

Montenegrin Elections (MNEE) Database

Party Splits and Party Mergers

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Description

This document is part of the *Montenegrin Elections (MNEE) Database*, a non-profit research project aimed at providing researchers, policy makers and other interested individuals comprehensive electoral data on Montenegro.

The purpose of this short document is to provide essential information on party splits and mergers in Montenegro that can support further research on party and party system dynamics in Montenegro from 1990 up to date. This is especially relevant if we take into account that large number of parties and coalitions that existed and still exist could make the analysis (especially of electoral volatility and party fragmentation indices) difficult. One of the biggest challenges is access to historical data which would allow us to gain a better insight into party splits and mergers. This is where MNEE Database aims to provide another important contribution to the literature.

The data is collected from the relevant academic literature and was supplemented with official reports and relevant online sources. It is important to note that there were probably more party splits and mergers (especially in the universe of micro parties) that occurred in the Montenegrin party system compared to those reported here. These, however, can hardly be captured given very little (if any at all) data available for these micro parties. Therefore, MNEE Database offers probably the most comprehensive overview of party splits and mergers from 1990 onwards.

Coding decisions: what is a party split and what is a party merger?

One of the most important questions in researching party splits and mergers is how to code these two important events in the development of both the parties that make the party system and the party system itself. While party merger or fusion (Ibenskas 2016) can be coded more easily (two or more parties form a new party or they fuse with another already existing party), the question can sometimes be asked: what exactly constitutes party split? Do splits occur just when a significant group within an existing

party decides to defect and form its own party, or even a single member leaving the party and forming its own party due to disagreements with the leadership of the party can be considered party split? What constitutes ‘significant number’ of people leaving the party if we require only that a group of people leave a party? Does the single member who leaves the party need to be also a high ranking official or a member of any rank leaving the established party and forming their own party can also be considered a party split? The literature provides different ideas on how to code party splits and what types of party splits exist (see Ibenskas 2020; Casal Bértoa and Enyedi 2016; Sakaiya and Maeda 2014).

For the purpose of coding party splits and mergers in MNEE database, the following decisions are implemented:

- 1) **Party mergers:** whenever two or more parties (or coalitions), or a party and several individual members (faction) of another party decide to join forces and make (formally register) a new party; or when one or more parties decide to fuse with another existing party.
- 2) **Party splits:** whenever a single individual or a group of individuals leave the existing party due to disagreements with that party and form a new party (formally register new party). Whether that individual or group of individuals held high ranking positions previously or not is not taken to be another criterion for consideration although in each case where the data is available it will be clarified whether the leaving members held high ranking positions to allow additional coding decisions if required. Differences in how groups of MPs might have voted within the same party are not counted here for coding of party splits (even though some researchers consider dissent in parliament voting even without formal registration of a new party as party split).

The data is presented in the following way: first, year when the event (split or merger) occurred; second, political parties taking part in the event separated by “-“ in case of a split and “+” in case of a merger (abbreviations are used, full names available at the end); and third, source from which the data was collected or where more information regarding the event can be found (literature, official audit reports, newspaper articles or official government web pages). The format used is:

Year (when the event occurred)

For splits: parent party - splinter party; for mergers: party1 + party2 + ... = new party

Source: (where the data was collected or where users can find relevant supporting information)

Party Splits and Mergers in Montenegrin Party System (1990 - 2025)

1992

NSCG - NDS

Source: Kocan (1996)

*Note: NDS later took part in the formation of another party called *Srpska saborna stranka* (SSS). That party was formed in summer 1996.

1993

DSCG - DUA

Source: Vukićević and Vujović (2012, 71); Dinoshia (2008).

SRS - SRSCG

Source: “Istorija SRS: nastanak i prvih osam godina političkog života” (2014).

1997

DPS – SNP

Note: this is probably the most obvious and significant case of party split in Montenegrin party system. The defecting group was large enough to almost equally split the electorate voting for united DPS before 1997 elections and it was led by both a high-ranking member of the party and the President of the Republic of Montenegro (Momir Bulatovic).

NSCG - SNS

Source: Vukićević and Vujović (2012, 67); Šćekić (2001, 41).

2001

SNP - NSS

Source: Vukićević and Vujović (2012, 67); Radulović (2001)

DSCG - PDP

Source: Vukićević and Vujović (2012, 71); (OSCE 2001)

2003

SNS - DSS

Source: Pavićević (2007, 27)

2005

SNP - DSJ

Source: Dragaš (2017).

2006

SDA + IDU + BDS + SNR = BS

Source: Vukićević and Vujović (2012, 71)

2009

AA - PERSPEKTIVA

Source: Vukićević and Vujović (2012, 71); Montenegro State Audit Institution (2018)

SNS + NSS = NOVA

Source: Vukićević and Vujović (2012, 67-68)

PZP - DC

Source: Vukićević and Vujović (2012, 68); Janković (2009)

2011

DUA - DP

Source: Vukićević and Vujović (2012, 71); “Kryetari i Komunës, Fatmir Gjeka” (n.d.)

2012

NOVA + PZP (+ several members of SNP) = DF

Source: Vukićević (2015, 147)

2015

SDP - SD

Stankov (2019, 174)

DF - DEMOS

Source: Stankov (2019, 177-178)

PCG - URA

Source: Stankov (2019, 173); “Civic Movement United Reform Action (GP URA) - Info Brochure,” (n.d.)

SNP - DEMOKRATE

Source: Stankov (2019, 179); Dragaš (2017)

2017

DEMOS - UCG

Source: Stankov (2019, 178-179)

2020

HGI - HRS

See: Barisic (2020)

2024

DPS – SEP

Note: former high-ranking member of DPS and former Prime Minister of Montenegro, Dusko Markovic, decided to abandon the former dominant party due to disagreements on how the DPS should conduct politics. He created his own party, Party of European Progress.

See: *Radio Slobodna Evropa* (2024)

BS – BDP

Note: a group of mostly young people left Bosniak Party (BS) disappointed with the decision of high ranking officials to support the entry of the party in the new government formed by Movement Europe Now. These disappointed members formed their own party called Bosniak Democratic Movement in Montenegro (BDP).

See: Sper (2024)

2025

RP + PRAVA + NOVA = NOVA

Note: In this case we have an interesting example of two existing parties (Worker's Party and Right Montenegro) choosing to merge (fuse) themselves within an existing bigger party (New Serb Democracy).

Source: Stojadinović (2025)

AA – AR

Note: the Albanian Renaissance (AR) party was formed by a former local representative (local MP) of Albanian Alliance (AA) who decided to leave AA and become its opposition due to significant disagreements with political leadership of AA. I was unable to verify if the defecting politician managed to gather more people from AA to join him in forming Albanian Renaissance (AR) or was he alone in the decision to leave the party which might be relevant for some political scientists in determining whether to code this as a split or not.

See: *Portal Analitika* (2025)

SNP – PNP

Note: The People's Trust Movement was formed when the former vice-president of SNP and Minister of Sport and Youth in the Government of Montenegro, Dragoslav Scekić, left SNP amid growing disagreements with political leadership of the party.

Source: (Turović 2026)

Special case (pending)

PES - PZCG (?)

Note: The growing disagreements between the President (Jakov Milatović) and the Prime Minister (Milojko Spajić), both originally from Movement Europe Now (PES), occurring in the aftermath of 2023 parliamentary elections, resulted in President Jakov Milatović leaving the party in February 2024 (Marčić 2024). Some media claimed that reliable sources informed them that Milatović is planning on forming his own party (see Stojadinović 2025). In 2024, Milatović and former PES members loyal to him participated in forming a political movement for the local elections in Podgorica together with URA which was called “For better Podgorica” (“Lista ‘Jakov Milatović- Za bolju Podgoricu’ predstavila program” 2024; Stojadinović 2025). Former PES party members loyal to Milatović named their group in local parliament “Pokret za Podgoricu” or Movement for Podgorica (Stojadinović 2025). Media reported in 2024 that his party might be called “Pokret za Crnu Goru” or Movement for Montenegro (Stojadinović 2025) which is aligned with the name of the political movement for the already mentioned Podgorica local elections. However, this is still pending official confirmation at the beginning of 2026 which is when this document was last updated. Therefore, we still cannot fully confirm the data for PES split (we lack the official formation of the potential splinter party), but once the information on Milatović’s party becomes available we will know how to code this split properly.

Full party names:

DPS – Demokratska partija socijalista (Democratic Party of Socialists)

DSCG – Demokratski savez u Crnoj Gori (Democratic Alliance in Montenegro)

DUA – Demokratska unija Albanaca (Democratic Union of Albanians)

SNP – Socijalistička narodna partija (Socialists People's Party)

NSCG – Narodna stranka Crne Gore (People's Party)

NDS – Narodna demokratska stranka (People's Democratic Party)

SNS – Srpska narodna stranka (Serb People's Party)

SRS – Srpska radikalna stranka /Srpska radikalna stranka dr Vojislav Šešelj (Serb Radical Party)

SRSCG – Srpska radikalna stranka Crne Gore (Serb Radical Party of Montenegro)

PDP – Partija demokratskog prosperiteta (Party of Democratic Prosperity)

DSS – Demokratska srpska stranka (Democratic Serb Party)

DSJ – Demokratska stranka jedinstva (Democratic Party of Unity)

SDA – Stranka demokratske akcije (Party of Democratic Action)

IDU – Internacionalna demokratska unija (International Democratic Union)

BDS – Bošnjački demokratski savez (Bosniak Democratic Alliance)

BS – Bošnjačka stranka (Bosniak Party)

NOVA – Nova srpska demokratija (New Serb Democracy)

SDP – Socijaldemokratska partija (Social Democratic Party)

SD – Socijaldemokrate (Social Democrats)

DF – Demokratski front (Democratic Front)

DEMOS – DEMOS (No special translation)

DEMOKRATE – Demokratska Crna Gora – Demokrate (Democrats of Montenegro)

PCG – Pozitivna Crna Gora (Positive Montenegro)

URA – Ujedinjena Reformska Akcija (United Reform Action)

PzP – Pokret za promjene (Movement for Changes)

AA - Albanska alternativa (Albanian Alternative)

PERSPEKTIVA – Perspektiva (Perspective)

DC – Demokratski centar (Democratic Centre)

HRS – Hrvatska reformska stranka (Croatian Reform Party)

PES – Pokret Evropa Sad (Movement Europe Now)

SEP – Stranka evropskog progresu (Party of European Progress)

RP – Radnička partija (Worker's Party)

PNP – Pokret narodnog povjerenja (People's Trust Movement)

AR – Albanska renesansa (Albanian Renaissance)

BDP – Bošnjački demokratski pokret u Crnoj Gori (Bosniak Democratic Movement in Montenegro)

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