

Moreover, two political deals appear likely to ensure the party's survival. SPM has persuaded SDSM to co-operate in 14 constituencies and the two parties have agreed to support each other's candidates in the second round of voting.

In an unlikely combination, SPM has joined forces with several small ethnically-based parties. The Democratic Party of Turks (DPT), the Party for Full Emancipation of Roma (PCER), the Democratic Progressive Party of the Romas, the Unions of Serbs (DPS), and the Bosniac Party of Democratic Action (SDA) have allied together under the leadership of Ferid Muhic. The movement stresses that the parties have "clean hands" and that members have not been involved in criminal acts. The platform promises to encourage democracy, safe investments and domestic production.

The rationale for the electoral alliance is the five percent threshold necessary to receive a single proportional seat. SPM is unlikely to receive five percent of the electorate without this coalition. Although, SPM would probably win a couple of majoritarian seats on its own, the party needs at least five to be considered a player in the new government.

VI. LIKELY RESULTS

Many opinion polls have been taken in the run-up to the elections, though most Macedonians view the results with scepticism. It appears that at this stage of Macedonia's democratic development, opinion polling, and especially surveys conducted by telephone, tends to under-represent the strength of opposition parties. VMRO-DPMNE supporters, for example, generally refuse to answer pollsters' questions. Based on its own polling and field observations, ICG foresees the future distribution of seats in parliament as the following:

VMRO-DPMNE	34-37
SDS	27-31
PDP/PDP-A/NDP	22-25
LDP	8-10
DA	5-7
SPM	5
DPM	1
Others	3