

After leaving government in 1992, VMRO-DPMNE is only now emerging from the political wilderness. Due to its good showing in the 1996 local elections, the party can count on a number of mayors and city councillors and use their political infrastructures to its advantage. VMRO-DPMNE has also had some success in expanding its electoral base beyond the working class and unemployed. Students and under-35s in general have become increasingly active in the party. VMRO-DPMNE has long supported closer links with the Macedonian Diaspora, particularly in Bulgaria. The party claims to have moved away from its pro-Bulgarian tilt, but this has not been reflected in continued presence of "Bulgarian supporters" in its top ranks. That said, the party's nationalist slogans have been muted in recent months. Nevertheless, the party platform includes references to stopping the demographic explosion in the country and to having all children learn together. Ethnic Albanians see these references as thinly-veiled promises to halt ethnic Albanian immigration, introduce forced family planning, and insist that all children learn in Macedonian.

DA is promoting a Plan for Renewal and Development (POR), which is based on foreign financial participation. Tupurkovski has promised to bring \$1 billion of foreign investment into the country in two years. The DA economic programme includes employment of 121,000 people, renewal of existing plants and building new ones, and privatising the agricultural sector.¹² The campaign's focus has shifted from an early emphasis on building civil society, improving education and social services, and reinstating respect for laws, to the economy.

Tupurkovski has vowed to create a multi-ethnic party and formally it appears as if has succeeded. However, ethnic Albanians remain distrustful of DA's motives. They blame two senior DA advisors Savo Klimovski and Radmila Kiprijanova-Radovanovic for encouraging last year's student protests against the teaching of the Albanian language in the university's pedagogical institute. Tupurkovski, himself, has deplored the poor quality of education for ethnic Albanians, but stated that Tetovo University cannot be recognised.¹³

The coalition between VMRO-DPMNE and DA followed failed negotiations between VMRO-DPMNE and LDP. Those negotiations reportedly broke down because LDP leaders Petar Goshev and Stojan Andov were not willing to concede the prime minister slot to VMRO leader Ljupco Georgievski. According to party sources, the potential government composition places Georgievski as prime minister and Tupurkovski as speaker of the parliament. DA is presumed to be interested in the ministries of economy, justice and education. Should

¹² *Nova Makedonija*, 21 September 1998.

¹³ *Dnevnik*, interview with Tupurkovski, 4-5 July 1998.