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An early parliamentary election has been declared in Macedonia

On 15 April the Macedonian parliament decided to dissolve itself with votes from the ruling right-wing party VMRO-DPMNE and the Albanian parties. An early parliamentary election will be organised on 5 June. The ruling coalition hopes that very likely victory in the election will affirm social support for the government's policies which have been heavily criticised by the opposition parties who are now boycotting the workings of parliament.

The main reason for deciding on an early election is the boycott of parliament by the largest opposition party – the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia that has been underway since January this year. The party is accusing the government of limiting civil liberties and blames it for the deteriorating economic situation. The target for criticism is the intransigent policy towards Greece and the lack of a solution to the dispute between the two countries, which results in blocking Macedonia's membership in the NATO and the launch of accession negotiations between Skopje and the EU.

The negotiations undertaken by the government aimed at persuading the opposition to return to parliament have not brought any results and the protracted boycott has been negatively assessed by EU institutions and EU member states. This would affect the assessment of Macedonia's preparedness for EU membership and consequently thwart any progress in EU integration. Currently, referring to the advanced stage of preparations for EU accession, Macedonia is demanding that EU member states and institutions put pressure on Greece and withdraw the blockage in launching negotiations. For this reason declaring an early election and making an appeal to the society was the only chance of ending the political crisis.

Opinion polls point to victory in the election for the ruling VMRO-DPMNE but the party's position in the future parliament will be decidedly weaker than now. Despite this the government is most likely to continue its present policy. <MarSz>