

## Reporting on the initial findings of the elections in 2016



Romalitico, 2017

## Content

Introduction .....	3
Methodology.....	4
Financing of the political parties and coalitions .....	5
Election irregularities .....	10
Post Election analysis .....	12
Conclusion.....	14
Bibliography .....	15

## Introduction

After eight (8) cycles of elections since independence, conducting different electoral models including the majority, proportional and mixed model, it is interesting to note the fact that Roma have always had one or two political representatives in the Parliament. Apart from the members of Parliament, other Roma political parties intended to secure seats at the institutional level and the decision-making level. These results position the Roma community in Macedonia as advanced compared to other countries in the neighborhood and beyond. However, the ninth cycle of elections in 2016, Roma will have three candidates on the lists in experimental places to win mandates. This is the first time where three Roma candidates participated in parliamentary elections.

In addition, this cycle like previous other cycles, the competition is based on the two major Macedonian parties. SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE are again the key coalition partners to all the Roma parties. Although Roma have seven active political parties, none of the parties ever decided to participate independently in the parliamentary and local elections. Debating the outcome, whether Roma can win a mandate or not, they should also assess the opportunity to build coalitions after the elections based on their program or the interest of the electorate. Nevertheless, the most important on these elections were the maturity and political culture for three rules – Use your right to vote, Vote according to your own preference and do not sell your vote.

## Methodology

The methodology of the reporting on the initial findings is mainly based on *comparison* as well as *review of primary and secondary sources* covering the election day. The comparison was focused on the finances especially the revenue and expenditure costs of the parties in 2016 campaign period. While the review of the primary and secondary sources was dedicated for tracking the election irregularities and the post-electoral results. The reporting was covered through documents from OSCE, EU and SEC reports as primary sources, whereas media (traditional and social) and civil society reports as secondary sources. These sources covered the developments from the outset to the end of the election process. Considering the fact that prior to these elections there was not any Roma organization to be accredited to observe the elections, in 2016 elections were observed only by the platform “My vote my responsibility”.

## Financing of the political parties and coalitions

According to the Transparency International – Macedonia and Center for Economic Analyses (2016)<sup>1</sup>, in the reporting period 21.11.2016 to 30.11.2016, eight political parties (Coalition VMRO-DPMNE, DUI, Coalition VMRO for Macedonia, Coalition Alliance of Albanians, PDP, LP, DPA) have not shown expenses for communication services and eight political parties (Coalition VMRO-DPMNE, DUI, DPA, Levica, Besa, LP, PDP, and Coalition VMRO for Macedonia) have not shown expenses for utilities and heating. Furthermore, eight political parties (Coalition SDSM, DUI, Coalition VMRO for Macedonia, Coalition for Changes and Justice, Coalition Alliance of Albanians, PDP, DPA, LP) have not shown expenses for transportation and transportation services and five political parties (DUI, PDP, LP, Levica, Coalition VMRO for Macedonia) have not shown expenses for renting space and equipment.

In the reporting<sup>2</sup> period from 01.12.2016 to 09.12.2016 from eleven political parties' financial reports have submitted ten political parties (PDP did not submit a report in the envisaged statutory period). However, eight political parties (Coalition SDSM, Besa, DUI, Coalition for Changes and Justice, Alliance of Albanians, Levica, Coalition VMRO for Macedonia, LP, DPA) have not shown expenditures for communication services and seven political parties (Besa, DUI, Coalition for Change and Justice, Alliance of Albanians, Levica, Coalition VMRO for Macedonia, LP, DPA) expenses for utilities and heating. Also, seven political parties (Coalition SDSM, Besa, DUI, Alliance of Albanians, Levica, Coalition VMRO for Macedonia, LP, DPA) have not shown expenses for transportation and transportation services and three political parties (DUI, LP, Alliance of Albanians) have not shown expenditures for renting space and equipment. The exception is the Coalition VMRO - DPMNE, which in the second report has covered all these items.

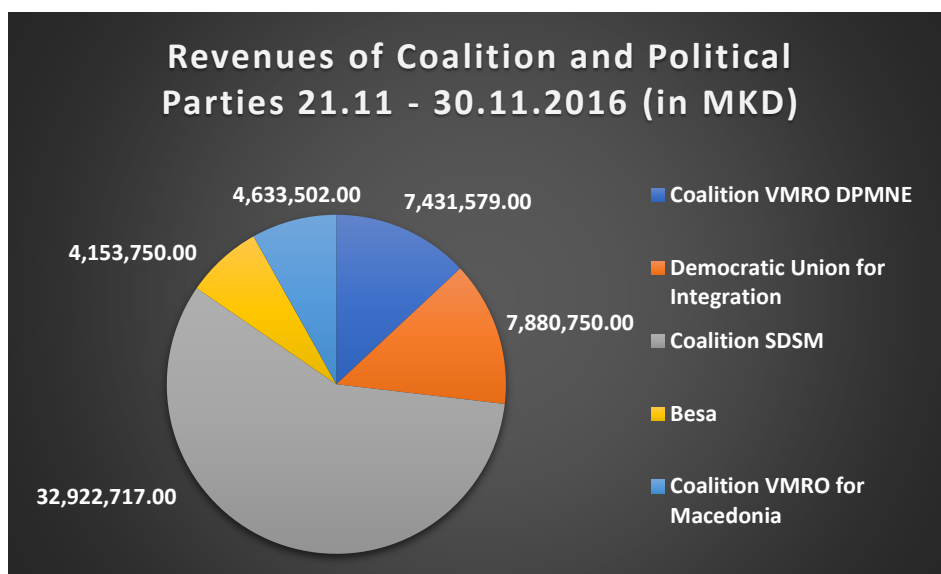
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<sup>1</sup> Transparency International – Macedonia, Center for Economic Analyses. (2016). Monitoring of the spending from budgets and political parties in the campaign and electoral process 21.11 – 30.11.2016. Available at: <https://goo.gl/PP6pky>

<sup>2</sup> Transparency International – Macedonia, Center for Economic Analyses. (2016). Monitoring of the spending from budgets and political parties in the campaign and electoral process 01.12 – 09.12.2016. Available at: <https://goo.gl/cCucYf>

In the first reporting period, the Coalition SDSM had the largest revenues collected, they stated that their revenues amounted 32.933.717 MKD. The Coalition VMRO DPMNE and DUI reported that their revenues are around 7.000.000 MKD, while Besa and Coalition VMRO for Macedonia have reported that their revenues were about 4 million MKD.

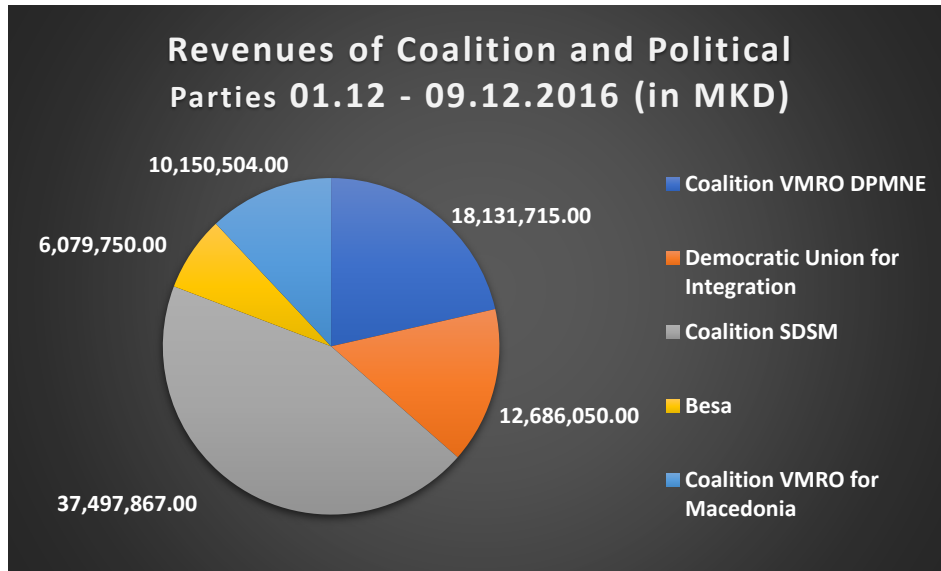
Graphic 1. Revenues in the first period of reporting



Source: Monitoring of the spending from budgets and political parties in the campaign and electoral process 21.11 – 30.11.2016

In the second reporting period, from Graphic 2, the Coalition SDSM again reported the highest revenues 37.497.867 MKD. The Coalition VMRO DPMNE reported 18.131.715 MKD, DUI reported 12.686.050 MKD, BESA 10.150.504 MKD, while the Coalition VMRO for Macedonia reported 6.079.750 MKD. It can be concluded that in the second reporting period all political parties and coalitions reported higher revenues.

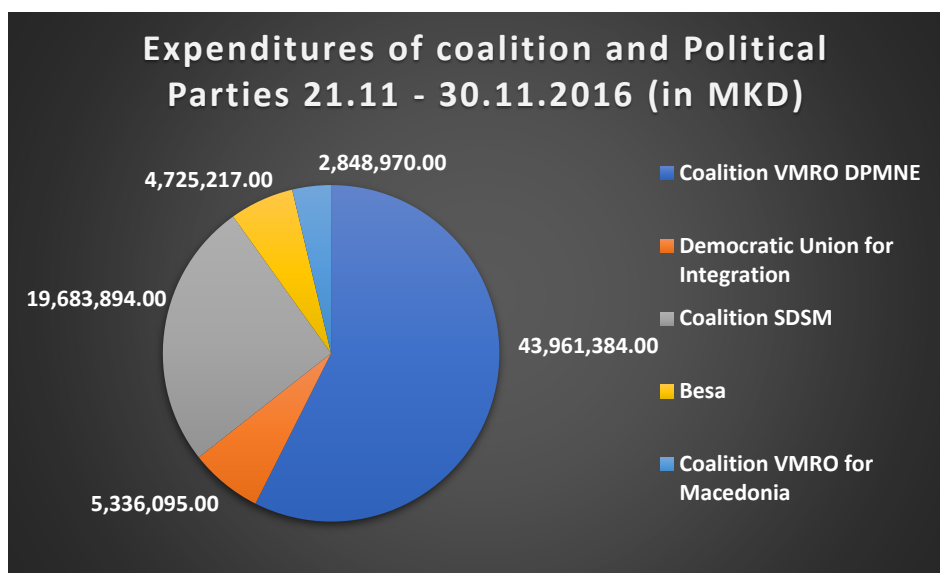
Graphic 2. Revenues in the second period of reporting



Source: Monitoring of the spending from budgets and political parties in the campaign and electoral process 01.12-09.12.2016

In the first period of reporting, from the Graphic 3. The Coalition VMRO DPMNE has shown expenditures of 43.961.384 MKD from which one third of the amount has been spent for the political program and advertising materials (flyers, mugs, hats, scarves), while the Coalition SDSM has shown 19.683.894 MKD of which around 25% has been spent for the political program and advertising materials (flyers, mugs, hats, scarves). The expenditures of DUI and Besa amounted around 5.000.000 MKD, whereas the Coalition VMRO for Macedonia amounted around 3.000.000 MKD. It is interesting the fact that the two biggest Coalitions from the Macedonian bloc use to spend more on the advertising materials, while the political parties from the Albanian bloc use to spend on the TV campaign, especially Besa.

Graphic 3. Expenditures in the first period of reporting

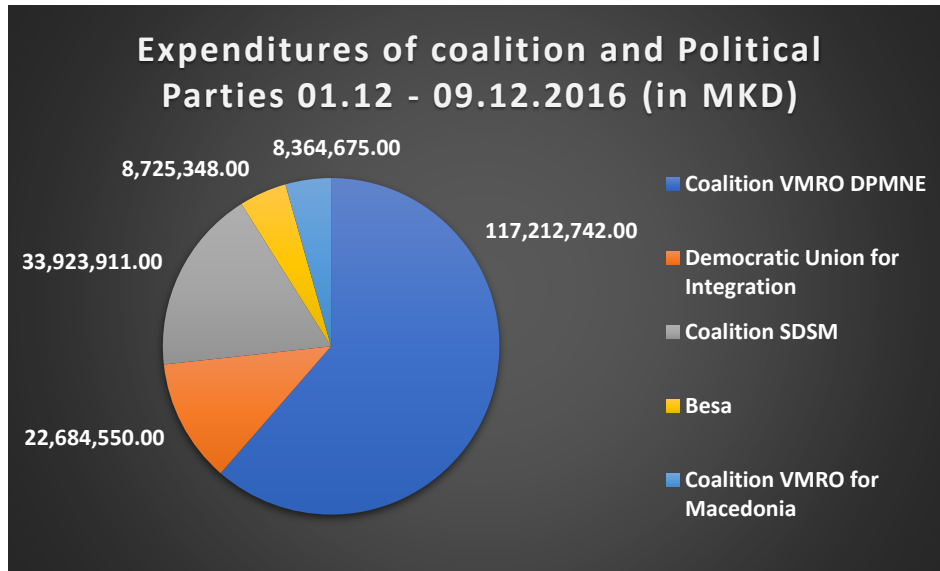


Source: Monitoring of the spending from budgets and political parties in the campaign and electoral process 21.11 – 30.11.2016

From the Graphic 4. In the second period of reporting the Coalition VMRO DPMNE has shown 117.212.742 MKD more expenditures than the Coalition SDSM 33.923.911 MKD. The expenditures of the Albanian parties in the second period of reporting obviously have been increased. DUI reported expenditures of 22.684.550 MKD, while Besa reported expenditures of 8.725.348 MKD. In this period of reporting DUI spent one third on the political program and advertising materials (flyers, mugs, hats, scarves).



Graphic 4. Expenditures in the second period of reporting



Source: Monitoring of the spending from budgets and political parties in the campaign and electoral process 21.11 – 30.11.2016

It can be concluded that the Coalition VMRO DPMNE, showed more expenditures than revenues in the amount of 99.081.027 MKD, DUI showed more expenditures than revenues in the amount of 9.998.500 MKD and BESA showed more expenditures than revenues in the amount of 2.648.598 MKD.

Due to the fact that the Roma political parties have been in coalitions with Macedonian mainstream parties, there is no data available to find for the revenues and how much they spent on the early parliamentary elections. However, according to Albert Memeti and Nadire Redjepi in 2014<sup>3</sup>, Roma political parties fall into the category of small parties that lack network of funding. Memeti and Redjepi claim that *"the Roma political parties rely on alternative ways: personal funds received from the party leaders; "loans" from banks' or the so-called "Bank of services"- trading service for service - "employment in the public administration" with "money contribution for the party". In this respect, the Roma political parties have a characteristic of clientele's mass party due to the patron - client relation which is based on the economic/ material exchange. This model provides the leaders with a monopolistic power to control his patrons and obey."*

<sup>3</sup> Albert Memeti & Nadire Redjepi. (2014). The discrepancy between the exercises of the political and financial power: Roma political parties in Macedonia. Romalitco. Available at: <https://goo.gl/G6XL3j>

## Election irregularities

These elections also had irregularities. The Ombudsman office received 145 reports from citizens during the election campaign, including the election day. Most of the complaints reported intimidation, manipulation and misconduct. In addition, the Ombudsman office received complaints from citizens for the electronic voting register because some of the voters were part of the electronic voting register, while not listed on the voting day<sup>4</sup>. Citizens demanded protection from the ombudsman office as well as other organizations. According to Fokus, there was an attempt to buy votes in critical constituencies where the difference of the parties is small, they report that parties offered 3.000 to 6.000 MKD which is 50 to 100 euros<sup>5</sup>. TV21 also reported that many voters from Shuto Orizari had issues with the right to vote due to the electronic voting register and the lists on the voting day<sup>6</sup>. In addition, A1on also reported from the Ministry of Interior that there were attempts to vote manipulation in Suto Orizari, where 14 (fourteen) vehicles were forcing people to vote and agitated for party preference<sup>7</sup>. Fokus also noted that five (5) people were caught with a copy of the voting ballot<sup>8</sup>. There were also attempts to take photos of voters and show to parties that they have voted for a certain party, which violates the Electoral Code<sup>9</sup>. In addition, there were cases where public officials offered money to voters to vote for a certain party for around 1.000 MKD which is around 16 euros<sup>10</sup>. This was usually happening to people that have not been identified as certain voters for a party, so the parties wanted to make sure that they maximize their electorate<sup>11</sup>. Roma politicians were also caught in attempt to buy votes in Kavadarci, where they tried to buy votes from the Roma electorate with

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<sup>4</sup> More information on: 24 Vesti, 145 reports to the Ombudsman for early parliamentary elections. Available at: (<https://goo.gl/LtlZAN>) Last accessed on: 01.03.2017

<sup>5</sup> More information on: Fokus, In Tearce was given up to 100 euros per vote. Available at: (<https://goo.gl/JKixES>) Last accessed on: 01.03.2017

<sup>6</sup> More information on: TV 21, Citizens in Shuto Orizari cannot find themselves on the voting lists. Available at: (<https://goo.gl/rifr62>) Last accessed on: 01.03.2017

<sup>7</sup> More information on: A1 On, Interior: One arrested for handing out money and agitation of citizens. Available at: (<https://goo.gl/iofVkn>) Last accessed on: 01.03.2017

<sup>8</sup> More information on: Fokus, Five people caught with a copy of the voters list and notebook identification numbers. Available at: (<https://goo.gl/IX2iCp>) Last accessed on: 01.03.2017

<sup>9</sup> More information on: A1 On, MOST: Agitation, unauthorized identification of voters photographing ballots. Available at: (<https://goo.gl/S6811F>) Last accessed on: 01.03.2017

<sup>10</sup> More information on: Fokus, Verified bribery of voters in Demir Hisar: Executives offered 1,000 MKD for vote. Available at: (<https://goo.gl/hYwmH5>) Last accessed on: 01.03.2017

<sup>11</sup> More information on: Fokus, Black campaign in Madzari, chaos in the electoral commission in Kicevo. Available at: (<https://goo.gl/GhY4Pt>) Last accessed on: 01.03.2017

the amount of 1.000 MKD which is approximately 16 euros<sup>12</sup>. Generally the voter buyout started from 16 euros to 500 euros in places where parties wanted to make sure that they have more voters to win a constituency.<sup>13</sup>

Prior to the distribution of the parliamentary seats, there were several complaints made by the parties. Out of many, there were only some approved as irregular conduct in electoral districts. After the Administrative Court decided on the appeals filed by the parties, it was clear that there is going to be a repeat of voting at one polling station in electoral district 6. In line with the Court's decision, the repetition took place at village Tearce, in polling station 2011<sup>14</sup>. Previously, the Administrative Court accepted VMRO DPMNE's appeal in regards to SEC's decision for repetition of voting at a polling station in Gostivar. A total of 714 voters are registered at the polling station in Tearce. On December 11th, 414 people voted there. VMRO-DPMNE attained 91 votes, SDSM 87, BESA 65, DPA 64, DUI 53, and the Alliance for Albanians 25<sup>15</sup>. In electoral district 6, VMRO DPMNE was ahead of SDSM by 307 votes. A repeat of voting could have potentially change the outcome of election results. If SDSM gained one more MP seat, then the overall ratio of mandates would be VMRO-DPMNE 50, and SDSM 50 mandates<sup>16</sup>.

After the election day and the revote in the Tearce, the redistribution of the mandates took place. According to the count, VMRO DPMNE with the coalition won 51 seats, SDSM and their coalition won 49 seats, DUI won 10 seats, Besa won 5 seats, the coalition alliance for Albanians won 3 seats and DPA won 2 seats. With this result the distribution of the mandate became a mind game for both of the Macedonian parties. The following infographic shows the distribution of the seats in each of the constituency for all the parties that won seats. There is also a detail that shows the seats of Roma politicians in the second constituency.

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<sup>12</sup> More information on: Civil, Amdi Bajram caught in the act?. Available at: (<https://goo.gl/spZuAp>) Last accessed on: 01.03.2017

<sup>13</sup> More information on: A1 On, Bags of money came in Bitola, 200 euros per vote. Available at: (<https://goo.gl/1Eupto>) Last accessed on: 01.03.2017

<sup>14</sup> SEC. (2016). Report on the executed early parliamentary elections held on 12.11.2016. Available at: <https://goo.gl/NNnRxi>

<sup>15</sup> More information on: Independent, Macedonia: With Revote at Polling Station on Sunday, Distribution of Mandates Depends on Vote Count. Available at: (<https://goo.gl/qqV33J>) Last accessed on: 01.03.2017

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

## Post Election analysis

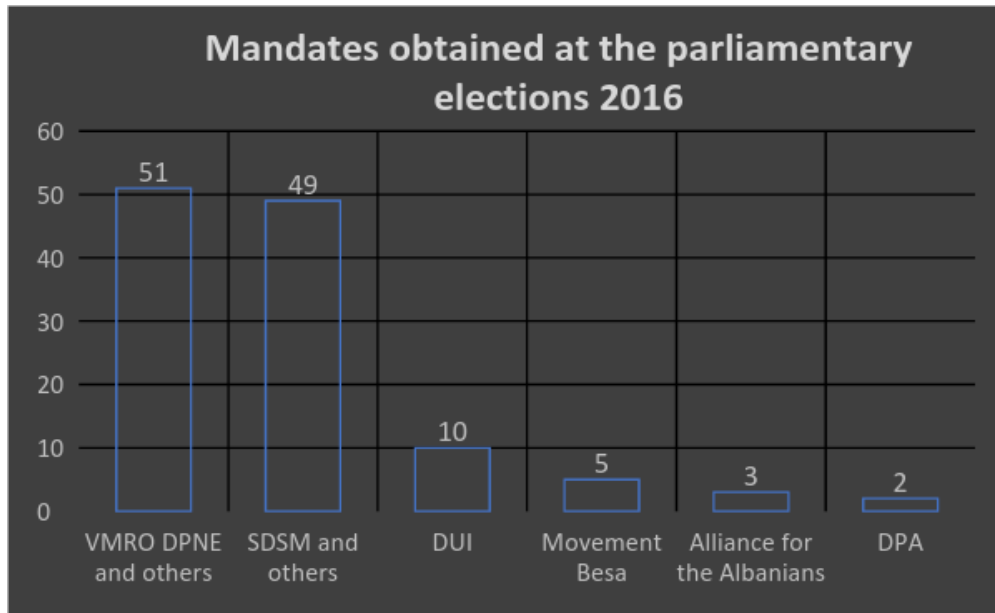
SEC announced that in the Parliamentary Elections out of 1,784,524 registered voters only 1,191,852 exercised their right to vote. The voting turnout was 66,79% which is an increase of 3,79% when compared with the turnout (63%) from the previous elections in 2014. According to the final results published by SEC, the coalition “Za podobra Makedonija” led by VMRO DPMNE, won the majority of the votes and acquired 51 mandates in parliament. The total number of votes received by VMRO DPMNE is 454,577 votes or 38,14% of the total number of votes. The second major party is SDSM and the coalition winning 436,981 votes or 36,66% of the total votes. As a result, the coalition won 49 mandates in parliament, which is very close to VMRO DPMNE. The third position holds DUI, having won 86,796 votes or 7,28% of the total votes. As a result, DUI won 10 mandates in parliament. The fourth party is the new registered party Besa having won 57,868 votes or 4,86% of the total votes. As a result the party won 5 mandates in the parliament. The fifth party is also newly registered Alliance for the Albanians and received 35,121 votes or 2,95% of the total votes. As a result the party won 3 mandates in parliament. The weakest party in the parliamentary elections that won 2 mandates in parliament is DPA. The party won 30,964 votes or 2,60% of the total votes.<sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately, the other parties and coalitions did not manage to win mandates in this parliamentary election. Additionally, none of the parties and coalitions managed to win mandates from the diaspora. The reason for not getting a mandate from the diaspora is the small percentage of voting turnout.

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<sup>17</sup> SEC. Results of the early Parliamentary Elections 2016. Available at: <https://goo.gl/X3Xkbe>

Graphic 5. Mandates obtained at the parliamentary elections 2016



Source: SEC

Party	VMRO DPMNE	SDSM	DUI	DPA
2014	61	34	19	7
2016	51	49	10	2

\*VMRO – DPMNE 10 mandates less, SDSM 15 mandates more, DUI 9 mandates less, DPA 5 mandates less

In this parliamentary election, only two Roma succeeded to win mandates in parliament. Both were elected in the second constituency, one is elected from the SRM party that is in coalition with VMRO DPMNE and the other elected MP is from SDSM.

## Conclusion

Finally, this analysis shows that mainstream Macedonian and Albanian parties reported their revenues and expenditure costs, while there was no data for Roma political parties. Big mainstream parties, both Macedonian and Albanian, were the biggest spenders during the campaigning period. According to the data, almost all of the parties presented more expenditures than revenues with a dramatic misbalance in figures in VMRO DPMNE.

Furthermore, the election day was evaluated as safe and fair in comparison with previous elections. There were minor irregularities that had no serious impact over the processes and the procedures. However, citizens and watchdog organizations reported series of complaints where voters reported intimidation, manipulation and misconduct. There were also cases of desynchronization between the electronic voting register and the voting list on the election day. Media also reported largely on vote buying and these reports were also confirmed by the organizations. Fortunately, all of the attempts for misconduct did not alter the vote count.

The initial results of the elections were tight and all of the parties declared they won in the elections in their own way. SEC processed the vote count and the main Macedonian parties were left with a difference of two (2) seats. While the Albanian bloc was left with plenty of options and different actors. DUI won ten (10) seats, BESA won five (5) seats, the Alliance for the Albanians won three (3) seats and DPA only two (2) seats. These results made the situation even harder to build coalition between the Macedonian and Albanian parties for a government.

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