

NATIONAL DEBATE FOR DEMOCRACY

DELIBERATIVE POLLING ON PROMOTING SUCCESSFUL
DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION IN MACEDONIA

22 – 23 JUNE 2019

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Questions and answers

Why is there a need for an open, broad dialogue with citizens regarding successful democratic transition in the Republic of North Macedonia?

In the past period, prior to 2016 in particular, North Macedonia experienced a dramatic worsening of the democratic rule. Authoritarian tendencies captured the state and privatized political institutions. Party clientelism, rampant corruption and illiberalism became issues of the day. The election of the new government on June 1, 2017 promised democratic changes. In the post-authoritarian period that followed three issues have been of essential importance: 1) Re-establishment and strengthening of country's basic democratic institutions, 2) Dealing with the country structural democratic deficiencies, both formal and substantial, which dragged on ever since the 1991 independence and 3) Strengthening citizens' equality and increasing social cohesion in the country.

Despite the formal democratic change, substantial democratization is a process that will take a long time. Elite decision making still dominates and there is nascent all-inclusive political deliberation crossing party and ethnic lines. What is more, citizens' perceptions and participation in the process are mostly missing. Their views on the core values of democracy and their practical translation in everyday political life are hardly heard in the public discourse

The National Democratic Debate bridges the gap of fragmented and non-inclusive democratic dialogue, strengthening the culture of informed public debate in the country. It aims at increasing the involvement of the general public with national stakeholders in a national democratic debate that will open pan-national dialogue on the needed mechanisms for an effective democratic transition in North Macedonia.

What is the purpose of this document?

This document is a summary of the two discussion topics of the deliberative polling event. It provides:

1. Information about democracy and the state of democratic development in the country;
2. Background info about two topics: democratic institutions and equality for all;
3. Several possible policy approaches regarding the two topics and presents the arguments for and against regarding the successful democratic transition in the N. Macedonia

There are a number of topics that could be discussed in this regard, but due to time constraints the focus of the debate, and thus this document, is on democratic institutions and equality as two major topics related to the processes of successful democratic transition. While the document does not present all possible policy approaches and arguments for and against the policies, it serves as a basis for stimulating these discussions. You are welcome to discuss the arguments for and against that are present in this document, and also bring in your own arguments to further the deliberations. Arguments regarding alternative paths are more than welcome.

Is the information provided in this document balanced and unbiased?

In preparing this document, it was very important that the provided information was objective, balanced and unbiased. We consulted with leading experts with differing perspectives on the topics addressed

and drafted the document with the help of our partners. The people who reviewed the document for balance and accuracy are:

- Malinka Ristevska Jordanova
- Marija Risteska
- Jovan Bliznakovski
- Dzemaili Saiti

DEMOCRACY

Democracy, both as an idea and political practice came to the fore in ancient Greece. The word democracy comes from the Greek words "demos", meaning people, and "kratos" meaning power or government; so democracy can be thought of as "power of the people": a way of governing which depends on the will of the people.¹

What is democracy?

Summed up in the famous words of Abraham Lincoln, democracy is a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people." In other words, democracy is the formal set of rules, procedures and institutions but also a way of life. It is a condition of society characterized by tendency towards equality.²

There are so many different models of democratic government around the world that it is sometimes easier to understand the idea of democracy in terms of what it definitely is not. Democracy, then, is not autocracy or dictatorship, where one person rules; and it is not oligarchy, where a small segment of society rules. Properly understood, democracy should not even be "rule of the majority", if that means that minorities' interests are ignored completely. A democracy, at least in theory, is government on behalf of all the people, according to their "will".³

¹ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/democracy>

² Kaldor&Vejvoda. 2002. Democratisation in Central and Eastern Europe. Continuum, London.

³ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/democracy>



Why democracy?

The idea of democracy derives its moral strength – and popular appeal – from two key principles:

1. **Individual autonomy:** The idea that no-one should be subject to rules which have been imposed by others. People should be able to control their own lives (within reason).
2. **Equality:** The idea that everyone should have the same opportunity to influence the decisions that affect people in society.

These principles are intuitively appealing, and they help to explain why democracy is so popular. Of course we feel it is fair that we should have as much chance as anyone else to decide on common rules!

The problems arise when we consider how the principles can be put into practice, because we need a mechanism for deciding how to address conflicting views. Because it offers a simple mechanism, democracy tends to be "rule of the majority"; but rule of the majority can mean that some people's interests are never represented. A more genuine way of representing everyone's interests is to use decision making by consensus, where the aim is to find common points of interest.⁴

Formal vs substantive democracy?

As Kaldor's and Vejvoda's influential study on the condition of East-European democracies pointed out, there is a distinction between formal and substantive democracy.

⁴ Ibid.

1. Formal democracy is the formal set of rules, procedures and institutions that provide the legal and political setting for normal functioning of democracy. Here we have the issues such as rule of law, separation of powers, free and fair elections, freedom of expression etc.⁵
2. Substantive democracy is a condition of society characterized by its tendency towards equality. Essential here, among the other, is the character of constitutions and the perception of human rights, the role of political parties as vehicles for democratic, political participation, the role of media, administration, civil society etc. That is, the opportunities for individuals to participate and influence the conditions in which they live.⁶

In sum, the former is the formal-institutional framework of democracy, the latter its translation into the everyday life of the citizens in a given society. Notably, both formal and substantive democracy are taken as ideal-typical categories, while in practice though, they are intermingled.

North Macedonia and democracy

Milestones

The Republic of Macedonia gained its independence in 1991. Its first constitution proclaimed a liberal – democratic state based on the principles of democracy and rule of law. In 2001, following the brief armed ethnic conflict the Constitution was amended. Equal collective rights between the different ethnic communities were underlined as one of country's major political principles. In 2019, following the consultative referendum on the name agreement with Greece,⁷ constitutional amendments changed the name of the country to **North Macedonia**.

Key democracy points; achievements vs. challenges

Since independence in 1991, a number of achievements have been made:

- The country transitioned from a former one-party, socialist democracy with a planned economy to a liberal, pluralist democracy based on rule of law and free-market principles.
- Freedom of speech, expression and the press has been institutionalized and the Macedonian citizens are free to choose among the variety of political opinions.
- Organized political parties became major political actors while elections represent tests for their competing ideas. Political stability (with some major exceptions, such as the brief 2001 armed conflict) has been also maintained. Despite the setbacks, the Macedonian and the ethnic Albanian parties have cooperated within the institutions throughout the years.

Equally, there have been challenges, such as:

⁵ Mary Kaldor and Ivan Vejvoda, *Democratisation in Central and Eastern Europe* (Continuum, London) 4,

⁶ Kaldor and Vejvoda, *Democratisation in Central and Eastern Europe*, 3.

⁷ Notably, the legal threshold of 50% (about 900 000 citizens) voters was not reached, also due to the organized boycott of the referendum by the right-wing political groups. But of those voting, more than 600 000, the overall majority (more than 90 %) has been in favor of the name change. See: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-45699749>

- The division of power has never been fully implemented so as to secure the independence of, and 'checks and balances' between, the legislative, executive and judicial branches of the government.
- Political elites have controlled the democratization process, and corruption and party clientelism have characterized the process of transition.
- Interethnic relations have remained fragile throughout the years and, in general, citizens have been excluded from decision-making procedures.
- The sovereignty of the people, despite being constitutionally guaranteed, has remained formal rather than substantive.

In sum, imbalanced struggle for democracy has characterized the transition years. That is to say that formal, procedural democracy has preceded substantive i.e. egalitarian democracy.

The country's rankings on democracy

Based on this, the reputable external analysis – the Freedom House annual report for 2016 first classified Macedonia's political system as a "Transitional Government or Hybrid Regime." It maintains this classification still. In simple terms, it is a governing system in which, although elections take place, citizens are cut off from knowledge about the activities of those who exercise real power because of a lack of civil liberties. This is illustrated by the country's Freedom House democracy score, which kept falling from 2011, reaching an all-time low in 2017. In 2018, the score slightly improved.⁸ Please see the table below.

Nations in Transit Category and Democracy Scores: North Macedonia⁹

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
National Democratic Governance	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.75	5.00	4.75
Electoral Process	3.50	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.50	3.75	4.00	4.00
Civil Society	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.50	3.25	3.25	3.25
Independent Media	4.25	4.25	4.50	4.75	4.75	5.00	5.00	5.25	5.25	5.00
Local Democratic Governance	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	4.00	4.00	4.00
Judicial Framework and Independence	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.50	4.75	4.75
Corruption	4.25	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.25	4.25	4.50	4.75	4.75
Democracy Score	3.86	3.79	3.82	3.89	3.93	4.00	4.07	4.29	4.43	4.36

⁸ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/macedonia>

⁹ Ibid.

Macedonia – a captured state?

Prior to 2018, notably, democratic standards in the country, which also make the basis for EU membership, have degraded. Many relevant factors, including the EC reports on the country's progress toward the EU underlined illiberal tendencies and "state capture". That is, private, mostly party-related, interests significantly influenced (i.e. privatized) the work of the state institutions such as the government, public administration, judicial bodies, regulatory agencies and media outlets.¹⁰ As a result, political polarization in the country increased. Civil unrest and continual protests have filled the democratic void. Inter-ethnic relations have also been tense and deep intra-ethnic political cleavages have increased. Party antagonism reached unprecedented levels and contributed to the momentum that led to the events of 27 April 2017, when protesters stormed the parliament, injuring a number of MPs from the opposition.

Post-authoritarian democratic transition?

The election of the new government on 1 June 2017 has provided a new window of opportunity. The government clearly announced a return to the EU accession path. Now, whilst it was clear that democratic reforms were needed, the challenge was to define and implement the most suitable approach. Obviously, the choice and pace of reforms will reflect the kind of state and society we would like to live in. It will also largely affect our future EU prospects. Notably, the change in the political context was also noted in the EC reports. They saw a greater commitment this time, among some stakeholders, to address political challenges and proactively assume responsibility. In their view, in many areas the appropriate democratic, formal/regulatory framework is in place. However, the considerable gap between legislation and practice, which has different causes, still needs to be bridged. Important areas, such as the judiciary, security or media, require systemic reforms based on an inclusive, transparent and cross-party process. Both government and the entire society should engage in the reform process.¹¹

ISSUE NO.1: FORMAL DEMOCRACY /DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Background and current state of affairs

Democracy, as we pointed above, is the formal set of democratic rules, procedures and institutions but also a condition of society characterized by tendency towards equality.¹² In the past 30 years, the citizens of (North) Macedonia have learnt that formal rules do not necessarily translate into a functional, participative and egalitarian democracy. As well known, partisanship, corruption and inefficiency continually undermined the institutional democracy in the country. In the tripartite system, both legislature and judiciary have been a constant prey to the executive from which the apex of political power emanated. The legislature, most often, served to blindly follow the directives of the government rather than providing independent initiatives of its own. The judiciary was no less problematic. A

¹⁰https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhoodenlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2016/20161109_report_the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia.pdf

¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/news_corner/news-news-files/20150619_recommendations_of_the_senior_experts_group.pdf

¹² Kaldor&Vejvoda. 2002. Democratisation in Central and Eastern Europe. Continuum, London.

constant prey of political games as well as of internal clientelistic networks it never rose to the role of independent and impartial provider of justice for all. As result, the political system has been flawed; the principle of checks and balances has never been fully implemented to secure equal divisions of power. If one adds the inefficient, partisan and unprofessional public service to this then the grim picture of the processes of democratic governance in the country is complete.

In 2017, following the election of the new government, urgent reform priorities plans, the so-called “3-6-9” plan, followed by the “18” plan, have been introduced.¹³ The intended reforms, as outlined in the plans, arose from the Government Work Program 2017-2020, taking into account the Political Agreement of Przino and in line with the recommendations of the EU representatives. Answering the critiques on the weak formal and institutional setup in the country, both plans addressed structural democratic deficiencies. Specifically, their objectives targeted the weakest elements in the tripartite division of powers in the country. Firstly, building an independent, unbiased, professional and efficient judicial system; secondly, renewal and development of the democratic environment by strengthening the independence and oversight function of the Assembly over the work of the Government and, thirdly, departisation and professionalization of the administration. Within this context, a number of systemic laws have been proposed and indeed, some progress has been made.

In line with the above, the key areas of intervention identified are:

1. Rule of law – judicial reform and fight against organized crime and corruption; and
2. Political participation – strengthening the independence, effectiveness and oversight function of the Assembly;

All of these areas touch upon reforms specifically aimed at strengthening the formal institutional framework of democracy in the country.

Judicial reform and fight against organized crime and corruption

Judicial reform is the complete or partial transformation of a country’s court and/or prosecutorial system and procedures. Among other, it includes strengthening judicial independence with judicial councils or changes to appointment procedures, determining retirement age for judges or enhancing independence of prosecution etc. Judicial independence, in short, is about courts not to be subject to improper influence from the other branches of government or from private or partisan interests.¹⁴

In the case of North Macedonia, the judicial system has been assessed on the one hand as efficient in dealing with the number of cases received, but on the other as politicized. The political pressures over the judiciary were confirmed in the wiretapping scandal of 2015 which revealed large-scale, high-level corruption, massive infringements on the right to private communications, and a lack of control over the

¹³ <https://vlada.mk/sites/default/files/dokumenti/Narrative%20Plan%206-9%20EN.pdf> and <http://www.sep.gov.mk/data/file/Dokumenti/Plan.18.ENG.pdf>

¹⁴ Francis Neate and Holly Nielsen. 2007. The World Rule of Law Movement and Russian Legal Reform (Justitsinform, Moscow), 5.

state intelligence and security agencies.¹⁵ After a lengthy political mediation supported by the EU and NATO, a Special Prosecutor's Office (SPO) was set up in September 2015 with the task to investigate and prosecute individuals implicated by the wiretapping revelations, instead of the regular Public Prosecutor's Office, which was considered partisan. The 2017 report of the Senior Experts' Group on systemic Rule of Law issues still notes the control and misuse of the judicial system by a small number of judges in powerful positions to serve and promote political interests.¹⁶ According to the report, these judges have continued to bring pressure on their more junior colleagues through their control over the systems of appointment, evaluation, promotion, discipline, and dismissal characterising this situation as capture of the judiciary and prosecution by the executive power.¹⁷ On a more positive note, despite the misbehaviour of a minority, the report notes that many of the judges do their best to administer justice honestly and fairly. Overall, despite the need to reform certain procedural issues, there is broadly consensus that the judiciary in the country is not plagued by the legal foundations, but rather practices and behaviour.

The 2017 Draft Strategy for Reforming the Judicial Sector (SRJS) addressed these issues by proposing main reform objectives. Essentially, it gave directions for improving the system of judiciary by overcoming the existing deficiencies of **normative** and **institutional** character, tackling the basic problem of the interference of the executive power and the partisanship of the justice sector.¹⁸ Remedies proposed were: 1) establishing objective and non-political criteria for selection and advancement of judges and observers from the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors, 2) establishing objective and meritorious criteria for adjudicating judges and public prosecutors and 3) strengthening the Special Prosecutor's and Public Prosecutor's Offices and the Council of Public Prosecutors.

As to 1 and 2, following the adoption of the SRJS, the Law Amending the Law on Courts and the Law on the Judicial Council of the Republic of Macedonia, with the aim of improving the evaluation process of judges and the requirements for appointment of judges, have been adopted. As to 3, they were followed by the enactment of the amendments to the Law on the Public Prosecutor's Council (PPC). In order to strengthen the fight against the high-profile political corruption and also to accommodate and integrate the work of the Special Prosecutor's Office (SPO) new Law on the Public Prosecutor's Office (PPO) has been proposed. To secure anonymous corruption reports and more effective criminal prosecution in cases of organized crime and corruption, new laws on witness and whistle-blowers protection as well as amendments to the Criminal code have been adopted thus rounding up the proposed legal framework of the SRJS. Related to this is also the adoption of the new Law on the prevention of corruption and the election of the new State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC).

What follows are the key proposals and arguments for and against in relation to the adoption of the proposed framework.

Rule of law and judicial reform	Arguments for	Arguments against
Secure objective and non-	1. Strengthens	1. Redefining the criteria

¹⁵ SEE Senior Expert Group's report of 2015 (the Priebe report) commissioned by the European Commission https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/news_corner/news/news-files/20150619_recommendations_of_the_senior_experts_group.pdf

¹⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/2017.09.14_seg_report_on_systemic_rol_issues_for_publication.pdf

¹⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/2017.09.14_seg_report_on_systemic_rol_issues_for_publication.pdf

¹⁸ <https://www.akademik.mk/nacrt-strategijata-za-reforma-na-pravosudniot-sektor/>

political criteria for selection and advancement of judges:	<p>the independence of the judiciary because its current role has been highly politicized</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduces improved criteria for appointment and election of judges in basic and higher courts (compulsory training at the academy of judges, continuous judicial service, positive ranking etc.) and Introduces precise disciplinary measures and procedures for dismissal of judges from judicial function Improves the objectivity and public standing of the judiciary in the country. 	<p>for election, advancement and dismissal will certainly have an impact. Yet, without cleansing of the system of corrupt judges, the new Law will legitimize the composition of judges which has been an object of strong political influence throughout the years.</p>
Secure objective and meritorious criteria for evaluating the work of the judges and public prosecutors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthens the competence of the judiciary which was highly compromised in the past years Would introduce measurable quantitative criteria such as the number, type of decisions and resolved cases in relation to the number of monthly resolved cases to track the record of individual judges Would introduce measurable qualitative criteria for the performance of judges, such as the respect of the legal deadlines for undertaking procedural actions, adopting and publishing court decisions through the 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Judicial Council and the Public Prosecutors Council are the main bodies in charge for evaluation. In the past years they've been continually misused by a small number of powerful and politically corrupted judges and prosecutors. Hence, despite the stricter criteria for evaluation, without a full restoration of the composition of these two bodies, the respective laws can partly stop but not fully abolish their disruptive practices.

	<p>number of confirmed, altered and abolished judgments in relation to the total number of resolved cases</p> <p>4. Improves the efficiency of the judiciary and, essentially, restores the oversight role of the Judicial Council</p>	
Secure the independence of the PPO, integrating the SPPO in the normative and institutional framework	<p>1. Secures objective procedures for naming and dismissal of the public prosecutor of the country without undue political influence</p> <p>2. Restores the integrity of the PPO expanding the competences, establishment, abolition, organization and the functioning of the Public Prosecutor's office</p> <p>3. Would define the relations of the PPO with the Special Prosecutor's Office (SPO), securing the institutional framework for fighting organized crime and expanding the scope for investigations of both offices</p> <p>4. Preserves the autonomy of the SPO essential for clearing up the illegal interceptions scandal</p>	<p>1. The adoption of the new Law on the Public Prosecutor's Office lacks a clear framework for the financial and structural independence of the SPO and can certainly impair its effectiveness in the proposed framework.</p> <p>2. In addition, some argue the law will legitimize the biased procedures of the SPO against the opposition providing ground for further political persecution.</p>
Secure protection and testimonies for the sources of information in very sensitive and high-profile corruption procedures	<p>1. Improves efficiency of the investigative procedures and related trials</p> <p>2. Would open space for witness and whistleblowers</p>	<p>1. Legal and institutional weakness to execute such programs in the past, such as public leaking of information on protected witnesses, cast doubts</p>

	protection,essentialfor proceeding in highly complex and high-level organized crime and corruption cases	on the capacity to deal with the issues; 2. In this line, notably, since the enactment of the law on whistleblowers in 2016 no single application has been submitted by whistleblowers. It speaks of low levels of public awareness of the role of the whistleblowers, public distrust and lack of political will for the implementation of the law.
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	Arguments for	Arguments against
Create a reformed national anti-corruption system	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthens the efficiency and independence of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption and the legal and institutional anti-corruption framework because the current role of the Commission is only partial. 2. Would expand the competences of the SCPC in many critical areas prone to systemic corruption, including financing of the political parties. 3. Restores public faith in its work; improved procedures for the election and dismissal are also in favor of that. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Possible cases of nepotism and political interference in the election of the members of the SCPC cast doubts on the reform of the anti-corruption system. 2. The new Law on Prevention of Corruption causes fiscal implications on the state budget for the application of anti-corruption legislation. Still, there is a lack of clear financial independence of the SCPC. Notably, its budget is to be annually endorsed by the Assembly, upon prior request by the commission. Hence, there is room for political interference which may question the independence and

		<p>effectiveness of the SCPC in the years to come.</p> <p>3. The anti-corruption system depends on the functioning of numerous institutions, including the Public Prosecutor and their coordination, which means that one institution is not a guarantee of success.</p>
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Strengthening the independence, effectiveness and oversight function of the Assembly

In liberal, parliamentary democracies, the Assembly is the central democratic institution. Generally, a modern assembly has three functions: representing the electorate, making laws, and overseeing the government via hearings and inquiries. In North Macedonia, weak legislative and oversight functions of the Assembly have been a continuous case in point. As the 2016 EC report noted, the Assembly needs “to substantially improve its performance as a forum for constructive political dialogue and representation. The focus needs to be on active participation of all parliamentary parties, proper consultation and impact assessment prior to the enactment of legislation, credible functional oversight of the work of government and the intelligence services, establishing political accountability for the illegal wiretaps, and the capacity to monitor the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the country.”¹⁹ Following the storming of the Assembly in 2017, when angry mob attacked and beaten up parliamentarians from the opposition, the reform of the Assembly was/is needed more than ever. Not only it needs to strengthen its independence vis-à-vis the Government, the law enforcement agencies and in particular the security and intelligence services, improve its effectiveness in everyday democratic, representative duties, it should also reinvent the Assembly as a credible democratic forum of the citizens upholding their sovereignty uncompromisingly. In the past 25 years, unfortunately, it has rarely been a case.

Hence, both, 3-6-9 and 18 plans addressed the issue of the Assembly and promulgated a number of related measures. Essentially, strengthening the effectiveness, accountability and independence, and enabling oversight function of the Assembly and the parliamentary bodies over the work of the Government and its security and intelligence services has been of primary importance. For the strengthening of the effectiveness of the Assembly a new Code of Conduct for the parliamentary members was adopted followed by the search (still ongoing) for acceptable political agreement for amendments to the Rules and Procedures of the Assembly, essential for strengthening the effectiveness and independent capacities of the Assembly. Notably, both documents are designed to influence and provide rules to determine all major decisions and actions in the Assembly, and all activities take place

¹⁹https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2016/20161109_report_the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia.pdf

within the boundaries set by them. Procedures, on the other hand, are the specific methods employed to express policies in action in day-to-day operations of the institution. In order to strengthen the accountability of the Government vis-à-vis the Assembly, thematic parliamentary questions have been introduced, beside the regular ones, once a week for an hour. In the direction of democratic accountability of the Assembly vis-à-vis the civil sector, a new tool, called "e-Window", has been activated and functional, enabling citizens to apply for attendance at plenary sessions. For increasing the voice and participation of the marginalized communities in the work of the Assembly, on February 23, 2018, inter-party parliamentary group for the rights of LGBT persons was constituted in the Parliament for the first time.

What follows are the key proposals and arguments for and against in relation to the adoption of the proposed framework.

Assembly	Arguments for	Arguments against
Secure the supervisory role of the parliamentary committees over the work of the government	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthens the authority of the committees – clearly missing in the past years 2. Strengthen professional criteria and expertise of the committees to review the work of the government 3. Would increase the competence and capacity of the committees to control the work of the government 4. Strengthens the overall efficiency of the Assembly which was not the case in the past years 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unless integrated in a stronger legal framework, accompanied by a resolute political initiative for genuine democratization of the Assembly, mechanisms for overview and capacity building are only a partial solution to the problem.
Secure efficient institutional mechanisms of the "parliamentary questions" - a major form of legislative oversight and constituency service,	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It should increase subjects and frequency of the hearings at "parliamentary questions" 2. Would improve the ability of the Assembly to question the work of the Government 3. Straightens the institutional autonomy of the Assembly vis-à- 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Only a partial solution to the problem. Dependent also on political support and cooperativeness and responsiveness of the various ministries in providing relevant answers (formerly not a case). Also dependent on appropriate media coverage.

	vis the Government	
Enable the opposition to preside over the work of significant number of committees	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthens the overseeing role of the opposition vis-à-vis the ruling majority 2. Would induce intra-parliamentary initiatives for improving and promoting the dialogue between the majority and the opposition 3. Increases inter-parliamentary confidence and cohesion vis-à-vis the Government 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stronger control of the opposition can lead to parliamentary blockade which was often the case in the previous years 2. Clear institutional framework for intra-parliamentary cooperation is still lacking. Stronger measures and policies are needed to bridge the enormous gap of distrust between the members of the position and opposition.
Allow for greater and decisive oversight of the Assembly for work of security services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Would prevent political misuse of the security services which accounted grave human rights violations in the past years 2. Would give legitimacy to the initiatives for adequate capacity building of the parliamentary commissions (such as workshops and trainings and adequate professional background in the field for the MPs overseeing the work of the security services) which was not the case in the preceding years 3. Would also increase the inclusiveness and transparency of the process of supervision; provides room for the NGO sector in the process 4. Provides better 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stronger normative and procedural checks over the work of the security service may hamper their efficiency 2. Broad initiatives for one or two occasional workshops of the members of the Committees not enough. Clear framework for continuous capacity (professional and expert) building needed for effective supervision. 3. Partially effective unless stronger participation of independent NGO/expert sector secured. 4. Insisting on strict protection of human rights and liberal freedoms can jeopardize national security in sensitive

	mechanisms for the protection of human rights and constitutional order of the country.	issues such as preventing and fighting foreign terrorist activities
Increase the initiatives for civic participation in the work of the Assembly	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increases the transparency of the Assembly 2. Strengthens existing initiatives for civic participation in the work of the Assembly such as the "e-Window" 3. Would strengthen the debate for the inclusion of marginalized communities in the work of the Assembly (disabled persons, LGBT community etc.) 4. Increases modalities for political participation and strengthens the democratic accountability of the Assembly towards the citizens. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hampers the representative character of the Assembly by including direct-democratic participation in its work of the citizens and the CSO 2. Dilutes the effectiveness of the Assembly by providing space for numerous citizens' initiatives, provides space for populist rather than rational-functional politics 3. Provides room for uncontrollable expansion of the liberal human rights discourse (such as the one on the LGBT rights) which is against the traditional values of the society 4. Increases practices of egalitarianism against liberal individualism

