



## HISTORY OF PARLIAMENTARISM IN MACEDONIA

*The Constitution of the sovereign and independent Republic of Macedonia was adopted on November 17, 1991. According to the Constitution, Macedonia is a republic with parliamentary democracy and division of state powers into legislative, executive and judicial. The Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia is a representative body of citizens and a legislative branch of power. The Assembly is unicameral and it can be composed of 120 to 140 members of the Assembly. Members of the Assembly are elected on general and direct elections by secret ballot and their mandate lasts for 4 years.*

*Krusevo Republic in 1903 and ASNOM in 1944 laid the historical foundation of the Assembly of Republic of Macedonia, and it continued to develop with the National Assembly of NRM in 1946 and the Assembly of SRM in 1963 and 1974.*

*The most important historic events and dates that characterize the modern development of the Macedonian parliamentarism are presented below.*

**August 2, 1903** - Ilinden Uprising started in order to liberate Macedonian people from the Ottoman rule. On August 3, after the liberation of Krusevo, the constitution of the new revolutionary-democratic national rule was initiated; and this, in historiography, is known as the Krusevo Republic, which lasted for 10 days. In order to elect the governing bodies in a democratic manner, an Assembly which consisted of the 60 most prominent citizens was convened; they were representing all national groups in the town of Krusevo (Macedonians, Albanians and Vlachs), and this served as a kind of a representative-parliamentary body. The Assembly elected a six-member interim executive government. The progressive democratic ideas of the revolutionaries, desires for cohabitation, equality among nationalities, brotherly concord and unity against the Ottoman despotism are incarnated in the Manifesto of the Krusevo Republic. The Manifesto of the Krusevo Republic is one of the most important documents in the history of the Macedonian national liberation movement. Although the Krusevo Republic lasted for only ten days, it has a prominent place in our history because it is a symbol of the nation-building

aspiration of the Macedonian nation and a foundation of the Macedonian statehood.

**August 2, 1944** – The first session of ASNOM (Anti-fascist Assembly for National Liberation of Macedonia) took place in the St.Prohor Pciniski monastery.

The Macedonian nation achieved its national liberty, by participating in the Second World War and the National Liberation War against fascism, and created its own state on the first session of ASNOM. Nine legislative acts were adopted at the First session of ASNOM, four of which were of state-forming character. These acts laid the foundations of the Macedonian state, as a federal state within the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia. The Democratic Federal Macedonia was solemnly constituted on this session.

ASNOM was constituted as a supreme legislative and an executive representative body of people and a supreme body of government in democratic Macedonia. The Presidium of ASNOM was established as a holder of executive as well as legislative competencies that were realized between the plenary sessions of ASNOM.



*ASNOM Presidium headed by Metodija Andonov Cento*

The Declaration of Fundamental Rights was adopted, according to which “all citizens of the federal Macedonian state were equal in front of the laws regardless of their nationality, race and creed”. The Macedonian national language was introduced as an official language of the Macedonian state, and August 2 was proclaimed as a national and state holiday of the Macedonian nation and the Macedonian state, as a symbol of all its struggles for liberation from centuries-long tyranny and of the creation of free Macedonian state.

In honor of the two major events that happened on the day of Ilinden, which laid the foundations of the Macedonian statehood and sovereignty, August 2 was proclaimed also as national holiday of the Republic of Macedonia - Day of the Republic.

**April 14-16, 1945** – at the third session, ASNOM was renamed in National Assembly of Democratic Federal Macedonia. The most important state-legal act that was adopted on this session was the act on formation of the first government, as an executive body of the Macedonian state (in March, 1946 it was renamed into National Republic of Macedonia). This was a completion of the constitutive process of the national rule as well as an affirmation of the state and national sovereignty of the Macedonian nation.

**December 31, 1946** – The Constitutional Assembly of the National Republic of Macedonia, elected at free elections on direct elections and by secret ballot, adopted the first Constitution of the National Republic of Macedonia. This Constitution is of major historic and political importance for Macedonia. The National Republic of Macedonia was defined as a national state with a republican model of government, and it was united with the other Yugoslav people and their national republics: National Republic of Serbia, National Republic of Montenegro, National Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, National Republic of Croatia and National Republic of Slovenia in one common federal state - Federal National Republic of

Yugoslavia (in 1963, it was renamed into Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia). According to the Constitution, the parliamentary organization of the government was the basic principle to organize the government, i.e. unity of government principle. The National Assembly represented the national sovereignty and it was a supreme governing body in the Republic, and it was the only holder of the legislative branch of power. The National Assembly of NRM was elected by citizens on general, equal and direct elections by a secret ballot for a period of four years.

The National Assembly, which was renamed into Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia in 1963, became the highest governing body until Macedonia gained independence from SFRY in 1991. The unity of government principle, i.e. the parliamentary system was the basic principle of organized government in the Republic, while the extent of its power, as well as organization and structure of the Assembly underwent changes (changes were specified in the Constitutional Law on the Foundations of the Social and Political System and Governing Bodies of NRM from 1952, the Constitution of SRM from 1963 and the Constitution of SRM from 1974). Namely, during this period, the Assembly was unicameral, bicameral, tricameral, and even fivecameral. The mandate of the representatives in the Assembly was imperative (there was a possibility to dismiss the representatives), while the manner of their election underwent changes from a direct elections system to a complex delegate system, as a system of indirect constitution of the Assembly.

**September 20, 1990** – The Assembly of SR Macedonia adopted 25 amendments to the 1974 Constitution of SRM, which led to radical changes in the social-economic and political system. This marked the beginning of the transition of the state towards the future parliamentary system and the creation of a sovereign and independent state. The constitutional amendments, among others, introduced ownership and political pluralism and restructuring of the main institutions in the country (the Assembly became unicameral, the Executive Council became Government, and instead of the collective presidium, the function of a President of the Republic was introduced for the first time). The system of delegates was abolished, and the members of the Assembly of SRM were elected by citizens on direct elections and by a secret ballot. Candidates for members of the Assembly were nominated by citizens, political organizations and other forms of organization and association. One month later, the Assembly adopted the Law on Elections and Dismissal of Members of the Assembly and Councilors, which was the last step in the preparations for the first democratic and multiparty elections.

**November 11, 1990** – The first free democratic multiparty parliamentary elections were held in SR Macedonia. The Elections were held according to the majority election model, and the territory of Macedonia was divided in 120 electoral districts. 18 political parties and 43 independent candidates took part in these elections. 120 members of the Assembly were elected in the Assembly of the then Socialist Republic of Macedonia. This election of representatives from different parties and political options introduced the parliamentary system with pluralistic democracy in Macedonia.

**January 8, 1991** – The first multiparty Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia was constituted on this day and it was composed of members of 9 political parties and 3 independent candidates. In accordance with the provisions of the interim Rules of Procedure, the session was chaired by the oldest member of the Assembly, and then Stojan Andov was elected as the President of the Assembly of SR Macedonia. The first multiparty Assembly directed its activities towards adoption of the necessary state-building acts and documents, which clearly expressed the centuries-long aspiration of Macedonian people to create a sovereign and independent state. This Assembly elected the first President and the first Government of the Republic, announced the independence referendum and adopted the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, and the country's anthem and flag.

**January 25, 1991** – At one of the first sessions, members of the Assembly adopted the Declaration of Sovereignty of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, which stipulated the sovereignty of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia in accordance with the constitutional determinations for independence and territorial integrity of the Macedonian state, as well as the right of the Macedonian nation to self-determination, including the right to separation. This Declaration was the basis for the adoption of the first democratic Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia.

**January 27, 1991** - Kiro Gligorov was elected as the first president of SR Macedonia on a session of the Assembly.

**March 20, 1991** – The Assembly elected the first Government of the SR Macedonia (called Expert Government), headed by Nikola Kljusev, PhD.

**June 7, 1991** – The Assembly of SR Macedonia adopted 4 amendments to the Constitution of SR Macedonia, including the amendment to delete the attribute “Socialist” in front of the name of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. Since then, the Republic is called the Republic of Macedonia.

**August 6, 1991** – The Assembly adopted the decision for announcing the referendum on which citizens were to decide on a sovereign and independent state. The Decision specified the question which the citizens were supposed to answer at the referendum: “Please state if you are for sovereign and independent state of Macedonia with a right to join the future union of sovereign states of Yugoslavia?”

**September 8, 1991** - The Referendum on sovereignty and independence of the Macedonian state was held. 95,09% of the citizens who voted gave positive answer to the referendum, or 72,16% of the total number of citizens with voting right. On that occasion, September 8 was declared as a state holiday – Independence Day.



*Invitation for referendum*

**September 17, 1991** – The Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia adopted a declaration to verify the referendum results for constituting the Republic of Macedonia as a sovereign and independent state. The Declaration underlined that the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, in a democratic manner wrote a new page in the Macedonian centuries-long history of efforts to make the Republic of Macedonia an independent and sovereign state. This Declaration is an official decision of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia to constitute the Republic of Macedonia as a sovereign and independent state, given the fact that citizen's expressed desire at the referendum was not of a decisive, but only of a consultative character.

**November 17, 1991** – The Assembly proclaimed the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia as the highest legal act of the state, which served as a completion of the long historic process of building the Republic of Macedonia as a sovereign, independent, democratic and social state. The adoption of the Constitution marked the beginning of the creation of the new constitutional order and establishment of the Republic of Macedonia as a parliamentary democracy. The Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia from 1991 is the first Macedonian constitution that regulates the principle of division of braches of power as a fundamental value of the constitutional order (previous constitutions of

Macedonia recognized the principle of parliamentary rule or unity of government principle). According to the Constitution, the Republic of Macedonia has a legislative, an executive and a judicial branch of power. The holder of the legislative branch of power is the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, which is a unicameral representative body of citizens, composed of 120 to 140 members (exact number of members is specified by law; until 2008, it was 120, and then the number of members was increased to 123, whereby 3 members are elected by the Republic of Macedonia's nationals who are temporarily staying abroad for work or other reasons). Members of the Assembly are elected on general, direct and free elections by a secret ballot for a period of four years.



*Proclamation of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia from 1991*

Since the adoption of the Constitution, the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia adopted total of 32 amendments which are an integral part of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia (1992, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2009 and 2011).

**December 19, 1991** – The Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia adopted the Declaration for International Recognition of the Republic of Macedonia as a Sovereign and Independent Country. Based on this Declaration, the Republic of Macedonia became a member of almost all relevant international organizations and it still maintains active and successful cooperation: UN (April 1993), WTO (1993), OSCE (1995), Council of Europe (1995), CEFTA (2006) and other. Macedonia is a candidate country for membership in the European Union (since 2005) and NATO.

**February 14, 1992** – The Law on Defense was adopted. According to this law, the Armed Forces – Army of the Republic of Macedonia – have the responsibility to defend the country.

**April 26, 1992** – The Assembly adopted the Law on Monetary Unit of the Republic of Macedonia, whereby the monetary independence was declared and the national currency, the Macedonian denar, was introduced.

**July 29, 1992** – The Decision for membership of the Republic of Macedonia in the United Nations Organization was adopted.

**August 11, 1992** – The Assembly adopted the flag and the anthem of the Republic of Macedonia.

**October 16 and 30, 1994** - The first parliamentary elections, after the Republic of Macedonia gained independence, were held. The first direct presidential elections were held at the same time. The parliamentary elections were held according to the same election model applied in 1990 (parliamentary elections in 1998 were held according to the combined election model, while the proportional model is applied since 2002).

**November 16, 2001.** - As a result of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, signed on August 13, 2001, the Assembly adopted significant changes and amendments to the Constitution, both in its Preamble and in a number of provisions in its normative part. These amendments introduced essential changes in the constitutional-legal system of the Republic of Macedonia with the purpose to enhance processes of internal integration of all ethnic communities without assimilation and creation of base for long-term interethnic stability.



*Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia*



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