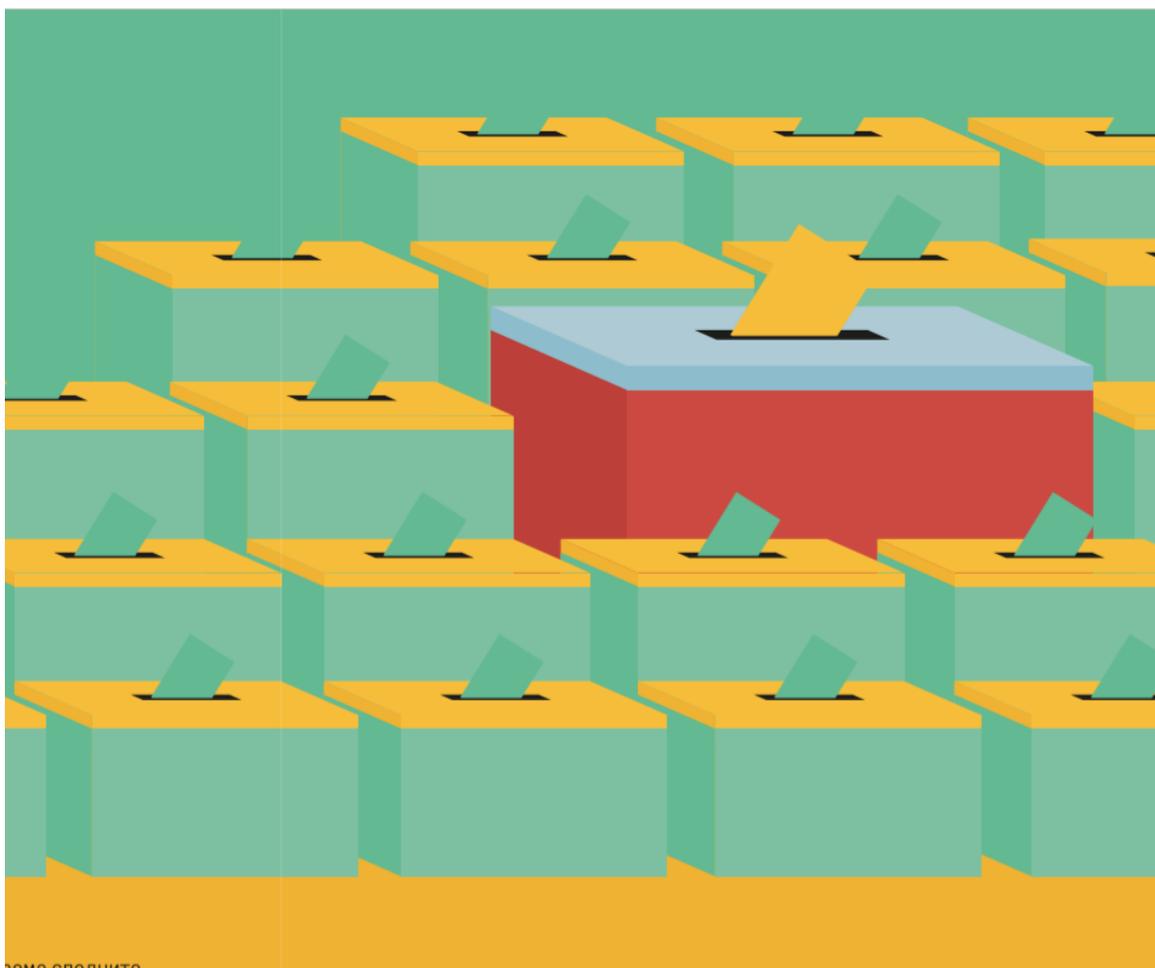


Parliamentary Elections 2020 - Candidate Lists

Analysis

Through the Lens of Social and Political Inclusion



Skopje 2020



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
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The publication is part of the “Support to Electoral Reforms in North Macedonia”, project funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation/Swiss Embassy in North Macedonia and is implemented by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems and National Youth Council of Macedonia.

Contents

List of Acronyms	5
Introduction	6
Leal Requirements about Candidate Lists for Parliamentary Elections	7
Social and Political Inclusion	9
Methodology and Limitations	10
General overview of Candidate List	12
Gender representation	13
Ethnic representation	14
Young people (18-29) representation	16
Rural Representation-Candidates from Rural Municipalities	18
Findings and Conclusions	19
Annex 1- Gender Representation	21
Annex 2- Women Head of Candidate List per Political Party and Electoral Districts	22
Annex 3-Ethnic Representation	23
Annex 4- Young Candidates (18-29) Representation.....	24
Table 1: Distribution of candidate lists and voters per electoral districts	12
Table 2:Gender representation on the candidate list per electoral districts.....	13
Table 3:Number of women heads of the candidate list in electoral districts	14
Table 4:Number of multi-ethnic candidate lists in electoral districts	15
Table 5:Number of candidates with different ethnic background per electoral districts	16
Table 6:Number of young candidates and percentage of female within young candidates	17
Table 7: Young candidates on top 5 positions in candidate lists.....	18
Table 8: Number of candidate residents of urban and rural municipalities	19

List of Acronyms

AA	Alliance for Albanians
CDU	Civic Democratic Union
CoE	Council of Europe
DPA	Democratic Party of Albanians
DUI	Democratic Union for Integration
EC	Electoral Code
ED	Electoral District
EU	European Union
MRRO- WP	Macedonian Renewal Reform Option - Workers' Party
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
SEC	State Election Commission
SDSM	Social Democratic Union of Macedonia
SDU	Social Democratic Union Skopje
VMRO-DPMNE	Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

Political Developments- After a decade-long dispute with Greece, in January 2019 the country changed its name to the Republic of North Macedonia. This opened a path for Euro-Atlantic integration and in February 2020 the Parliament approved North Atlantic Treaty. In regard to the EU accession process there was expectation the country to be invited to start membership negotiation as a result of the European Council meeting in October 2019. This did not take place and a decision was made for early parliamentary elections to be held on April 12th, 2020.

As per the legal requirement for a technical government to be appointed at least 100 days before the elections, the parliament elected the technical government on January 3rd 2020 and on February 16th 2020, after amending the Electoral Code, the parliament was dissolved. The State Election Commission (SEC) started the process of preparing the early parliamentary election and the calendar for elections to be completed within the period of 60 days.

Corona Virus Pandemic - First cases of persons infected in the country by COVID-19 were registered at the beginning of March and it was followed by introduction of prevention measures. As election activities had already started, some were put on hold such is training of the Municipal Election Commission and Electoral Boards members and closing of the voters lists. As the number of infected persons increased, the President of the country declared a state of national emergency while the mandate of the technical government was extended.

Election process - Under these circumstances, the technical government has both executive and legislative powers. A government decree¹ extended the mandate of the SEC for 6 months after the parliamentary elections are implemented, while all election activities were stopped. Once the national emergency is lifted, SEC would need to prepare a revised calendar for election activities so that the electoral process continues.

At the time of writing this analysis which is part of the project “Support to Electoral Reforms in North Macedonia”, President Pendarovski extended the state of emergency until May 16th 2020 when the conditions will be assessed again to decide whether the emergency measures will be lifted or continued. In case of the latest, SEC should prepare new calendar for elections based on which the electoral process will continue. Protective measures and health considerations for election administration, electoral contestants, civil society or voters in general will need to be carefully integrated in the electoral process.

¹ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iTMIPVvItYTXf0qZdlFrcbTIJD_DdGqM/view

Legal Requirements about Candidate Lists for Parliamentary Elections

In contemporary democracies, the internal functioning of political parties is determined by two principles: 1) the principle of party autonomy, whereby political parties are granted associational autonomy in their internal and external functioning. According to this principle, political parties should be free to establish their own internal organisation and rules for selecting party leaders and candidates, since this is regarded as integral to the concept of associational autonomy; 2) the principle of internal democracy, as political parties are essential for political participation, and therefore should respect democratic requirements within their internal organization.

In line with the above, the Council of Europe (CoE) Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulation state that: “Parties must have the ability to determine party officers and candidates, free from government interference. Recognizing that candidate selection and determination of ranking order on electoral lists is often dominated by closed entities and old networks of established politicians, clear and transparent criteria for candidate selection is needed, in order for new members (including women, and minorities) to get access to decision making positions. Gender-balanced composition of selecting bodies should also be commended”²

Analysis of the legal framework regulating the work of the political parties in North Macedonia³ shows that laws and regulations prescribe the process of registration, financing, name and insignia but does not affect the selection of candidates. This is regulated by the Electoral Code and by the internal rules of the political party for nominating the candidates. The process described below is applicable for regular parliamentary elections, while in case of early elections, deadlines are shortened with 5 days.

According to the Electoral Code (EC), the list of candidates can be submitted by the authorized representatives of registered political parties, coalitions and group of voters. While registered political parties and coalition can submit candidate lists to SEC, the group of voters (article 61 of EC) should first collect at least 1,000 signatures of the voters registered in the Voter List of the relevant electoral district. After the signatures are collected, the group of voters can submit candidate list for respective electoral district.

The procedure for collection of signatures by a group of voters for nomination of candidates is regulated by the article 63 of the EC. Following February 2020 changes of the EC, the candidates (nominated by the group of voters) could collect the signatures both in SEC regional offices and public notaries, which responds to previous OSCE/ODIHR recommendations of including

2 CDL-AD(2010)024, para 113.

3 Law on Political Party http://aa.mk/WBStorage/Files/Zakon_politicki_partii.pdf and Law on Financing of Political Party http://aa.mk/WBStorage/Files/Zakon_finansiranje_politicki_partii.pdf

alternatives for signature collection, besides the SEC Regional Offices. Collection of the signatures takes place for 15 days and one voter can sign for more than one candidate.

The submitted list of candidates for Member of Parliament should contain following elements: number of the electoral district, list title, name and symbol (if the list submitter has one), name and surname of the head of the list, name and surname of each candidate for Member of Parliament and it shall contain as many candidates as there are candidates elected in the electoral district, along with their permanent residence and unique personal identification number of the citizen and a statement to declare the belonging to a ethnic community (article 64 of the EC).

At least 40% of the candidates in a list shall belong to the underrepresented sex, and it is articulated in the EC as follows: at least one out of every three places shall be reserved for the underrepresented sex, with at least one additional place out of every ten places.

After the lists are submitted, SEC ensures all required elements are provided and verifies candidates' data with relevant institutions. Once confirmed, the lists are published in the daily newspapers and one of them shall be in the community language spoken by at least 20% of the citizens in the country. The publication of the lists by the SEC shall not be later than 23 days prior to Election Day (in case of early elections, deadlines are shortened). The process from submission of the candidate list until its publication lasts not longer than 10 days. The process is described in the article 67 of EC while on the graph below are presented only the key steps.

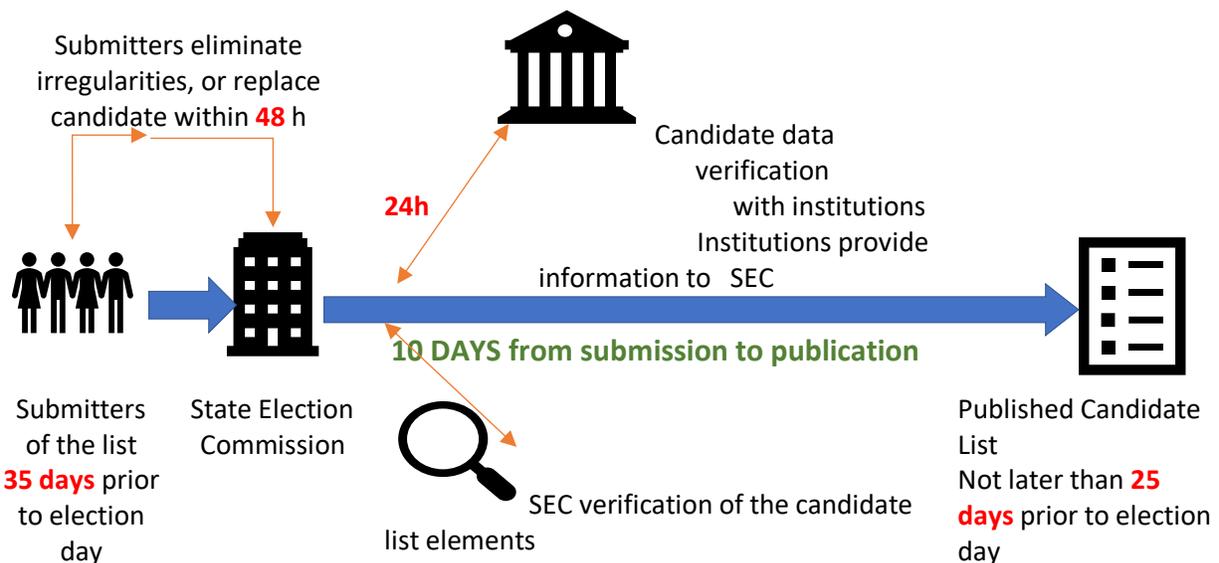


Figure 1: Process of submission of the Candidate List during regular parliamentary elections

As noted by CoE Venice Commission⁴, the Electoral Code is silent concerning the withdrawal of candidates and lists of candidates after they have been confirmed by the electoral administration. The issue could benefit from further regulation, in order to ensure legal clarity. This is even more relevant under the current circumstances, when electoral process is put on hold and will be continued after a number of weeks/months.

Social and Political Inclusion

Given legal framework leaves up to the political parties' internal democracy principles when selecting the candidates for the parliamentary elections, this chapter provides further rationale why the candidate lists should strive ensure representation of those who are marginalized, vulnerable and underrepresented.

Social inclusion is comprehensive and complex concept defined as “the process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights”⁵.

There are many other definitions in addition to the above (European Commission 2004; World Bank 2013; WHO 2008) and all of them describe the paradigm of inclusive society through the concepts of: solidarity, integration, cohesion, social capital and similar.

North Macedonia as a United Nations member state has committed to implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030⁶. Social Inclusion is enshrined in the definition of the different goals including Goal 10 to “empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status”.

Political Inclusion, as an integral part of social inclusion, implies “engaging all in the community in political processes, such as civic education, voting, running for office, and offering input to representatives as policies and legislation are developed, thereby creating a sense of agency and belonging”⁷. In doing so, political inclusion focuses on a vulnerable group in society as the ones with lower likelihood to participate and be included.

4 OSCE/ODIHR and CoE Venice Commission Joint Opinion on the Electoral Code, 2016
<https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/fyrom/275336?download=true>

5 <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/rwss/2016/chapter1.pdf>

6 <https://www.mk.undp.org/content/north-macedonia/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/background.html>

7 https://www.gmfus.org/sites/default/files/achieving_political_inclusion.pdf

The trust of the people in the parliament, and the level of the democracy in the country, is in direct correlation to what extent diversity in society is reflected in institution such as Parliament and processes related to its formation and operation. Unfortunately, in many countries, large portions of the population are excluded from politics based on their age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, or other identity factors.

Due to the above, this Analysis aims to examine **to what degree** and in which position on the list, representatives of vulnerable groups in society are included in the candidate lists as an indication of how inclusive and diverse will be composition of the parliament of North Macedonia 2020-2023. Indirectly, this may influence whether the policies and laws enacted by the Parliament will be more sensitive to, and reflect upon the needs of all people and also promote greater equality.

Given that national legislation does not provide definition of the social inclusion and who are marginalized and vulnerable groups in society, the analysis focuses on the following major groups that were referred in the body of analyzed literature.

- Gender representation;
- Ethnic representation;
- Inclusion of young people;
- Representation of rural population.

People with disabilities was another group aimed to be analyzed, however legal framework does not require collection of data about candidates on the disability ground therefore it was not possible to include this vulnerable group in the analysis.

Methodology and Limitations

The analysis uses the data from candidate lists published on the web site of the State Election Commission⁸ and metadata generated by the candidate lists application⁹, also available on the SEC web site.

The application provides easy to find information on two (2) key searchable indicators: Political Party and Electoral District. Combination of these indicators aggregates data for parameters of gender representation, candidates' age group and place of birth¹⁰ of candidates.

⁸ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1n61MT7PT5JmZpUqr2E9BoYNQNOWQzsbw/view>

⁹ <https://candidatelist.sec.mk/DashBoard>.

¹⁰ Place of Birth of the candidates is shown on the application due to the SEC requirements and administrative procedure requiring information about the candidates from the basic courts. Place of residence is used when analyzing rural/urban representation.

For some other indicators, not included in the candidate lists application, additional data sources are examined and consulted such as State Statistical Office, Bureau for Regional Development, Agency for Youth and Sport and similar.

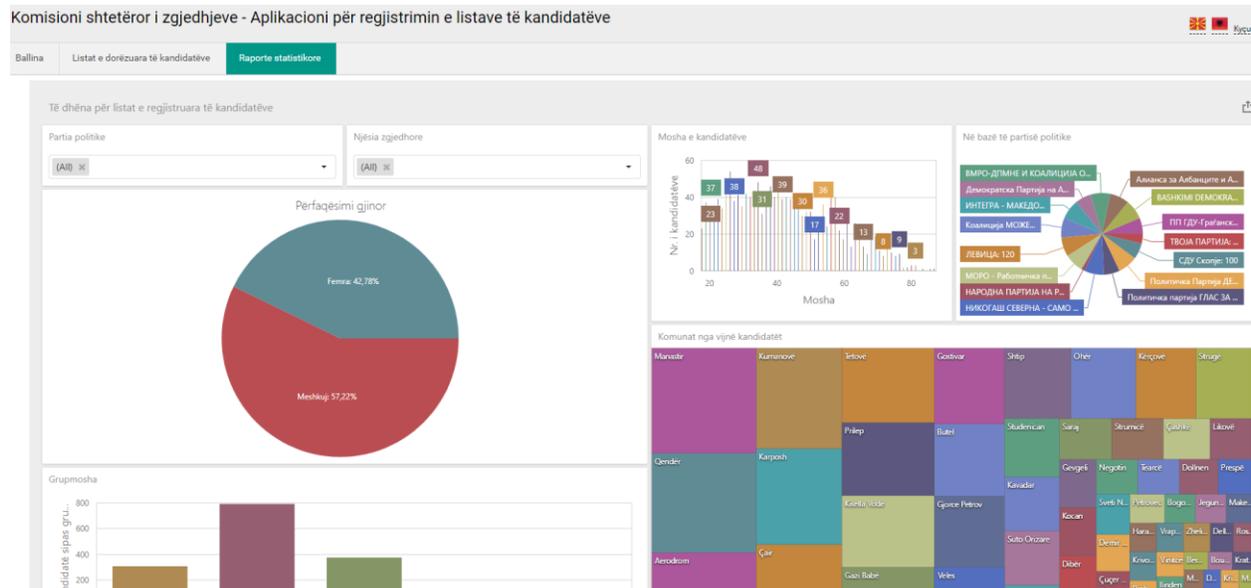


Figure 2: Candidate List Application functionalities

Due to COVID-19 outbreak and halt of election activities, it is not clear whether these candidate lists will be the final one or they will be changed when the election activities will continue. According to Electoral Code the candidate list can be changed on two grounds (Article 67):

- If the candidate does not fulfill the requirements set by the EC, in that case within 48 hours the candidate is replaced;
- In case the candidate passes away. The EC provides two possibilities, when the candidate passes away on the day of confirmation of the list and on the period less than 10 days from election day.

Having in mind the above, it is not clear what will be the procedure in case some of the candidates do not fulfil anymore the requirements from EC (ground 1), or they have passed away. The likelihood for any of the options to occur is high as two months have passed from the time when candidate lists were submitted and confirmed.

In case the candidate lists are changed, the findings from the analysis will not be relevant to the fullest extent.

General overview of the Candidate Lists for the 2020 Early Parliamentary Election

According to SEC information, 15 political parties and coalitions submitted candidate lists for the early parliamentary elections scheduled for 12 April 2020. Out of these, two (2) are coalitions and thirteen (13) are registered political parties. Since the required threshold for organization of the election process out of the country was not reached, the analysis examines only the candidate lists submitted for the six (6) in-country electoral districts and not the one for out of country voting.

As such, 1560 candidates were registered on 78 lists submitted by 15 political parties and coalitions for the in-country electoral districts. The number of submitted lists for each electoral district is provided in the table below.

Table 1: Distribution of candidate lists and voters per electoral district

Electoral District	1	2	3	4	5	6
Candidate List	13	15	13	13	14	10
Number of Voters (2020 elections¹¹)	310.238	321.360	280.249	284.119	315.511	310.504

The legal framework specifies that the maximum deviation of the number of voters between electoral districts cannot be greater than -5% to +5% of the average number of voters per electoral district¹². As for number of lists submitted for this election, it can be observed that electoral district 6 has the lowest number of the candidate lists. This can be explained by the fact that this electoral district has higher percentage of population with ethnic Albanian background. With few exceptions in past electoral cycles, majority of voters vote for candidates/lists with same ethnic background.

While big political parties/coalitions submitted lists for all electoral districts in the country, it appears that smaller political parties that do not target ethnic Albanian voters did not submit a candidate list for this district. On the other hand, a lower political offer means that voters of this district have fewer options to choose than the voters from other electoral districts. In case the offer was richer/higher than they be voting differently.

¹¹ SEC data

¹² Electoral Code

Gender representation

Equitable participation by women in politics and government is essential for building and sustaining democracy. If democratic governments are to respond to citizens, they must be truly representative. Historically, in democratic Republic of North Macedonia, substantive efforts for increasing women political participation and involvement in the decision-making processes started with introduction of affirmative actions (quotas) in various legislation. First time quota of 30 per cent was introduced in 2004. The changes of the EC in 2015 resulted with an increase of quota at 40 per cent. It is important to mention that Article 153a of the EC introduced in 2014 guarantees the position to next woman listed should the one elected resigns from the post. These are effective mechanisms for promoting women's participation in political and public life, in line with OSCE commitments and international standards.

“Quota is positive measurement instrument aimed at accelerating the achievement of gender-balanced participation and representation by establishing a defined proportion (percentage) or number of places or seats to be filled by, or allocated to, women and/or men, generally under certain rules or criteria.” European Institute for Gender Equality

Overall, for the submission of lists for the 2020 early parliamentary election, the candidate lists have 42,78% female and 57,22% male candidates which is slightly more than 40% legal requirement. On the table below are presented percentage (%) of females within candidate lists for each electoral district (ED) in the country.

As it can be seen the percentages are almost uniform across the districts, the highest percentage being in ED 4 (44,17) and the lowest in ED 6 (41,50).

Table 2: Gender representation in the candidate lists per electoral district

Electoral District	1	2	3	4	5	6
All Candidate Lists - Female representation in %	43,21	42,33	42,69	44,17	43,21	41,50

In regard to the gender quota within candidate list of political party/coalition, details for each political party/coalition and for each electoral district are provided in Annex 1. All lists submitted by political parties/coalitions respected gender quota, with the exception of the candidate list of SDU in ED 5 with only 35% of female representation. The highest representation of women across the country and per ED is noted on the candidate lists submitted by DUI with 47,78% (overall) and 60% for ED 4.

By analyzing the placement of women candidate on candidate list, another requirement deriving from the law, all political parties have respected the placement rule and, in this way, enabling women candidate to be placed on “winnable/competitive” seats.

42,8% of the candidates on the lists are represented by women while only

24,4% of the lists have women as heads of the list

A closer look at the candidate lists from the perspective of women heading the list shows a different situation. There is no legal requirement for placing women on the first position. However, the number of women heading the lists indicates how strong the position of women in the hierarchy of the political party is. As the table below shows, the representation of women candidates as heads of lists is very low across all political spectrum, with ED 1 having the highest representation. Details for each political party/coalition and electoral district are presented in

Annex 2.

Table 3: Number of women as heads of the candidate lists per electoral district

Electoral District	1	2	3	4	5	6	All
Total # of Candidate Lists	13	15	13	13	14	10	78
# of candidate list in which women are heads of the list	6	3	3	1	3	3	19 (24,35%)

In regard to political parties/coalitions, the highest number of candidate lists headed by women were proposed by “Voice for Macedonia-Глас за Македонија“, four (4) out of six (6). All other parties and coalitions either they do not have women heading the lists, or they have in the one or two candidate lists. It is interesting to be noted that DUI as the party with highest percentage of gender representation across the lists does not have any candidate list headed by women.

Ethnic representation

North Macedonia is a multi-ethnic and multi confessional society. Following political changes in the early 1990's the country struggled to design a state organization structure that is capable of accepting diversities through different mechanisms and instruments. Transition period resulted with formation of political parties which were divided across ethnic lines. With few exceptions, until parliamentary elections 2016 political parties with predominant Macedonian ethnicity membership mostly proposed candidates with ethnic Macedonian background and political parties with predominant Albanian ethnic background membership proposed candidates with Albanian ethnic

Only 3 political parties offer a multi-ethnic composition of the candidate lists (including Albanian candidates)

background. Political parties of other ethnic communities such as Roma, Serbian, Turks and Bosniaks would be part of the pre-election coalition.

In 2016, for the first time Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) included candidates with Albanian ethnicity on their candidate list.

For the parliamentary elections 2020 for the first time a political party Movement Besa entered pre-electoral coalition with a SDSM led coalition. Until now, only post-electoral coalitions were formed between ethnic Macedonian and ethnic Albanian political parties.

As there is a difference between ethnic community names and surnames, for the purpose of this analysis, a distinction of the ethnic background of the candidate is done by analyzing his/her name and surname. In this way, as there is no evidence-based data (declaration of ethnicity) but rather a rough indication about ethnic composition of the candidate lists. *Therefore, the findings below are grounded on subjective interpretation of author and they are presented only for the purpose of having a general understanding about this parameter of the candidate lists.* Detailed composition of the list for political parties for ED is presented on Annex 3. Aggregate findings are presented on the table below.

Table 4: Number of multi-ethnic candidate lists in electoral districts

Electoral District	1	2	3	4	5	6	All
Total # of Candidate Lists	13	15	13	13	14	10	78
# of Candidate List with multi-ethnic representation	4	8	4	5	9	5	35

All electoral districts have candidate lists with multi-ethnic representation and the number of such lists mirrors the ethnic composition of the population across electoral districts. For example, ED 2, ED 5 and ED 6 as the districts with ethnically mixed population have higher number of ethnically diverse lists compared to ED 1, ED 3 and ED 4 where the ethnic groups living there are homogeneous.

As mentioned above, there are two big coalitions taking place in elections 2020. Both of them include, beside Macedonian ethnic community, political parties representing Roma, Turkish, Serbian and Bosnian communities. Coalitions' candidate lists have diverse ethnic representation however it can be assumed diversity on these lists results from coalition agreement between the political parties and it may not be an indication of the ethnic inclusiveness within the party.

7 political parties have multi-ethnic composition of the Lists, but no ethnic Albanian candidate.

3 political parties have multi-ethnic candidate lists but no ethnic Macedonian candidate.

On the other hand, a review of the ethnic composition of single political party candidate lists shows a trend of ethnically mixed composition of the lists. Such candidate list may be interpreted as a reflection of party multi-ethnic membership, hence inclusion of different ethnicities within one political party and electoral platforms based on citizens needs rather than ethnic belonging.

These are recently established or smaller parties such as SDU, Democratic Political Party and Citizen Democratic Union. For illustration, on the table below is presented number of candidates with different ethnic background on candidate lists of aforementioned parties. While majority (up to 20 candidates per list) is with Macedonian ethnic background, the number of candidates presented on the table below is with Albanian, Bosnian, Roma or

Macedonian Muslim ethnicity.

Table 5: Number of candidates within different ethnic backgrounds per electoral districts

Electoral District	1	2	3	4	5	6	All	Total Candidates	% Ethnic
CDU	0	2	0	3	4	-	9	100	9
Democrats	0	7	3	2	3	6	21	120	17.50
SDU Skopje	2	1	2	0	2	-	7	100	7.00

Although percentage wise, it is low, as a trend it may be promising development. If continued it could contribute to social cohesion in the country and neutralize wide gap of ethnic divide and segregation¹³.

In regard to so called “Albanian block”¹⁴ of political party, representing Albanian ethnic community interests, the lists beside majority of candidates with Albanian ethnic background include representatives of Macedonian Muslim, Roma and Turkish community.

Most notably the candidate lists of DUI (14.15% other ethnic communities). There is no candidate with ethnic Macedonian background on the candidate list of these three political party, nor there is a candidate with Albanian ethnic background in remaining candidate lists of “Macedonian block” of political parties, other than of three above. This include a VMRO-DPMNE led coalition list as well.

Young people (18-29) representation

¹³ “Parallel lives”, Lijbers, Utrecht University, 2015

¹⁴ DUI, DPA, Alternativa-AA

According to the State Statistical Office estimations in 2018¹⁵, the country had a population of 2.077.132 and in 2020 median age¹⁶ is 39,117. This indicates that the population is getting older¹⁸ which represents a challenge for inclusion and participation of young people in public life. According to the National Youth Strategy 2016 – 2025¹⁹, the term ‘young people’ (youth) refers to any person(s) between the age of 15 and 29. This is a category that holds huge potential as a key resource for social progress, but also a category that is highly vulnerable to social and economic changes in society.

Despite on-going efforts to address issues of concern for young people, different research shows that 97% of them are not satisfied²⁰ with their position in society and 32% see their future employment²¹ outside of the country.

Inclusion of young people in the candidate lists during elections can be seen as a possibility for young political leaders to influence policy development, decision making and implementation processes. If elected as members of the parliament, the youth can better advocate to incorporate and address youth issues in a meaningful way.

Table 6: Number of young candidates and percentage of female within young candidates

Electoral District	1	2	3	4	5	6	All	%
Number of candidates	280	300	260	240	280	200	1560	100
Number of young candidates (18-29)	48	49	60	43	59	43	302	19,36
Number of young women candidates	25	27	18	21	28	19	138	8,85
% of female within age cohort 18-29	53%	55%	30%	49%	48%	44%		

The table above shows that ED 3 and ED 6 have the highest number of young candidates, whereas women representation among the young candidates is more than 40% across the electoral districts, apart from ED 3. It is not obvious why this particular ED has lower percentage of young

¹⁵ Latest population census took place in 2002 <http://www.stat.gov.mk/>

¹⁶ The median age is the age that divides a population into two numerically equal groups; that is, half the people are younger than this age and half are older. It is a single index that summarizes the age distribution of a population.

¹⁷ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/510328/average-age-of-the-population-in-macedonia/>

¹⁸ In 2000 median age was 32,3 years

¹⁹ <http://strategijazamladi.mk/sites/default/files/National-Youth-Strategy-2016-2025.pdf>

²⁰ Socio-Political participation of youth in North Macedonia: Apathy, Optimism or disappointment <https://www.wfd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/WFD-Youth-NMK.pdf>

²¹ IFES internal research 2020

candidates, however the representation of women within this age cohort is encouraging, showing that political parties ensure opportunities for young women to participate in the electoral race as well as opportunities for young women to further develop and advance within the political parties.

The inclusion of young candidates in the party lists and for each electoral district are detailed in Annex 4. In addition, the data shows that Roma People’s Party has 45% representation of young candidates within their candidate list, followed by Alliance for Albanians and Alternativa with 32,50% and Democratic Party of Albanians with 29%. This is not unusual as both Roma and ethnic Albanian communities have higher natality rates and lower median age compared to ethnic Macedonian community.

When analyzing the placement of this age group in the top five (5) positions on the candidate lists, the numbers vary between the ED, with the lowest being ED 6 and the highest ED 2.

*Out of a total of **1560** candidates **19%** are young people of 18-29 years old.*

*Out of those, **138** are women.*

Table 7: Young candidates on top 5 positions in candidate lists

Electoral District	1	2	3	4	5	6	All
Total number of young people (18-29) in the Candidate Lists	48	49	60	43	60	43	302
Young Candidates in the top 5 positions of the list	5	8	6	6	7	2	34

***34** young candidates have good position on the lists to be elected MPs*

Having in mind that out of the 120 members of parliament during 2016-2020, only two (2) were less than 30 years old²², and now 34 young people are in possibly winning positions on the lists, the prospects of increasing this number are higher. On long term, this may lead to better social and political inclusion of young people in mainstream society.

Rural Representation - Candidates from Rural Municipalities

22 https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/sites/youthwiki/files/gdlformer_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia.pdf

Territorial organization of the country is in 80 municipalities out of which 38 are rural. About 44% of the population²³ lives in rural areas, which have lower quality of life compared to the population in urban areas because of more limited or poor access to services, lack of employment opportunities, deteriorated road infrastructure and similar. This situation stimulates migration of the population and the abandonment of rural areas²⁴.

That is why there is a need through rural development policies to increase infrastructure investment and investments in the revitalization of villages in order to make them attractive places for young people and entrepreneurs to live and work in them.

An indication of the intention of political parties to address needs and priorities of local communities and ensure adequate political inclusion of rural population, can be seen also when analyzing the representation of the candidates from rural municipalities on the candidate lists during elections or among the leadership of the political parties.

Table 8: Number of candidates residing in urban and rural municipalities

Total Municipalities	Urban Municipalities	Rural Municipalities
80	42 (or 52.5%)	38 (or 47.5%)
Total Candidates	Candidate Urban	Candidate Rural
1560	1303 (or 83.5%)	257 (or 16.5%)

As the table above shows, the number of the candidate residents of rural municipalities are five times less than candidates living in urban municipalities. This disproportion can be interpreted as lack of interest and commitment of the political parties to address issues of the concern for rural population. This may also lead to further decrease of interest and investments contributing to equitable regional development which may lead to widening the gap between urban and rural areas.

5 times lower number of candidates living in rural areas compared to urban municipalities

Findings and Conclusions

²³ Population Census 2002 data presented in National Strategy for agriculture and rural development 2014-2020 <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/mac176055.pdf>

²⁴ The Strategy for development of rural network <http://ruralnet.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/%D0%A1%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%B3%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0-%D0%9C%D0%A0%D0%A0-2019-2022-final.pdf>

The Early Parliamentary Elections 2020 can be considered different from the previous practice in organizing the election in many respects. In the history of independent country this is first time the election process to start and to be put on hold in order to continue later.

Indeed, the country was faced with the challenge of COVID-19 outbreak and had to introduce the measures for battling the outbreak. This was new situation for which there was no prior guidance, experience and existing operational procedures.

Legal Framework need to be amended and supplemented for requirements emerging from pandemic and safety measures and distancing. This is of an utmost priority taking into consideration upcoming parliamentary elections.

State Election Commission, following (to be) revised legal framework and safety measures and directives, needs to amend existing and introduce new processes and procedures for election administration.

Candidate Lists verification process and related dead-lines were for the first time tested for these elections. Based on the implementation and the challenges deriving from it, certain deadlines and procedures may be revisited during electoral reform processes and revisions of legal framework.

Candidate Lists are inclusive on the ground of vulnerable groups, each party in different degree.

Candidate Lists are gender inclusive in line with requirement of 40% from Electoral code and in line with requirement for placement of women candidate on the voter list. One fourth (about 25%) of the candidate lists have women in the first position-head of the list.

There is growing trend of multi-ethnic candidate lists, mostly by new and small political party, which include two biggest ethnic communities in the country.

Bigger and traditional political parties continue with the practice of including smaller ethnic communities and excluding biggest one; (The candidate lists representing ethnic Macedonian community political party tend to exclude ethnic Albanian community representatives and vice versa. The only exception is the Coalition led by Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (majority Macedonian) on two grounds: by putting forward party candidates with Albanian ethnic background, and by including in the coalition a majority ethnic Albanian Political Party.

Representation of young people ages 18-29 is 19% across all political party lists and only 34 of them are placed in top 5 positions of the list. Not all of these positions are winnable especially when it comes to smaller political parties.

Candidate lists appear to be “urban-centric” and proposed candidates living in rural areas are disproportionately underrepresented by five time less than the ones from urban areas.

Annex 1- Gender Representation

Political Party	Electoral Districts						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	All %
CDU	40	45	45	40	50	-	44
Democratic Union for Integration	50	50	40	60	50	45	48,78
Alliance for Albanians and Alternativa	40	40	40	45	45	40	41,67
VMRO-DPMNE and the Coalition "Renewal for Macedonia"	40	40	45	40	40	45	41,46
DPA	40	40	40	-	40	40	40
INTEGRA	40	40	40	40	40	40	39,02
Coalition WE CAN	50	45	50	50	50	55	47,97
The Left	45	40	40	40	40	40	40,83
MRRO - Workers' Party	40	40	50	40	50	40	43,33
Roma People's Party	-	40	-	-	-	-	40
Never North – Just Macedonia	40	40	40	40	40	40	40,65
Voice for Macedonia	45	55	45	45	45	-	47
Democrats	55	40	40	40	40	40	42
SDU Skopje	40	40	40	50	35	-	41
Your Party	40	40	-	-	40	-	40

Source: Candidate List application and author calculations.

Note: Sign “-“ indicates that political party has not submitted a Candidate List for that Electoral District

Annex 2- Women Head of Candidate List per Political Party and Electoral Districts

Political Party	Electoral Districts						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	All
CDU	1	0	0	0	0	-	1
Democratic Union for Integration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Alliance for Albanians and Alternativa	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
VMRO-DPMNE and the Coalition "Renewal for Macedonia"	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
DPA	0	0	0	-	0	0	0
INTEGRA	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Coalition WE CAN	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
The Left	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
MRRO - Workers' Party	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Roma People's Party	-	0	-	-	-	-	0
Never North – Just Macedonia	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Voice for Macedonia	1	1	1	0	1	-	4
Democrats	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
SDU Skopje	0	1	0	0	0	-	1
Your Party	1	0	-	-	0	-	1
Total per PP	6	3	3	1	3	3	

Source: Candidate list posted on SEC web site and author calculation

Note:

1. Sign “-“ is used to indicate that political party has not submitted a Candidate List for that Electoral District
2. Sign “0” indicates that political party has not placed women candidate head of the Candidate List

Annex 3-Ethnic Representation

Political Party	Electoral Districts							All	Total Can.	% Ethnic
	1	2	3	4	5	6				
CDU	0	2	0	3	4	-	9	100	9	
Democratic Union for Integration	0	0	6	5	6	0	17	120	14.17	
Alliance for Albanians and Alternativa	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	120	0.83	
VMRO-DPMNE and the Coalition "Renewal for Macedonia"	1	1	0	1	3	1	7	120	5.83	
DPA	0	0	0	-	4	0	4	100	4.00	
INTEGRA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	120	0.00	
Coalition WE CAN	3	7	3	1	6	12	32	120	26.67	
The Left	0	1	0	0	0	2	3	120	2.50	
MRRO - Workers' Party	0	3	0	0	0	3	6	120	5.00	
Roma People's Party	-	0	-	-	-	-	0	20	0.00	
Never North – Just Macedonia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	120	0.00	
Voice for Macedonia	2	0	0	0	1	-	3	100	3.00	
Democrats	0	7	3	2	3	6	21	120	17.50	
SDU Skopje	2	1	2	0	2	-	7	100	7.00	
Your Party	0	1	-	-	0	-	1	60	1.67	
Total per PP	8	23	14	12	30	24				
Multi-ethnic list	4	8	4	5	9	5				
Total Lists per ED	13	15	13	13	14	10				

Source: Candidate Lists posted on the SEC web site and authors interpretation

Note:

1. Sign “-“ is used to indicate that political party has not submitted a Candidate List for that Electoral District
2. Sign “0” indicates that political party has not nominated candidate with different ethnic background on the Candidate List for that Electoral District

Annex 4- Young Candidates (18-29) Representation

Political Party	Electoral District							All (18-29)	Total Can.	% Youth
	1	2	3	4	5	6				
CDU	0	3	5	5	9	-	22	100	22	
Democratic Union for Integration	9	2	6	8	6	3	34	120	28.33	
Alliance for Albanians and Alternativa	6	4	9	8	7	5	39	120	32.50	
VMRO-DPMNE and the Coalition "Renewal for Macedonia"	4	4	0	4	2	5	19	120	15.83	
DPA	7	6	6	-	6	4	30	100	30.00	
INTEGRA	1	0	4	0	1	3	9	120	7.50	
Coalition WE CAN	3	2	3	3	3	5	19	120	15.83	
The Left	4	3	9	2	8	5	31	120	25.83	
MRRO - Workers' Party	3	4	2	0	1	4	14	120	11.67	
Roma People's Party	-	9	-	-	-	-	9	20	45.00	
Never North – Just Macedonia	4	3	2	2	3	5	19	120	15.83	
Voice for Macedonia	2	4	4	3	5	-	18	100	18.00	
Democrats	1	2	5	3	2	4	17	120	14.17	
SDU Skopje	4	3	5	5	6	-	23	100	23.00	
Your Party	0	0	-	-	0	-	0	60	0.00	
Total per PP	48	49	60	43	59	43				

Source: Candidate Lists application and author calculations

Note:

1. Sign “-” is used to indicate that political party has not submitted a Candidate List for that Electoral District
2. Sign “0” indicates that political party has not nominated candidate within the age cohort 18-29 years old on the Candidate List for that Electoral District