

The Revolutionary Organisation-Democratic Party for National Unity led by Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski retains power in Macedonia

from **Corinne Deloy**

Translated by Helen Levy

Results

The Revolutionary Organisation-Democratic Party for National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) led by outgoing Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski won the elections on 5th June in Macedonia. It won 38.98% of the vote and 56 seats according to results that are still incomplete. The Social Democratic Union (SDSM), the main opposition party led by former President of the Republic (2004-2009), Branko Crvenkovski, won 32.78 % of the vote (42 seats).

As for the Albanian speakers, the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI-BDI) led by Alija Ahmeti, member of the outgoing government won 10.24% of the vote. It came out ahead of the Albanian Democratic Party (PDA-PDSH) led by Menduh Thaci which won 5.90% of the vote and National Democratic Renaissance (RDK), a party created at the end of March by the mayor of Gostivar, Rufe Osmani, won 2.67% of the vote.

Finally the Revolutionary Organisation-People's Party (VMRO-NP) of former President of the Republic (1998-2002) Ljubco Georgievski won 2.51% of the vote.

Turnout totalled 63.48%, i.e. +6.31 points more in comparison with the last election on June 1st 2008. The general election therefore motivated the Macedonians, nearly half of whom said that they were tired of the incessant political quarrels, according to a poll published during the electoral campaign.

The manager of the Macedonian Electoral Commission, Josif Josifovski said that the general elections on 5th June had been the best organised in Macedonia's history. The police engaged 7000 men to guarantee the security of the polling stations. Moreover 3,500 local observers and 330 from abroad were asked to monitor the election. Some minor incidents were observed however. "It is my pleasure to announce to you that the Revolutionary Organisation-Democratic Party for Unity and the coalition 'For a better Macedonia' which it leads are the victors in this general election. We have won 55 of the 123 seats in the Sobranie (single chamber in Parliament)," declared outgoing Prime Minister Nikola

Gruevski. "A majority of the Macedonians acknowledged that things changed in 2006 when a group of young politicians came to power. In these times of international economic crisis and the prevention of our entry into NATO and the EU by Greece most of the electorate chose those who can best manage the country's problems," he added.

The head of the outgoing government campaigned on the need to continue reform so that his country could enter the EU and NATO. He promised to increase retirement pensions by 24.2% by 2015 as well as employees' salaries in the civil service, unemployment benefits and social aid. Nikola Gruevski has also promised to bring unemployment down (which affects around one third of the working population) under the 25% mark. In terms of taxation the VMRO-DPMNE is not due to introduce any further taxes and will bring down taxes on SMEs to zero if their annual revenue is below 3 million dinars (50,000 €). Small trading companies with an annual revenue of between 3 and 6 million dinars (between 50 000 and 100 000 €) will be able to choose a specific tax regime. Finally the VMRO-DPMNE is due to bring VAT down on tourist products.

"This victory is a great responsibility. We now have to implement the measures that we have promised. We must solve Macedonia's problems rapidly and become a NATO and EU member, a vital factor for our nation and our dignity," stressed the outgoing Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski who concluded: "As of tomorrow we shall continue to serve the citizens."

General Elections in Macedonia 05th June 2011

The leader of the Social Democratic Union, Branko Crvenkovski, said he was pleased with his party's performance on 5th June. His satisfaction lies in the increase in the number of seats won by his party (SDSM) in the Sobranie. "You have seen what we can do with 18 seats (the SDSM had 18 seats in the outgoing parliament), can you imagine what we can do with more than 40 MPs?" declared the opposition leader.

The VMRO-DPMNE will probably join forces with the Albanian speaking party that came out ahead in the election i.e. the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI-BDI), to form the next government. It should succeed in bringing Macedonia out of the serious socio-economic crisis in which it finds itself right now. During his visit to Skopje on 6th April last European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, Stefan Füle, pointed to the need for rapid reform in terms of

political dialogue, justice, civil service and the fight to counter corruption, as well as the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement (a peace agreement signed by the main Macedonian parties on 13th August 2001, to put an end to the conflict between the government forces in Skopje and the Albanian guerrilla, the National Liberation Army, which had been ongoing for years). Nikola Gruevski is also due to counter unemployment and the lack of professional opportunities (a poll revealed that half of Macedonian schoolchildren 49.5% wanted to leave their country within the next ten years) and to reduce poverty (the average national salary is 250€ per month, a figure that is clearly below the European average with 30% of Macedonians living below the poverty line).

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