

Polity IV Country Report 2007: Macedonia

Score:	2006	2007	Change			
Polity:	9	9	0			
Democ:	9	9	0			
Autoc:	0	0	0			
Durable:		5				
Tentative:		Yes				
SCODE	MAC	CCODE	343	Date of Report	1 November 2008	
Polity IV Component Variables						
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP	
3	3	4	7	2	4	
Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)						
End Date			Begin Date			
			17 September 1991 (Ind.)			
Polity Fragmentation: No						
Constitution	1991					
Executive(s)	President Branko Crvenkovski (SDSM); directly elected, 14 and 28 April 2004, 60.6% Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski (VMRO-DPMNE); appointed as leader of majority party or coalition in parliament, 28 August 2006					
Legislature	Unicameral: Assembly (120 seats; proportionally elected; most recent election, 1 June 2008) For a Better Macedonia Coalition (VMRO-DPMNE): 63 Sun – Coalition for Europe: 27 Democratic Union for Integration (DUI): 18 Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA): 11 Party for European Future: 1					
Judiciary	Supreme Court					

Narrative Description:¹

Executive Recruitment: Competitive Elections (8)

Macedonia has a mixed presidential-parliamentary system. While the prime minister is the constitutional head of government, the president retains significant powers. The president has primary control over national security issues and is commander-in-chief of the military apparatus. Since independence in 1991, the electoral process in Macedonia has been deemed by domestic and international observers to be

¹ The research described in this report was sponsored by the Political Instability Task Force (PITF). The PITF is funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. The views expressed herein are the authors' alone and do not represent the views of the US Government.

relatively free and fair. However, second round voting in the presidential elections of 1999 were marred by minor irregularities, particularly in Albanian-dominated regions (the Supreme Court later ordered a revote in some of these disputed areas). The government was also accused by opposition leaders and the media of harassing members of the opposition prior to these elections. While the executive recruitment process in Macedonia can still be considered competitive in nature, recent trends indicate some reasons to be concerned over the democratic nature of this process. In particular, the outbreak of armed conflict by ethnic-Albanian militants in February 2001 stemmed from perceived domination of the political process by ethnic-Slavs.

The Ohrid peace accord and power-sharing agreement, brokered by the EU and US, largely ended the Albanian insurrection in August 2001. However, hardliners in the VMRO-DPMNE government continued to obstruct implementation of the Ohrid agreement up until the September 2002 general elections. In those elections, support for the nationalist parties declined dramatically and a new coalition government was formed, led by the former communist Social Democratic Alliance for Macedonia (SDSM), the leading member of the Together for Macedonia alliance, and the Albanian Democratic Union for Integration (BDI), a party comprising the former National Liberation Army. Early presidential elections were held in April 2004, following the death in February of President Trajkovski in an airplane crash. Prime Minister Branko Crvenkovski secured over 60% of the votes in second-round balloting to become the new President. He appointed Hari Kostov as Prime Minister in May 2004; Kostov subsequently resigned in November and was replaced by Vlado Buchkovski on 26 November 2004.

Nikola Gruevski, leader of the center-right VMRO-DPMNE party, formed a new government in July 2006 after forming a coalition agreement with the Democratic Party of Albanians and three smaller parties following largely violence-free general elections. The elections, in which the Prime Ministers party won 44 out of 120 seats in parliament, was seen as a test of the Ohrid peace deal that ended the ethnic Albanian uprising in 2001. However, there was some reports of protests after the largest Albanian party, the Democratic Union of Integration, which was part of the outgoing coalition, was left out of the new government.

Executive Constraints: Executive Parity or Subordination (7)

The parliamentary structure of government found in Macedonia places significant constraints on the actions of the chief executive. The prime minister is directly accountable to the legislature. While the president is less constrained by the actions of the National Assembly, nevertheless, his/her powers are severely limited by constitutional design. Constraints on executive power have been limited by the weakness of the emerging party structure, competition between nationalist and moderates, and constitutional provisions restricting the influence of the increasingly activist ethnic-Albanian minority. Constitutional changes mandated by the Ohrid peace accord were approved by the legislature in November 2001; these changes guaranteed equality for minorities and instituted power-sharing arrangements. The judiciary is largely autonomous from executive interference.

Political Participation: Political Liberalization: Limited and/or Decreasing Overt Coercion (9)

Macedonia is a multiethnic state comprised of Slavic-Macedonians (67%), ethnic Albanians (23%) and a handful of smaller groups (e.g., Turks, Serbs, Vlachs, and Roma). While the Government has been committed to a policy of peaceful integration of all ethnic groups since independence, nevertheless, social inequalities and prejudices persist and ethnic tensions have remained close to the political surface. Until early 2001, however, Macedonia remained largely immune from the ethnic violence that had ravaged its neighbors throughout the 1990s. This abruptly changed in early 2001 when ethnic warfare spread throughout the northern regions of the country. Led by the National Liberation Army (NLA), an Albanian-based ethnonational organization, a number of small towns around Tetovo (the unofficial Albanian capital of Macedonia located east of Skopje) were seized by guerilla forces. While the NLA remained quite small and enjoyed only limited backing by ethnic Albanians in Macedonia it, nonetheless, was able to challenge the authority of the central government in this region.

At the core of this insurrection was the perception by ethnic Albanians that they are second class citizens within the Macedonian state. Albanian leaders in Macedonia have called for the recognition of Albanians as a constituent, or founding, national group within the country (instead of its current "minority" classification). They have also proposed that both Macedonian and Albanian should be official languages and that Albanians should have the right to fly the Albanian flag alongside the Macedonian flag. While

most Albanian leaders suggest that they wish to remain within the Macedonian state, the common perception by many Macedonians is that these demands are merely a thinly veiled guise for the creation of a “greater Albanian” state. Despite this ethnic tension, efforts by the Macedonian government and moderate Albanian leaders had prevented the outbreak of ethnic violence throughout the 1990s. In an effort to reach out to moderate elements within the Albanian community, the Government had integrated Albanian ministers into the country’s coalition governments and had implemented significant educational reform proposed by Albanian politicians. Despite the fact that most Albanians in Macedonia have preferred to use the power of the ballot over the power of the gun in advancing their ethnic agenda, ethnic violence erupted in February 2001.

In an effort to quell this unrest, believed to be orchestrated by Albanian “extremists” returning from the war in Kosovo, a government of national unity was formed. Consisting of representatives from over four-fifths of the parties found in the National Assembly (including Albanian parties), the Government pursued a dual-track strategy of military combat against guerilla insurgents and political negotiation with constitutional representatives of the Albanian people. While members of the moderate Albanian parties sought to negotiate a settlement with the NLA, Macedonian representatives in the Government refused to deal with “terrorists” and continued to wage war in the northern regions of the country. President Trajkovski even went as far as to demand that ethnic Albanian ministers in the government renounce their contacts with the rebels or lose their political posts.

The impasse was finally resolved under pressure from the EU and US. A formal ceasefire was signed by both sides in July 2001 and a brokered peace agreement was signed in August 2001. As a result of the Ohrid Peace Accord, NATO forces collected NLA weapons in September and in November the legislature approved a package of constitutional reforms including rights and language guarantees, limited amnesty, and power-sharing provisions. In December 2001, multi-ethnic police units entered villages formerly held by NLA fighters. In June 2002, the insurgent NLA was disbanded and reformed as a legal party, the Albanian Democratic Union for Integration (BDI). September 2002 general elections were patrolled by NATO forces and the OSCE provided 900 election observers. Despite high tensions and some disruptions, the elections were deemed largely free and fair. As a result, nationalist parties lost a substantial portion of their support and in November 2002 a new coalition government was formed between the former communist party (SDSM) and the party of the former NLA, The Albanian Democratic Union for Integration (BDI). Despite this progress, Albanian frustrations over the pace of reform efforts surfaced again when the BDI was left out of the governing coalition following the July 2006 elections. In September 2007 the police clashed with supporters of the BDI outside of parliament after rival MPs exchanged blows inside the building. BDI deputies have vocally opposed government plans to guarantee parliamentary seats for Macedonia’s smaller ethnic groups. Fearing a diminution of their political power, Albanian MPs have argued that this act will undermine their influence and upset their ability to check the power of the dominant Slavic-Macedonian parties in the country.