

CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND POLICY MAKING

C R P M



**THE MACEDONIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM- SHORT
INTRODUCTION TO THE MACEDONIAN
POLITICAL PARTIES N.2**

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CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND POLICY MAKING (CRPM)



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The Macedonian political system- short introduction to the Macedonian political parties N.2

Modern Macedonia came into existence in 1945 as one of the six constitutive republics of Socialist Federated Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). When Yugoslavia disintegrated in the second half of 1991, Macedonia chose to assert its own independence rather than remain in a truncated Yugoslav state likely to be dominated by Serbia without the counterbalancing influences of Croatia and Slovenia. Macedonia declared independence on Nov. 21, 1991, and today is a democratic multi-party state. The president is elected for a term of five years by popular vote, while the unicameral Assembly (*Sobranie*) is comprised of 120 members. According to new electoral laws adopted in June 2002 (the Law on Election of Members of Parliament of 2002; the Law on the Voter List, and the Law on Election Districts) the parliamentarians are elected for a four-year term by those aged 18 and over, in six electoral districts. Each district has about 275,000 voters and elects 20 members by proportional representation subject to a 5% threshold. The political system is semi-presidential akin to the French model.

Macedonia's fourth post-independence parliamentary elections were held on Sept. 15, 2002. The elections were conducted in accordance with OSCE commitments and international standards for democratic elections. Out of the registered 1,664, 296 voters, 1,216,339 or 73%, came out to vote on election day. The winners, the coalition "Together For Macedonia" comprising the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), and a number of smaller parties representing the ethnic minorities in the country won 60 seats, while their main opponents, the coalition between Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization–Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO–DMPNE) and the Liberal Party (LP) won 33 seats. The Macedonian Albanian parties won 26 seats, the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), 16, the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA) 7, Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP), 2, and the National Democratic Party (NDP), 1, while the Socialist Party of Macedonia, 1. In total 14 parties are represented in the new Parliament. The new government is effectively a coalition between the parties that made up "Together For Macedonia" and DUI, the Prime Minister being the leader of SDSM, Branko Crvenkovski. On February 26th, 2004 President Trajkovski died in a plane crash. Extraordinary presidential elections were held on 14th and 28th April 2004. The turnout was 54% and Branko Crvenkovski was elected president on second-round ballot with a percentage of the vote of 42.47%. The main rival, the presidential candidate of VMRO-DPMNE, Sasko Kedev gained 34.07% of the votes.

Democratic Party of Albanians Demokratska Partija na Albancite (DPA)

Address. Marsal Tito 2, Tetovo 44000

Telephone. (389–44) 31534

Email. arben@pdsh.org

Website. www.pdsh.org

Leadership. Arben Xhaferi (chairman); Menduh Thachi (deputy chairman)

The Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA in Macedonian or PDPSH in Albanian) is one of several parties representing Macedonian Albanians (who comprise about 23% of the population according to the 1994 census). The party's origins hail to events in 1993 when a struggle developed for the control of Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) as a young generation of politicians favoring a radical agenda rose to eminence. PDP radicals, led by Arben Xhaferi and Menduh Thaci, complained strongly that the party, as part of the ruling coalition, made too many compromises which undermined ethnic Albanian interests, and initially argued for a separate Albanian state in Macedonia. At a national congress held by the PDP on Feb. 12, 1994, the party officially splintered into two factions, the moderate faction still supporting active participation in the political system. The radical faction founded a new party, PDP-A (Party of Democratic Prosperity of Albanians) which later registered in the courts as the DPA. Being in power in the period 1998-2002, DPA lost the intra-Albanian political contest in the 2002 elections to the newly formed Democratic Union for Intergration (DUI) led by Ali Ahmeti, winning only 7 to DUI's 16 seats.

Democratic Union for Integration

Demokratska Unija za Integracija (DUI)

Address. Shaban Bajrami 5

Telephone. (389-2) 2634955

Leadership. Ali Ahmeti (president); Agron Buxhaku & Teuta Arifi (vice-presidents)

The Democratic Union for Integration is the successor to the National Liberation Army which fought in Macedonia in early and mid-2001 under the leadership of Ali Ahmeti. Having secured constitutional reform and amnesty for his fighters Ahmeti made a leap into legitimate political activities. Although in the spring of 2002 he toyed with the idea of becoming a "coordinator" of the existing Macedonian Albanian political parties, thus achieving the status of an informal leader of this population's political structures, Ahmeti concentrated on founding a political party in the summer of 2002. Together with his former fighting associates, and co-opting various members of the Macedonian Albanian intelligentsia, Ahmeti founded the Democratic Union for Integration, (DUI in Macedonian and BDI in Albanian) on June 5 in Tetovo. In his inaugural speech, delivered beneath a large Albanian flag in Tetovo's "Palace of Culture", Ahmeti emphasized that the DUI is founded on the principle of equality, rather than discrimination, and promised to work for peace while repudiating the use of violent methods. In the parliamentary elections on Sept. 15 the DUI managed to win most of the votes of the Macedonian Albanian community and secure 16 seats in the Macedonian parliament. Following lengthy and tense negotiations DUI entered the coalition government of Branko Crvenkovski, leader of the Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia, the third partner being the small but influential Liberal Democratic Party of Macedonia.

Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization–Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity

Vnatesna Makedonska Revolucionerna Organizacija–Demokratska Partija za Makedonsko Nacionalno Edinstvo (VMRO–DPMNE)

Address. Macedonia 17A, 1000 Skopje

Telephone. (389–2) 3124244

Fax. (389–2) 3124336

Email. info@vmro-dpmne.org.mk

Website. www.vmro-dpmne.org.mk

Leadership. Nikola Gruevski (president) Ganka Samoilovska-Cvetanova (vice-president) VMRO-DPMNE is a right-wing party named after the historic clandestine organization that fought for the liberation of Macedonia from Ottoman Turkish rule. Supported by Macedonian emigrants and by such eminent Macedonian dissidents as Dragan Bogdanovski and Goran Jakovlevski, the party was founded in late June 1990. While in the early 1990s VMRO-DPMNE had a more nationalist outlook, failing to win the parliamentary elections in 1990 and 1994, as well as the presidential elections in 1994, it changed rhetoric on the eve of the 1998 vote, allying with a new pro-business party Democratic Alternative (DA). The alliance emerged as a clear winner, with 59 of the 120 seats, allowing Georgievski to form a coalition government including DA and DPA. Despite trailing in the first round of the presidential elections in 1999, the candidate of VMRO-DPMNE, Boris Trajkovski, was elected with 52.9% of the second round vote. Wavering between the harsh nationalist vocabulary of the former Minister of Interior Ljube Boshkovski and the more moderate pragmatic tones of the Finance Minister Nikola Gruevski the party lost the 2002 elections (winning only 29 seats), after which the charismatic leader Georgievski stepped down from all party functions.

Liberal Democratic Party

Liberalno-Demokratskata Partija (LDP)

Address. Partizanski odredi 89, 1000 Skopje

Telephone. (389–2) 3063675

Fax. (389–2) 3063099

Email. contact@ldp.org.mk

Website. www.ldp.org.mk

Leadership. Risto Penov (president); Jovan Manasievski & Angelka Peeva-Laurenchikj (vice-presidents); Vlado Popovski (secretary)

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) was created in January 1997 as a merger of the Liberal Party of Macedonia (LPM) led by Stojan Andov and the Democratic Party (DP) led by Petar Goshev. In 2000 a number of party members from the “liberal” wing decided to quit the LDP and (re-)found the Liberal Party of Macedonia. The party has a pro-reform market orientation and is particularly strong in the capital city, where LDP’s Risto Penov has been repeatedly elected as the mayor. Goshev, the leader of the DP and subsequently the LDP, resigned after the party’s poor results in the 1998 parliamentary elections. In March 1999 Goshev was succeeded by Penov, an economist. In the 2002 parliamentary elections the LDP won 13 seats in coalition with SDSM and a number of smaller parties. The LDP, which has an official membership of 35,000, is affiliated to the Liberal International.

Liberal Party of Macedonia

Liberalnata Partija na Makedonija (LPM)

Address. c/o Sobranje, Oktomvri 11, 91000 Skopje

Website. www.liberalna.org.mk

Leadership. Stojan Andov (president); Ljupcho Meshkov & Sasho Bogdanovski (vice-presidents)

Led by former Yugoslav diplomat and career politician Stojan Andov, the Liberal Party of Macedonia (LPM) was originally founded in 1989 as the Alliance of Reform Forces of Macedonia (SRSM), then an affiliate of Ante Markovic's Alliance of Yugoslav Reform Forces (SRSJ). The LPM in the early 1990s closely cooperated with the Social Democrats and was included in the coalition governments until 1996. Following the split with the SDSM, and being in the opposition to the government, in early 1997, the LPM merged with Goshev's DP, founding the LDP. Following the dismal performance of LDP presidential candidate Stojan Andov in the elections in 1999, when he was relegated to fifth place with only 11.2% of the first-round vote, and losing elections for the LDP presidency, Andov and his followers re-established the LPM in 2000. The LPM gave external support to the centre-right government headed by the VMRO-DPMNE and for a short period of time was a coalition partner. In the 2002 elections LPM won 5 seats in a coalition with VMRO-DPMNE.

Party for Democratic Prosperity

Partija za Demokraski Prosperitet (PDP)

Address. 62 Karaorman, 44000 Tetovo

Telephone. (389-44) 25709

Leadership. Abdurahman Aliti (chairman)

The Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) was in the 1990s the main party of Macedonian Albanians. The PDP, together with a smaller ethnic Albanian National Democratic Party (NDP) joined a coalition government headed by the Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia (SDSM) in 1992. Following turbulent events in Macedonia in 1993 and 1994 the PDP underwent a split in between moderates and nationalists. In the 1994 elections the PDP won only 10 seats but still remained a member of the government headed by the SDSM. The coalition government with SDSM proved unstable, and the PDP protested against numerous governmental laws and actions, even boycotting parliamentary sessions for a period of time in 1995. Although in the 1998 elections the PDP ran on a joint list with DPA winning 14 seats it did not enter the government led by VMRO-DPMNE, although the DPA did. After the poor showing of their candidate in the presidential elections in 1999, Muhamed Halili winning only 4.4% of the first-round vote against Muharem Hexipi from PDA who obtained 14.9%, PDP had an even worse showing in the 2002 parliamentary elections, winning only 2 seats.

Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia

Socijaldemokraski Sojuz na Makedonija (SDSM)

Address. Bihachka 8, 1000 Skopje

Telephone. (389-2) 3221-371

Fax. (389-2) 3221-071

Email. contact@sds.org.mk

Website. www.sds.org.mk

Leadership. Branko Crvenkovski (president); Vlado Buchkovski, Ilinka Mitreva, Nikola Popovski (vice-presidents)

The Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia (SDSM) is successor to the former ruling Alliance of Communists of Macedonia (SKM). Reformed by then party leader Petar Goshev in 1989, SKM changed its name into SKM-PDP adding “Party of Democratic Change” (*Partija za Demokratska Preobrazba*, PDP) to its title. Led by a young and reform minded generation of politicians, SKM-PDP came a close second in the 1990 parliamentary elections, with 31 seats. Following the fall of the “government of experts”, SKM-PDP now renamed the SDSM, headed a coalition government from 1992 till 1998. Their nominee, Kiro Gligorov, was elected head of state by the parliament in January 1991, and reelected in the direct presidential elections in 1994. Due to numerous corruption scandals and unpopular foreign policy moves, SDSM lost power in the parliamentary elections of late 1998, winning only 29 seats. The defeat was confirmed when in the 1999 a presidential election, the SDSM candidate Tito Petkovski, was defeated in the second round by the VMRO-DPMNE nominee, Boris Trajkovski. In the 2002 elections SDSM together with the Liberal Democratic Party and other smaller parties convincingly won the elections winning 42 seats. The new coalition government has included the DUI.

Socialist Party of Macedonia

Socijalistika Partija na Makedonija (SPM)

Address. Ilindenska bb, 1000 Skopje

Telephone. (389–2) 3228–015

Fax. (389–2) 3220–025

Leadership. Ljubisav Ivanov (president); Todor Kalamatiev, Petar Ilievski, Branko Petkovski, Milan Hristovski, Sasho Vasilevski (vice-presidents)

The Socialist Party of Macedonia (SPM) is the successor to the Socialist Alliance–Socialist Party of Macedonia, registered in the courts in September 1990. After winning 4 seats in the 1990 elections, the SPM joined the SDSM-led coalition government, remaining a member until the 1998 elections. The party fared very poorly in the 1998 elections, securing only two seats. Many blame the decline on the decreasing popularity of the aging president Ljubisav Ivanov, and the somewhat rural background of the party leadership, which proved unappealing to the majority of young and urban voters. The party won only one seat in the 2002 elections.

Other Parties

Democratic Party of Turks in Macedonia (*Demokratska Partija na Turcite vo Makedonija*, DPTM), draws its votes from the 77,000 strong Macedonian Turkish community. It won one seat in the 2002 elections in coalition with SDSM and LDP.

Leadership. Erdogan Sarach

Democratic League of Bosniaks (*Demokratska Liga na Boshnjacite*), a party representing the interests of the Bosniaks/Muslims in Macedonia. It won one seat in the 2002 elections in coalition with SDSM and LDP.

Leadership. Rafet Muminovic

Democratic Party of Serbs (*Demokratska Partija na Srbite*), a party representing the interests of the Serbs in Macedonia. It won one seat in the 2002 elections in coalition with SDSM and LDP.

Leadership. Ivan Stoiljkovic

People's Democratic Party (*Narodna Demokratska Partija*, NDP) is a radical Albanian minority party once part of PDP but now an independent organization; it won one parliamentary seat in the 2002 elections.

United Party of the Roms of Macedonia (*Obedineta Partija na Romite od Makedonija*, OPRM), representing Macedonia's Roms, won one seat in the 2002 elections in coalition with SDSM and LDP

Leadership. Nevdzhet Mustafa