



PRESS RELEASE

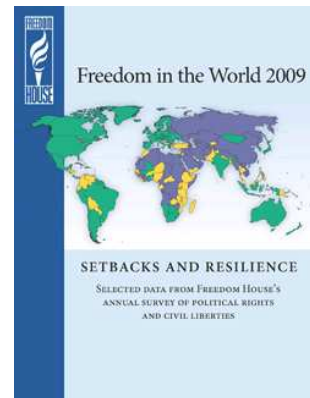
The place of Macedonia in the report of Freedom House

13th of January, 2008

Republic of Macedonia: partly free country

Freedom House, an independent nongovernmental organization that supports the expansion of freedom in the world, has been monitoring political rights and civil liberties worldwide since 1972.

Examines the state of freedom in all 193 countries and 16 strategic territories. The survey analyzes developments that occurred in 2008 and assigns each country a freedom status — either Free, Partly Free or Not Free based on a scoring of performance in key freedoms.



Free: The number of countries judged by Freedom in the World as Free in 2008 stands at 89, representing 46 percent of the world's countries and 46 percent of the global population.

Partly Free: The number of Partly Free countries is 62, or 32 percent of all countries assessed by the survey and 20 percent of the world's total population.

Not Free: The report designates 42 countries as Not Free, representing 22 percent of the total number of countries and 34 percent of the world population. Nearly 60 percent of this number lives in China. The annual Freedom House survey ranked Macedonia as partly free country, noting a setback for democracy.

On the scale from 1 to 7 (1 is the highest grade), Macedonia received 3 for political and human rights. Compared to countries in eastern and central Europe, the survey notes setback for democracy in Macedonia and Bulgaria. From the countries of the region in the group “partly-free” are also ranked Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, whereas Croatia is ranked as “free” country. Serbia from “partly-free”, in 2008 went to the group “free” while Kosovo is in the group of “not-free” countries due to the disrespect of the human rights of the minorities, and the bad security situation and corruption. From 193 countries, Finland is ranked first, and on the last place is North Korea. Countries which are in the worst situation are Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan;

The countries from Western Europe and Northern America have the highest ranks.



Freedom House notes that third year in a row there is a setback in terms of the political rights and citizen's freedom especially in the Sub-Saharan Africa and the countries from the former Soviet Union. According to the report Macedonia received a downward trend arrow due to increased harassment of and violence against political party members during the country's June parliamentary elections, which domestic and international observers deemed the worst since independence.