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# **Elections in Macedonia**

## *2016 Parliamentary Elections*

Frequently Asked Questions

Europe and Eurasia

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

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## Frequently Asked Questions

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### *Disclosure:*

*These FAQs reflect decisions made by the Macedonia elections authorities as of December 8, 2016, to the best of our knowledge. This document does not represent any IFES policy or technical recommendations.*

## When is Election Day?

Election Day is December 11, 2016.

## Who are citizens voting for on Election Day?

Citizens are voting for members of Parliament (MPs) on Election Day. Macedonians will elect between 120 and 123 MPs for four-year terms. There are six electoral districts in Macedonia and each electoral district will elect 20 MPs. Up to three additional MPs can be elected from the out-of-country district. Parliament is elected through a proportional representation system with closed lists. The seats in Parliament will be divided [according to a d'Hondt method](#).

## Who can vote in the country?

Macedonian citizens who are 18 years old by Election Day and who have a residence in the electoral district where the election takes place [are eligible to vote](#), unless they have lost their ability to vote through a court decision.

Voter registration is a passive process in Macedonia and voter registration is given to people who have both an official address in Macedonia and a valid ID card or passport and who are 18 years of age.

## How many registered voters are there?

Before the public inspection period, there were 1,783,715 names on the voter list. Since the State Election Commission (SEC) began its mandate, it has undertaken several operations in the process of updating the voter register such as cross checks of the voter register with other databases, field inspections, and active verification of inconsistent records. Following the public inspection period, 1,763,843 citizens are registered to vote in the country regularly or on special lists (such as those voting in prisons, citizens considered to be living or working temporarily abroad, internally displaced persons, etc.).

For citizens residing in Macedonia, voter registration is a passive process. However, citizens who live abroad must actively register. For these elections, there are currently 20,573 registered to vote out-of-country.

## **What is the structure of the government?**

The Macedonian government is made up of between 120 and 123 members of Parliament. The seats in Parliament are divided according to the d'Hondt method.

The current government is made up of six parties and coalitions who are represented in Parliament. Currently, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity has 61 seats and the Democratic Union for Integration has 19 seats, and the two together form the current government. The opposition consists of the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia with 34 seats, the Democratic Party of Albanians with seven seats, the National Democratic Revival with one seat, and the Citizens Option for Macedonia with one seat.

## **Are there reserved seats for women? What is the gender balance within the candidate list?**

Yes, there is a quota system in Macedonia. The quota calls for at least 40 percent of the candidates lists to be women. Currently, 41 percent of the candidates are female. However, only [four women are at the top of their lists](#).

## **What is the election management body? What are its powers?**

Elections in Macedonia are organized by the State Election Commission (SEC). The [SEC is aided](#) by 80 Municipal Election Commissions (MECs), 3,480 Election Boards (EBs), and 46 EBs that are located in diplomatic and consular offices abroad for those partaking in out-of-country voting.

The SEC is composed of nine members, three of whom are nominated by the ruling parties, three of whom are nominated by the opposition, and three of whom are independent experts. The president and the deputy of the SEC are selected from the three independent experts. In response to the 2015 Electoral Code amendments, the SEC has added short-term legal and IT staff members. The temporary personnel were nominated by the four main political parties. The SEC has [34 permanent regional offices](#).

MECs consist of five members that are central and municipal government administrators who are randomly selected. The EBs [consist of five members](#), three of whom are public employees who are randomly selected and the other two are appointed by the main political parties.

The [Electoral Code requires representation](#) of both genders and ethnic groups in these election management bodies. The Electoral Code requires that at least 30 percent of the election management bodies must be women.

## What is a polling place?

According to the Electoral Code, a polling station is the place where voting takes place. Once the polling stations have been determined, the lists of candidates will be displayed in the premises where the voting will take place.

The members of the Election Board will assemble at the polling station an hour before voting starts to prepare the voting and to ensure that the election materials have not been tampered with. [Approved observers are permitted](#) to observe this process as well.

Voting occurs from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., with police and the Election Board arriving at 6:00 a.m. After the polling station closes and the votes are counted, the [police will secure the building](#). The police will secure the polling station from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Upon the closure of the polling station and during the counting of the votes, the police will secure the building where the polling station and the Election Board is located.

## How many polling places are set up on Election Day?

For these elections, there are 3,478 [polling stations in Macedonia](#).

## Is out-of-country voting allowed?

Yes, out-of-country voting is allowed. For these elections, there are 20,573 [citizens registered to vote abroad](#).

Out-of-country voting occurs in diplomatic or consular offices abroad. The [Electoral Code provides a list](#) of countries and cities where there are diplomatic or consular offices.

## How will voters with disabilities cast their ballots?

Voters who are unable to vote in person at a polling station must notify the Municipal Election Commission at least three days before the election. The [Election Board \(EB\) allows the voter to vote through a proxy](#), or in their home the day before Election Day.

Voters who are unable to vote by themselves, due to a disability or illiteracy, are allowed to bring someone with them to vote. If they do not bring someone with them, [the EB can appoint someone to assist them](#).

## What technology will be used?

The State Election Commission (SEC) developed an online application for voters who live abroad. This was created in hopes of [making it easier for diaspora voters to register](#).

The SEC maintains the voter register online. There are no printed voter lists available, and thus citizens have to check their data online in SEC offices or at home via a personal computer. Voters could request changes to their data, and the SEC informed the voters about their requested changes by email, as is stated in the law. Therefore, voters without access to email [could not be alerted about the status of their request](#).

## Where is voting, counting and tabulation held?

Vote counting is held at each polling station. Prior to counting votes, the Election Board (EB) members and observers will count the number of registered voters who have voted and provided their signature or fingerprint. After the number of registered voters who casted votes is determined, the ballot box is opened and [the Election Board counts the votes](#).

The EB randomly selects one member to take out and open the ballots from the ballot box one by one. This member gives each ballot to the president of the EB. The president then shows the ballot to all members of the EB, to the representatives of the each submitted list, and to the observers. The EB will then ensure that the ballot is valid and determine which list of candidates the voter chose. Once this is determined, the vote is recorded. When the EB is finished with its vote counting, it gives its count to the Municipal Election Commission (MEC). The [MEC will tabulate the results at its polling station](#) within five hours of receiving the ballots from the EBs.

The MEC then turns its results over to the State Election Commission, which [determines the results](#) based off of the election materials and the information provided by the MEC.

## Who will observe during Election Day? How can they get accreditation?

The Electoral Code in Macedonia allows elections to be observed by domestic associations and foreign organizations registered in the country, international organizations, and representatives of foreign countries.

The accreditation process for civil society organizations who wish to observe the elections is ongoing and thus the list of civil society organizations who are observing the elections is not yet finalized.

## **When will official results be announced?**

The State Election Commission (SEC) announces the initial election results as they receive them electronically. The official results that are taken from the protocols developed by the Municipal Election Commissions are announced within 12 hours of the end of the election. The SEC [announces the final results as soon as possible](#), but no later than 24 hours after the results become final.

## **How will election disputes be adjudicated?**

The State Election Commission (SEC) handles complaints that are related to the election, while the State Audit Office and the State Commission for Preventing Corruption handle disputes that relate to campaign finance and the misuse of administrative resources. If a decision of one of these groups is appealed, it is [appealed to the Administrative Court](#).

In order to appropriately handle disputes and the appeals process, the SEC has created a procedural guideline. The Electoral Code requires that the SEC provide an electronic system for case and complaint management. This system has been created [but has not yet been tested](#) or used.

## **How will Election Day security be ensured?**

The police are in charge of ensuring polling station security on Election Day. According to the Electoral Code, the police are to be on duty at polling stations from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. While the votes are counted, the police will secure the building where the polling place is.

## Resources

- Electoral Code of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia ([English](#))
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Interim Report ([English](#))