



North Macedonia — Va-PoReg Country Report

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[Until 02/12/2019 known as Macedonia]

01/19/1392 Start Part of Other Country [of Ottoman Empire]: On 01/19/1392, Skopje fell under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, bringing the whole of Macedonia under Ottoman rule.¹

08/10/1913 End Part of Other Country [of Ottoman Empire, Constitutional Monarchy]/Start Part of Other Country [of Serbia, Constitutional Monarchy]: With the end of the second Balkan War, the territory of North Macedonia, called „Vardar Macedonia”, was given to Serbia in the Treaty of Bucharest. After World War I, the people in this region were regarded as southern Serbs.²

12/01/1918 End Part of Other Country [of Serbia, Constitutional Monarchy]/Start Part of Other Country [of Yugoslavia, Constitutional Monarchy]: On this date, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Sloves, later Kingdom of Yugoslavia was founded. And North Macedonia, as part of the Kingdom of Serbia became part of it.³

04/08/1941 End Part of Other Country [of Yugoslavia, Constitutional Monarchy]/Start Direct Rule Occupation Regime [by Bulgaria, Constitutional Monarchy, Germany, Right-Wing (Fascist) Autocracy, Italy, Right-Wing (Fascist) Autocracy]: From 1941-1944 the territory of today's North Macedonia was occupied by Germany, Bulgaria and Italy.⁴ Despite the occupation, the first meeting of the Macedonian Communists 'Anti-fascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Macedonia' (ASNOM) was held on 08/02/1944. On the same day, the Yugoslav Socialist Republic of Macedonia was founded.⁵ From August 1944 to the end of World War II. ASNOM was the supreme legislative and executive people's representative body of the communist Macedonian state. Italy signed its capitulation on 09/08/1943 and on 10/02/1944 Bulgaria ordered its troops to withdraw. By 09/1944, the Soviet Army was approaching North Macedonia. To create a buffer against the Red Army, Germany attempted to establish a Macedonian puppet state, the „Independent State of Macedonia,” under Ivan Mihailov in the territory of Yugoslavia, which had been occupied by Bulgaria. This plan failed, leading to a German withdrawal order on 10/06/1944. On 10/08/1944, right-wing nationalists declared independence and took control of the puppet state. The „Independent State of Macedonia“ existed from 10/08/1944 to 11/13/1944, overlapping briefly with the Socialist Republic during this period.⁶

11/19/1944 End Direct Rule Occupation Regime [by Germany, Right-Wing (Fascist) Autocracy]/Start Non-Electoral Transitional Regime: By this date, the Germans were completely dislodged from Macedonia, and organs of „People's Authority” were established. The body was set up by the Macedonian Partisans ASNOM during the final stages of the World War II in Yugoslav Macedonia.⁷ The Manifesto of ASNOM eventually became a compromise between the powers in favor of the creation of an independent United Macedonian state with loose ties to Yugoslavia, and the proponents of the creation of a Macedonian state within the Yugoslavian federation. The unification of the Macedonian people was discussed and propagandized but the decision was ultimately reached that Vardar Macedonia (today's North Macedonia) would become part of the new communist Yugoslavia.⁸

03/07/1945 End Non-Electoral Transitional Regime/Start Part of Other Country [of Yugoslavia, Communist Ideocracy]: On this date, and during the retreat of the German forces, a government dominated by Tito and the communists was established (Petrovich 1947: 508-9, Van Dyke 1947: 375). On 11/29/1945, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, led by Josip Broz Tito was officially proclaimed. In 1946, Macedonia

became autonomous as Peoples Republic of Macedonia, later Socialist Republic of Macedonia, within the SFRY.⁹ After Tito's death in 1980, the Yugoslav Communist Party adopted a collective leadership model, with the occupant of the top position rotating annually, and strengthened the federal structure that gave more authority to Yugoslavia's constituent republics. During the 1980s, however, attempts to implement IMF-sponsored adjustments to contain economic decline exacerbated tensions between liberal elites within the federal government and the regional elites, and among the regional elites themselves (Lansford 2021: 1242). On 11/11/1990 the first parliamentary universal elections in the country's history took already place before independence. Both LIED and V-Dem do not treat North Macedonia before 1991.

11/20/1991 End Part of Other Country [of Yugoslavia, Communist Ideocracy]/Start Electoral Hybrid Regime: On this day the Macedonian Independence Referendum took place. One should not be confused by the fact that North Macedonia celebrates 09/08/1991 as its Independence Day. From the mid-1980s, the Slovenian government initiated the practice of withholding tax contributions from the federal government and resisting attempts to increase federal control over the monetary system. These actions set a precedent that resonated in Croatia. The tensions within the federal system were further heightened by ethnic conflicts within Serbia, particularly between Serbs and Albanians. Slobodan Milosevic, the president of the Communist League of Serbia, exploited these intra-Serbian conflicts, utilizing Serbian nationalist appeals that alarmed elites in other regions. The growing discord among the regional branches of the Communist Party culminated in the effective dissolution of the Communist League of Yugoslavia during its 14th Congress in January 1990, giving rise to separate parties for each republic. The disbandment of the federal party paved the way for reformist communists across regions to organize multiparty elections in 1990. In Macedonia, despite the nationalist party securing a plurality, the ex-communist party (SDSM) under Kiro Gligorov managed to form a majority coalition in parliament. Gligorov was elected president in 1991 and, following Slovenia and Croatia's lead, spearheaded the government's declaration of „sovereignty“ later that year. Like Croatia, strong nationalist sentiments prevailed, yet widespread mobilization did not play a decisive role in the collapse of the Yugoslav regime or the decision to conduct regional elections. Additionally, thanks in part to UN peacekeepers, Macedonia remained relatively uninvolved in the Balkan wars (Haggard/Kaufman/Teo 2016: 39-40). On 06/05/2011 elections took place that were judged generally free, fair, and without incident (Lansford 2021: 1242). Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. Since the country's independence the elections are competitive (LIED). From 1991 to 1994 no cleanliness is scored. The electoral cleanliness was ambiguous from 1995 to 1998, 2002 and 2007 to 2008. In 1999, from 2003 to 2007 and since 2018 the elections were somewhat clean. They were not really clean between 2000 and 2001 (V-Dem CEI). Between 1994 and 1997 the overall election conditions are considered as ambiguous. In 1998, free and fair elections were held. But the following three years the overall conditions score ambiguous outcomes. For two years, from 2002 to 2003 freedom and fairness were achieved. Since 2004, the overall conditions are classified as somewhat free and fair. North Macedonia struggles with corruption and clientelism. Despite active involvement in robust public discourse by the media and civil society, journalists and activists continue to experience pressure and intimidation.¹⁰ Per FH, until 2000, the country scores between 6 and 7, categorized as partly free, which we interpret as rather free. In 2001 the country is partly free with a score of 8, which we interpret as rather not free. From 2002 the country is partly free with a score ranging from 6 to 7, which we place in the rather free category. Besides, LIED scores a constant absence of political liberties. V-Dem's PCLI considers the political liberties as somewhat present from 1991 to 2002, 2008 to 2017 and since 2022. The remaining years full political liberties were achieved. From 1992 to 2001, as per Polity5's classification, the executive's authority was significantly constrained by institutional checks during this time. Since 2002, based on Polity5's assessment, the executive was either equal to or subordinate to other institutions, demonstrating strong constraints on decision-making authority. For 1991 to 2007, V-Dem's JCE and LCE are both interpreted by us as indicating robust constraints on the executive. From 2008 to 2011, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, whereas V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative

constraints on the executive were robust. From 2012 to 2015, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were robust. In 2016, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were absent, whereas V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were robust. From 2017 onward, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were robust. According to FH North Macedonia is classified as partly free for the whole period, fluctuating between 6-8. In our framework, the country is therefore considered to be rather not free in 2001 and rather free from the remaining years of the considered time period. North Macedonia is over most of the period according to our observations a borderline case between an electoral democracy and an electoral hybrid regime.

Electoral Hybrid Regime as of 07/01/2025 continued.

Additional Sources (Kasapović 2010a)

Notes

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Macedonia

² [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Bucharest_\(1913\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Bucharest_(1913))

³ <https://www.worldstatesmen.org/Macedonia.htm>

⁴ <https://www.worldstatesmen.org/Macedonia.htm>

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-fascist_Assembly_for_the_National_Liberation_of_Macedonia;
https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nordmazedonien#Vom_Balkankrieg_bis_zum_Ende_des_Kalten_Krieges

⁶ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independent_Macedonia_\(1944\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independent_Macedonia_(1944))

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II_in_Yugoslav_Macedonia

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II_in_Yugoslav_Macedonia

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_North_Macedonia#Balkan_Wars_and_World_War_I

¹⁰ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/north-macedonia/freedom-world/2022>

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