, fair, and democratic. On the other side, according to SDSM and the united opposition, as well as the presidential candidate Stevo Pendarovski, the elections were unfair, undemocratic and "criminal". The other parties were mostly without commentary for the electoral process for the second round of the presidential elections.⁷⁶

Both VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM held press conferences right after the end of the voting day in the second round. The incumbent President and presidential candidate Gjorge Ivanov held a press conference the night after the end of the voting day, while the candidate Stevo Pendarovski held his press conference the following day, on 28th April.

On the press conference held right after the end of the voting day, on 27th April, the candidate for MP and carrier of VMRO-DPMNE's candidate list, Antonio Milososki evaluated the electoral process as peaceful, fair and democratic. Milososki stated that "the citizens demonstrated their democratic awareness and confirmed their ability to determine what is in

their and the country's best interest." At the same time, Milososki stated that SDSM and their leader Zaev made an attempt to fabricate a scenario for electoral irregularities, which was recognized by the citizens as such.⁷⁷

The leader of VMRO-DPMNE Nikola Gruevski and the presidential candidate Gjorge Ivanov addressed the public at another press conference, held later on 27th April. Gruevski emphasized that just like in the first round of the elections, Macedonia had had successful elections in the second round as well, confirmed by the peaceful, fair and democratic voting day. In his address, Gruevski congratulated the citizens for the peaceful voting day, and said that the victory of VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition "For better Macedonia" is double – secured both on the presidential and the early parliamentary elections.⁷⁸ Gjorgje Ivanov emphasized that on these elections "the winner is the democracy, the citizens, Macedonia. We had peaceful, fair and democratic elections, kind of elections that Macedonia, European Macedonia, deserves".⁷⁹

The president of the party in opposition – SDSM, Zoran Zaev, announced the party's and the united coalition's assessment of the voting day, right after the closing of the polling stations and before the counting of the votes for the second round. Zaev pointed at the abuse of the state's system for the benefit of the ruling party, usurping the citizens' right for free expression of their will, blackmailing voters, pressure on employees in the public administration, the social welfare beneficiaries and companies, voting of the so-called "phantom voters", agitation by religious leaders, abuse of the public broadcasting service and misinforming the public through the pro-governmental private media. In relation to the implementation of the electoral process, Zaev made accusations regarding the alleged existence of double ballots, as well as taking photos of the ballots, removal of the

⁷⁴ Popovski: GROM proved its an actor on the political stage. Radio Free Europe in Macedonian language, 13th April 2014, <http://www.mkdenes.org/archive/news/20140413/428/428.html?id=25331803> (Accessed on 7th May 2014).

⁷⁵ Congratulations from GROM to Ivanov and Pendarovski. Sitel TV, 13th April 2014, <http://www.sitel.com.mk/mk/chestitki-od-grom-za-ivanov-i-pendarovski> (Accessed on 7th May 2014).

⁷⁶ The reactions of the parties for the parliamentary elections are available in The Republic of Macedonia's 2014 Parliamentary Elections Handbook.

⁷⁷ VMRO-DPMNE: The citizens won, we had peaceful and fair elections. The Dnevnik newspaper, 27th April 2014, available at: <http://www.dnevnik.mk/default.asp?ItemID=FCA9C798EE508648B7BAE3B60B977D83> (Accessed on 5th May 2014).

⁷⁸ Gruevski and Ivanov: The greatest winner is Macedonia. Nova TV, 28th April 2014, <http://novatv.mk/index.php?navig=8&cat=23&vest=13677> (Accessed on 7th May 2014).

⁷⁹ Ivanov: The winners on these elections are the democracy, the citizens, Macedonia. Gjorge Ivanov's election website, 28th April 2014: <http://ivanov.mk/web/?p=1326> (Accessed on 7th May 2014).

visible ink, group voting, as well as other irregularities. The leader of SDSM announced that the presidential and parliamentary elections will not be recognised by SDSM and the united opposition and demanded establishing a technical government to carry out the electoral process.⁸⁰

The presidential candidate of SDSM, Stevo Pendarovski gave his assessment of the presidential elections at another press conference held on 28th April, a day after the voting in the second round of the presidential elections. In his address to the public, Pendarovski made accusations regarding violations of the right to a free expression of the citizens' will, blackmailing and putting pressure on the voters, but he also expressed his gratitude to those citizens who gave their vote for the candidate of the opposition, labeling it as "an act of personal bravery". The presidential candidate fully sustained the evaluation of the electoral process announced by the leader of SDSM a day before. Pendarovski evaluated the behaviour of the representatives of the international community that he qualified as "merely passive observers of the retrograde political processes in the Republic of Macedonia" asking from them to direct their resources, efforts and time towards the current government as a generator of crisis in the Macedonian politics. Pendarovski emphasized that the international community should take less interest in the activities of the opposition, but to the opposite, should direct its attention towards the actions of the ruling parties.⁸¹

On 2nd May, when the Certificate for Election of President was issued to Gjorge Ivanov by the SEC, the opposition SDSM announced to the public that it qualifies Ivanov as "elected to the position of President of the Republic of Macedonia on criminal, unfair and undemocratic elections". In the same announcement, SDSM stated that the party does not support the election of Ivanov for President of the Republic of Macedonia.⁸²

⁸⁰ Zaev: We do not support the electoral process, technical government for fair elections. Press conference, 27th April 2014, available on SDSM's website: <http://sds.org.mk/default.aspx?mId=55&agId=5&articleId=10576> (Accessed on 5th May 2014).

⁸¹ Pendarovski: My intention is to defend the concept for free Macedonia without retreat. Press conference, 28th April 2014, available on SDSM's website: <http://sds.org.mk/default.aspx?mId=55&agId=5&articleId=10580> (Accessed on 5th May 2014).

⁸² SDSM does not acknowledge Gjorge Ivanov for President of the Republic of Macedonia. Public statement, 2nd May 2014, available on SDSM's website: <http://sds.org.mk/default.aspx?mId=55&agId=2&articleId=10589> (Accessed on 5th May 2014).

CONCLUSIONS

In general, the presidential elections 2014 in Macedonia were peaceful and with no significant incidents. The campaign featured positive promotion of the candidates but also included "negative" campaign through which the opposing candidates tried to show themselves as antipodes of their main political opponents. Gjorge Ivanov, who was reelected as President, focused his campaign on national issues such as the preservation of the constitutional name of the country and protection of the Macedonian identity. In his campaign he also emphasized that there should be cooperation and unity between the state institutions stating as best example the cooperation between his work and the Government, which provided results. The candidate of the opposition political party SDSM, Stevo Pendarovski, through his campaign challenged the concept of the ruling VMRO-DPMNE party and tried to present himself as future president who would provide the checks and balances on the government policies. The campaign of Pendarovski was also focused on other ethnic communities to some extent, in addition to the Macedonians. The only ethnic Albanian running for president, Iljaz Halimi from the DPA opposition party focused his entire campaign towards the ethnic Albanians and considered issues which are relevant for this ethnic community. Zoran Popovski, candidate of the GROM non-parliamentary party, presented himself as candidate who will not allow for irresponsible spending of people's money, who will promote better conditions for the local businesses and youth and one who will be true advocate of the citizens. In parallel with the election campaigns of the four presidential candidates, the largest party of the ethnic Albanians, DUI, which is member of the ruling coalition, campaigned among the ethnic Albanians to boycott the elections and was promoting the idea for so called "consensual president" i.e. president acceptable for all the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia regardless of the ethnic background.

From all the presidential candidates, the most expensive election campaign was the campaign of Gjorge Ivanov who spent a total of 47,394,082

denars (766,895 euros) by the end of the second round. His opponent, Stevo Pendarovski spent a total of 9,392,108 denars (151,976 euros) for his campaign. The candidates who failed to enter the second round, Iljaz Halimi and Zoran Popovski, spent 509,226 denars (8,240 euros) and 830.000 denars (13,430 euros) respectively.

Same as in previous elections, the media played important role in shaping the public opinion. The media monitoring reports for the elections period show imbalance in the media coverage which is contrary to the legal requirements. Although most of the media met the legal requirements when it comes to reporting about the candidates, from qualitative aspect the reporting had serious flaws. The media in the frames of the public broadcasting service reported on the campaign implemented by VMRO-DPMNE and DUI in a significantly positively manner and in neutral manner about other stakeholders in the election process. In general, the commercial media reported in favor of the ruling VMRO-DPMNE and negatively about SDSM and Stevo Pendarovski. Nevertheless, some media still managed to be neutral in their reporting and presenting of the candidates. These elections again showed that the media reporting is subject to serious gaps and it remains to be a serious challenge for the Macedonian democracy.

The elections featured exceptionally low turnout in the first round which is the lowest in the history of the presidential elections. This was partially due to the boycott of the elections by some ethnic Albanians, initiated by DUI. In the first round the turnout was 48,86% of the total registered voters and in the second round it was 54,38% which is more compared to the turnout for the second round of the presidential elections in 2009. The overlapping of the second presidential elections round with the early parliamentary elections had positive impact on the turnout. The voting abroad did not provoke larger interest among the Macedonian nationals living in other countries.

Most of the votes in the first round were won by Gjorge Ivanov (51,69% of the ballots) and Stevo Pendarovski (37,51%), followed by Iljaz Halimi

(4,48%) and Zoran Popovski (3,61%). 2,72% of the ballots were invalid. In the second round most of the votes were won by Gjorge Ivanov (55,28%), followed by Stevo Pendarovski (41,14%). 3,58% of the ballots were invalid.

Gjorge Ivanov was elected in the second round with 30,06% of the total votes casted by the voters registered in the Single Voters List.

No objections for violation of the right to vote were filed to the State Election Commission (DIK) within the foreseen deadline. This goes for both the presidential candidates and the voters.

The first round of the presidential elections were observed and monitored by 9,917 local and 489 foreign observers and in the second round of the presidential elections, which was taking place in parallel with the early parliamentary elections the number was increased to 10,013 local and 610 foreign observers.

The general assessment of the monitoring missions, especially those of OSCE/ODIHR and the local MOST is that the elections were implemented in efficient manner and the candidates were able to freely run their campaign. However, the observers also noted some deficiencies such as group voting, failure on the side of the election boards to follow the instructions provided by DIK, reading aloud the names of the voters, presence of individuals registering the voters in front of the constituencies as well as efforts by the election boards to influence the voters in which election process to participate during the voting on 27 April.

The observers evaluated the work of the State Election Commission (DIK) as efficient and open, with certain remarks about its transparency. They noticed the political party divisions among the DIK members when deciding i.e. voting as political party members. The OSCE/ODIHR noted the weak communication between DIK and the municipal election boards in both rounds which resulted in confusions in relation to the procedures.

The Delegation of the European Union and the United States Embassy in the Republic of Macedonia came out with joint statement and assessment of the elections. This statement commends the citizens who exercised their right to vote and repeated the assessment of OSCE/ODIHR about the elections efficiency, the partiality of the media and the non-division between state and party activities – these were the largest deficiencies of the election process.

The political parties provided various opinions and assessments of the election process. The ruling VMRO-DPMNE evaluated the elections as peaceful, democratic and fair. The opposition SDSM accused of “systematic stealing of votes” and declared they will not recognize the legitimacy of the reelected president Gjorge Ivanov. DPA said the pressure put on the ethnic Albanian voters by DUI was the reason for weak turnout among the Albanians. GROM evaluated the elections as “relatively fair and democratic” but expressed doubts in the large number of the invalid ballots in the first round.

Gjorge Ivanov was inaugurated as President on 12 May 2014 but the Parliamentary session on his inauguration was not attended by MPs from SDSM, DUI and NDP. Both SDSM and NDP publically declared they do not recognize the election processes for the presidential and early parliamentary elections and they will not accept the mandates of their MPs thus making more likely the option for additional elections (for the early parliamentary elections) in order to fill the vacated MP seats i.e. the rejected MP mandates. The official standpoint of DUI is that the election of Ivanov is legal but not legitimate because it does not reflect the will of the ethnic Albanians so the second mandate of Gjorge Ivanov as President of the Republic of Macedonia starts with “non-recognition” by some of the local political stakeholders as well as in a time of potential political crisis if the non-participation of some of the opposition parties in the Parliament becomes reality.

In the days that followed the elections the new mandate of Mr. Ivanov was welcomed by a number of Presidents from other European countries such

as Vladimir Putin (Russian Federation), Joachim Gauck (Germany), Abdula Gjul (Turkey), Janosz Ader (Hungary), Milosh Zeman (Czech Republic) and others. Mr. Ivanov was also congratulated by the Presidents of the regional countries such as Rosen Plevneliev (Bulgaria), Borut Pahor (Slovenia), Ivo Josipovic (Croatia), Tomislav Nikolic (Serbia), Filip Vujanovic (Montenegro) and Bakir Izetbegovic (Bosnia and Herzegovina). The President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Baroso also congratulated Mr. Ivanov the reelection on behalf of the European Commission.



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