

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR FREE AND FAIR PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS MACEDONIA 2011

PREAMBLE

Free and fair elections are the cornerstone of democracy. An essential element of such elections is the freedom to campaign. Each person has the right to put forward his or her opinions without fear. Freedom to campaign, however, also means allowing every other person the same freedom.

We, the political parties of Macedonia, have agreed on this Code of Conduct for the forthcoming elections. The Code does not replace any existing rules. It helps to focus on problems that have occurred in the past. We believe it can help to bring about free and fair elections.

We solemnly undertake and promise to one another, and to the people of our country, that we shall observe, and actively promote, this Code of Conduct.

Our parties accept primary responsibility for seeing that the Code is fully applied.

RULE OF LAW

1. The parties, candidates and members will obey all laws, rules, and regulations of the Republic of Macedonia relevant to elections and will support the Rule of Law. The Rule of Law is largely based upon the independence and professionalism of the judiciary and of the court system. These, too, will have our full support.
2. All parties, candidates and members are equally subject to the law.
 - Parties, candidates and members may not use public funds or resources (e.g. offices, vehicles, etc.) for partisan election purposes nor may any candidate for election initiate any specific development project during the election campaign.
 - It is expected that publicly funded broadcasting stations will ensure fair and equitable access for the political parties, and will ensure accuracy and impartiality in reporting, as well as political neutrality in editorial commentary. The parties likewise agree to take all steps available to them to ensure accuracy, impartiality, and balance on the part of privately owned media.
 - Parties, candidates and members will fully co-operate with, and provide all support to the State Election Commission, and its subordinate bodies. It is expected that the Commission, and those bodies, will function on a basis of complete impartiality and transparency.
 - It is expected that the police and prosecuting agencies will be especially careful to ensure that their members behave in a professional manner, and in strict compliance with the law.

ELECTORAL CONDUCT

3. The parties, candidates and members promise to promote free and fair elections and a climate of democratic tolerance. They commit to:
 - give the widest publicity to this Code
 - promote voter education campaigns
 - publicly condemn violence and intimidation
 - emphasize that voting is secret
 - instruct their candidates and members about the Code and their responsibilities under it and with relevant legal provisions
4. The parties, candidates and members will condemn, publicly and repeatedly, any resort to violence or intimidation, from whatever quarter; they will also condemn any use of language, or any kind of action, which might incite violence or intimidation. In accordance with universal electoral practice, no weapon of any kind may be carried or displayed at public meetings, rallies or other campaign activities.
5. The parties, candidates and members will take every available step to eradicate all forms of electoral fraud before, during, and after Election Day.
6. No party, candidate or member may offer any reward or inducement in exchange for any electoral favor.
7. The parties, candidates and members will not publish or make defamatory or inflammatory allegations concerning any other party, candidate or person.
8. The parties, candidates and members will not remove, deface or over-poster the posters or other campaign materials of other parties or candidates. Nor will they plagiarize their symbols, colors or acronyms, or use graffiti.
9. The parties, candidates and members will do nothing to impede the democratic right of any party, through its candidates and members, to have access to all voters, to conduct voter education, raise funds, canvass membership, and otherwise clarify issues and seek support.
10. Parties are obliged to:
 - facilitate the full participation of citizens including women and minority groups during elections
 - ensure free access of citizens including women and minority groups to all campaign events
 - generally, refrain from forcing citizens to support a particular political party or candidate or to engage in, or refrain from engaging in, any political activity otherwise than in accordance with their free choice
 - support the universal concept of one-person-one-vote and discourage proxy voting.
11. The parties may decide to hold meetings to discuss implementation of the Code of Conduct at any time at the national or municipal level. Any issue relating to the campaign may be discussed. Civic organizations concerned with electoral integrity, such as the Citizens Association MOST, may attend and monitor these meetings.
12. The parties' will fully respect legal provisions on campaign expenditure and publish their accounts in accordance with these provisions.
13. The parties, candidates and members will accept the final outcome of the elections lawfully declared and certified by the State Election Commission and endorsed by the international community.