

	<p>Su Generis, 5(1), June, 2026 e-ISSN: 2955-1900 visionjournal.edu.mk/suigeneris</p>		<p>International Vision University Press © 2026 vision.edu.mk</p>	
<p align="center">Parliamentary Control Over the Government in the Republic of North Macedonia: Reassessing Constitutional Accountability Through Comparative Constitutional Law</p> <p>IBRAIMI Ebrar¹, OUMAROU Seydou², KORBAYRAM Azam³</p>				
<p align="center">Abstract</p>			<p>Recieved: 12 March 2026 Accepted: 24 June 2026</p>	
<p>The theory of the separation of powers remains one of the central issues in constitutional law. Within this framework, parliamentary control serves as a fundamental constitutional mechanism through which legislatures ensure executive accountability and preserve the balance between the legislative and executive branches. Although parliamentary constitutions provide various oversight instruments, including parliamentary questions, interpellations, inquiry committees and votes of confidence, their constitutional existence does not necessarily guarantee effective operation in practice. While constitutional scholarship has largely focused on the legal regulation of parliamentary oversight, comparatively less attention has been given to the relationship between constitutional design and institutional effectiveness.</p> <p>This article examines the constitutional effectiveness of parliamentary control in the Republic of North Macedonia through a comparative analysis of Serbia and Slovenia. It argues that parliamentary oversight should be assessed not only by the existence of constitutional mechanisms but also by their ability to produce effective executive accountability. The research employs a qualitative methodology combining doctrinal constitutional analysis, comparative constitutional law and institutional analysis, drawing upon constitutional provisions, parliamentary rules, official parliamentary documents, European Commission and other international reports, and contemporary academic literature.</p> <p>The findings indicate that the main weaknesses of parliamentary oversight in North Macedonia arise not from constitutional deficiencies but from limited executive responsiveness, insufficient institutional follow-up and weak parliamentary committee capacity. Comparative analysis demonstrates that stronger committee oversight, mandatory governmental responses, systematic post-legislative scrutiny and greater transparency significantly enhance parliamentary accountability. The article therefore proposes an Integrated Constitutional Accountability Model, arguing that effective parliamentary oversight depends on the interaction between constitutional design, parliamentary scrutiny, executive responsiveness, institutional follow-up and public transparency.</p> <p>Keywords: Parliamentary control; constitutional accountability; constitutional effectiveness</p>			<p>2955-1900 © 2026 by Authors Published by International Vision University Press This is an open access article under the CC BY license</p> <p>UDK:328.36:342(497.7:497.11:497.4) 340.5(497.7:497.11:497.4)</p>	

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Introduction

Parliamentary control constitutes one of the fundamental characteristics of modern parliamentary democracy. While legislatures are primarily recognised for their law-making function, democratic legitimacy equally depends upon Parliament's ability to supervise the exercise of executive power. Mechanisms such as parliamentary questions, interpellations, survey commissions, supervision debates and votes of confidence are therefore intended not merely to obtain information from the executive but to ensure political accountability. Consequently, parliamentary control represents an essential constitutional safeguard for maintaining the balance between the legislative and executive branches.

Recent constitutional scholarship has increasingly questioned whether the effectiveness of parliamentary control can be assessed solely through the existence of constitutional mechanisms. Earlier studies focused primarily on constitutional competences and formal oversight procedures, whereas more recent research emphasises executive responsiveness, committee activity, institutional follow-up and policy implementation as indicators of effective parliamentary accountability. Many authors, argues that parliamentary oversight should be evaluated through the interaction between parliamentary questions and executive responses rather than parliamentary activity alone. (Maricut, 2021). Despite this development, an important gap remains in the literature. Existing research on North Macedonia has predominantly examined the constitutional regulation of parliamentary control, while comparatively little attention has been devoted to the relationship between constitutional design, institutional practice and executive accountability. Constitutional scholarship has increasingly argued that parliamentary control in North Macedonia remains limited in practice because stable governing majorities reduce Parliament's capacity to exercise effective scrutiny over the executive (Zhuzhelovska & Bayraktar, 2023). This makes North Macedonia a particularly relevant case for examining whether constitutional mechanisms alone are sufficient to ensure effective parliamentary accountability.

Although the Assembly possesses a broad range of constitutionally recognised oversight instruments comparable to those found in other European parliamentary democracies, recent European Commission and OECD assessments suggest that their practical effectiveness depends less on their formal existence than on executive responsiveness, institutional implementation and parliamentary follow-up. This discrepancy between constitutional design and institutional practice raises a broader constitutional question concerning the conditions under which parliamentary control produces meaningful political accountability. Accordingly, this article addresses the following research question:

To what extent does the constitutional design of parliamentary control ensure effective executive accountability, and which institutional conditions determine whether constitutionally recognised control mechanisms produce meaningful political accountability in practice?

To answer this question, the article employs a qualitative methodology combining doctrinal constitutional analysis, comparative constitutional research and institutional analysis. The constitutional framework of North Macedonia is examined alongside those of Serbia and Slovenia through constitutional texts, parliamentary rules of procedure, official parliamentary reports, European Commission and OECD assessments, and contemporary constitutional scholarship. The principal contribution of this study is to demonstrate that the effectiveness of parliamentary control cannot be evaluated solely through the constitutional existence of oversight mechanisms. Instead, it argues that constitutional accountability depends equally upon executive responsiveness, institutional follow-up and the practical operation of parliamentary institutions. By integrating constitutional analysis with institutional practice, the article

proposes a broader framework for evaluating parliamentary control in North Macedonia and other parliamentary democracies. The remainder of the article is organised as follows. Section 2 examines the theoretical foundations of parliamentary control and constitutional accountability. Section 3 analyses the constitutional framework in North Macedonia, followed by a comparative examination of Serbia and Slovenia. The subsequent sections evaluate parliamentary practice, present the principal findings, discuss their constitutional implications, and conclude with recommendations for strengthening parliamentary accountability.

1. Legal Framework of Parliamentary Control in North Macedonia

Parliamentary control represents one of the essential constitutional functions of every parliamentary democracy. (Korbayram, 2024). Although legislation remains the Assembly's primary responsibility, modern constitutional systems increasingly recognize parliamentary scrutiny as an equally important instrument for ensuring executive accountability. (Zejneli, Shabani, & Lofton, 2021). The legitimacy of parliamentary government therefore depends not only on the confidence relationship between Parliament and the Government but also on the existence of effective mechanisms through which the executive may be questioned, criticized and, where necessary, held politically responsible for its actions. Constitutional law scholarship has consequently moved beyond a purely institutional understanding of parliamentary control and now evaluates its effectiveness through the interaction between constitutional design, parliamentary procedure and political practice.

The constitutional order of the Republic of North Macedonia follows this general parliamentary tradition. The Constitution establishes the Assembly as the central representative institution and provides several instruments through which Members of Parliament may supervise the Government and other public office holders. (Fruhstorfer & Hein, 2016). These instruments include parliamentary questions, interpellations, inquiry committees and motions of confidence. While each mechanism performs a distinct constitutional function, they collectively pursue a common objective: ensuring that executive authority remains politically accountable to the legislature. This constitutional framework is further elaborated by the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly and, in respect of control supervision debates, by the Assembly Act, which together define the institutional procedures governing parliamentary scrutiny. (Korbayram, 2021).

From a normative perspective, the North Macedonian constitutional framework appears relatively comprehensive. Unlike constitutional systems that concentrate political accountability within a limited number of parliamentary procedures, the Macedonian Constitution distributes control across several complementary mechanisms. Parliamentary questions facilitate the continuous flow of information between the executive and Members of Parliament. Interpellations provide a broader form of political accountability directed not only at ministers but also at other senior public office holders. Inquiry committees enable Parliament to investigate matters of public concern, while motions of confidence constitute the strongest constitutional instrument through which Parliament may determine whether the Government continues to enjoy political legitimacy. Rather than functioning independently, these mechanisms form an integrated constitutional framework intended to preserve the balance between legislative control and executive authority.

Nevertheless, constitutional regulation alone provides only a partial understanding of parliamentary control. Contemporary constitutional scholarship increasingly distinguishes between the *formal existence* of control mechanisms and their *practical effectiveness*. A constitutional system may formally provide numerous instruments of executive control while political realities substantially limit their operation. Stable governing majorities, strict party discipline and executive dominance over the parliamentary agenda may reduce

constitutionally available control mechanisms to procedural formalities. Consequently, assessing parliamentary control requires an examination of parliamentary practice in addition to constitutional provisions.

For this reason, the present analysis adopts a broader institutional perspective. Instead of limiting the discussion to constitutional provisions, it examines the procedural organisation of parliamentary scrutiny within the Assembly and evaluates how individual control mechanisms contribute to executive accountability in practice. This approach reflects the growing tendency within comparative constitutional scholarship to evaluate parliamentary control not merely as a legal institution but also as a constitutional practice shaped by political and institutional realities. The following sections therefore analyse each control mechanism separately before comparing the North Macedonian model with the parliamentary systems of Serbia and Slovenia.

1.1. Parliamentary Questions

Among the constitutional instruments of parliamentary control, parliamentary questions constitute the most accessible and frequently utilised mechanism through which Members of Parliament scrutinise governmental activity. (Constitution - Article 72). Their constitutional importance lies not in producing immediate legal consequences but in ensuring the continuous political accountability of the executive throughout the parliamentary term. (Rules of Procedure, 2026). Parliamentary questions enable Members of Parliament to obtain official information, require ministers to explain governmental decisions and expose executive action to public parliamentary debate. (Škarikj, 2015). In this respect, they represent the institutional expression of the constitutional principle that governments remain politically accountable to Parliament not only at the moment of their appointment but throughout the exercise of executive authority. (Siljanovska & Škarikj, 2009). It operates as a permanent safeguard against the concentration of executive power and contributes to preserving the institutional balance inherent in parliamentary democracy. (Zhuzhelovska & Bayraktar, 2023).

Within this constitutional context, the Republic of North Macedonia has established a relatively extensive framework of parliamentary control. The Constitution, complemented by the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly and the Law on the Assembly, provides Members of Parliament with several instruments designed to supervise the Government and other senior public office holders. Parliamentary questions, interpellations, survey/inquiry committees, supervision debates and motions of confidence collectively constitute the principal constitutional mechanisms through which Parliament exercises political control over the executive. Considered individually, these mechanisms perform different constitutional functions. Considered collectively, they form an integrated accountability framework intended to preserve responsible government within the parliamentary system. (Rules of Procedure, 2026), (Körbayram, 2022).

The existence of multiple control mechanisms should not, however, be understood as evidence of effective parliamentary control. Comparative constitutional scholarship has consistently demonstrated that formal constitutional guarantees and practical political accountability do not necessarily coincide. (Дескоска, Ристовска, & Христовска, 2021). Parliamentary control may remain constitutionally available while becoming politically ineffective where stable governing majorities, strict party discipline or executive dominance substantially reduce Parliament's willingness or ability to exercise meaningful scrutiny. Parliamentary questions are specific questions posed by a member of parliament that, in written or oral form, are posed by MPs to the President and members of the Government and other office holders. (Дескоска Р. Т., 2015).

Consequently, evaluating parliamentary control requires an analysis extending beyond constitutional provisions to include parliamentary procedures, institutional practice and political realities. (Aboelwafa, Tarek & Yaghi, 2024).

This article adopts precisely that perspective. Rather than limiting the analysis to a descriptive examination of constitutional provisions, it evaluates the institutional operation of each parliamentary control mechanism within the North Macedonian constitutional order. The analysis proceeds from constitutional regulation to parliamentary procedure and subsequently to institutional practice. This methodological approach makes it possible to distinguish between the legal availability of control instruments and their practical capacity to secure executive accountability. Such a distinction is particularly significant in parliamentary systems where governments enjoy stable parliamentary majorities and where constitutional control mechanisms may gradually lose their supervisory effectiveness despite remaining formally intact. (Zhuzhelovska & Bayraktar, 2023).

Recent institutional scholarship has moved beyond a purely legal understanding of parliaments by emphasising that parliamentary performance is shaped not only by constitutional rules but also by organisational practices, informal norms and institutional culture. Consequently, evaluating parliamentary control requires an examination of both the constitutional framework and the institutional environment in which control mechanisms operate. Constitutional provisions establish the formal structure of parliamentary control. Their practical effectiveness, however, is also shaped by institutional practices that develop beyond the constitutional text. As institutionalist scholarship has demonstrated, formal rules frequently evolve through informal practices, producing significant differences between constitutional design and constitutional reality. (Erikson & Josefsson, 2022) (Farrell & Héritier, 2007).

1.2. Interpellation

Interpellation represents a more intensive form of parliamentary oversight than ordinary parliamentary questions because it enables Parliament to debate the political responsibility of individual ministers, the Prime Minister and, under the Constitution of North Macedonia, certain senior public office holders. Unlike parliamentary questions, which primarily seek information, interpellations invite a broader parliamentary assessment of governmental conduct and provide the opposition with an institutional opportunity to challenge executive policy before the Assembly. The constitutional basis of this mechanism is established in Article 72 of the Constitution, while its procedural requirements are regulated in the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly. The proposal must be submitted by at least five Members of Parliament and is debated in plenary after the official response has been delivered. (Дескоска, Ристовска, & Христовска, 2021). From a comparative constitutional perspective, the legal design of interpellation in North Macedonia broadly corresponds to parliamentary practice in other European parliamentary democracies. Its practical significance, however, depends less upon procedural regulation than upon parliamentary dynamics. (Korbayram & Delev, 2023). Governments supported by cohesive parliamentary majorities rarely face serious political consequences following interpellation debates, regardless of the constitutional availability of this mechanism. (Ibraimi, Korbayram, & Shehu, 2024).

Consequently, interpellation should not be evaluated solely by reference to its formal constitutional framework but also by its capacity to stimulate public debate, expose governmental reasoning and strengthen political transparency. Even where no minister resigns and no governmental decision changes, interpellation may still fulfil an important constitutional function by enhancing public accountability and reinforcing Parliament's deliberative role. (Siljanovska & Škarikj, 2009) (Zhuzhelovska & Bayraktar, 2023).

1.3. Parliamentary Survey/Inquiry Committees

Parliamentary survey/inquiry committees represent the most comprehensive investigative instrument available to the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia. (Constitution - Article 76, n.d.) Unlike parliamentary questions or interpellations, which primarily seek political explanations from the executive, inquiry committees are designed to establish facts, collect evidence and examine matters of significant public interest. Their constitutional purpose is therefore broader than routine parliamentary scrutiny. (Rules of Procedure, 2026). They enable Parliament to investigate issues that raise concerns regarding the legality, effectiveness or political responsibility of governmental action and, where appropriate, to recommend further institutional or judicial action. (Law on the Assembly, n.d.).

The constitutional basis of inquiry committees is found in *Article 76 of the Constitution*, which authorises the Assembly to establish committees of inquiry for matters of public interest. This constitutional framework is further elaborated through the Rules of Procedure, which regulate the composition, powers and working methods of parliamentary committees. (Škarikj, 2015). Inquiry committees may request documents from public authorities, hear ministers and public officials, invite academic experts and representatives of civil society and prepare reports containing factual findings and political recommendations. (Siljanovska & Škarikj, 2009). Importantly, however, these committees do not exercise judicial powers. Their role is limited to parliamentary fact-finding and political accountability, while criminal or civil liability remains within the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts. (Klimovski, Deskoska, & Karakamiševa, 2012).

Comparative parliamentary scholarship increasingly emphasises that the effectiveness of inquiry committees should not be measured solely by their legal powers. Rather, their contribution to parliamentary oversight depends on whether their findings influence subsequent governmental conduct and whether recommendations are followed by institutional action. In this respect, legislative oversight is increasingly understood as a continuous accountability process rather than a single parliamentary event. Maricut-Akbik argues that effective oversight requires not only parliamentary scrutiny but also *executive responsiveness*, meaning that oversight should be evaluated by examining both parliamentary requests and governmental responses. (Maricut, 2021). This analytical perspective is equally applicable to parliamentary inquiry committees. A committee report has limited constitutional value if governmental institutions are under no obligation to explain whether, or how, its recommendations have been implemented.

The North Macedonian constitutional framework provides inquiry committees with broad investigative authority. Nevertheless, the available legal framework does not establish a systematic mechanism requiring the Government to report publicly on the implementation of parliamentary recommendations. This institutional gap deserves greater scholarly attention. In comparative parliamentary practice, particularly within several Westminster-inspired systems, committee reports frequently trigger formal governmental responses within prescribed periods, thereby transforming parliamentary recommendations into an ongoing dialogue between the legislature and the executive. (Farrell & Héritier, 2007). Such follow-up mechanisms strengthen political accountability without altering the constitutional balance between Parliament and Government because they reinforce transparency rather than judicial enforcement. This comparative experience suggests that the effectiveness of parliamentary inquiry committees depends less upon expanding their investigative powers than upon strengthening institutional follow-up after parliamentary investigations have concluded. (Erikson & Josefsson, 2022).

1.4. Supervision Debates

The introduction of supervision debates marked an important institutional development in the evolution of parliamentary oversight in North Macedonia. Unlike parliamentary questions and interpellations, which primarily facilitate political dialogue between Members of Parliament and the executive, oversight debates were designed to strengthen the fact-finding capacity of parliamentary committees. Their principal objective is not merely to obtain governmental explanations but to collect expert evidence, evaluate the implementation of legislation and examine the practical consequences of public policies before Parliament. In this respect, oversight debates reflect a broader transformation observable across European parliamentary democracies, where parliamentary scrutiny increasingly relies upon evidence-based evaluation in addition to traditional forms of political accountability.

The Law on the Assembly provides the legal basis for supervision debates by authorising parliamentary committees to invite ministers, public officials, experts, representatives of regulatory bodies and members of civil society to participate in committee proceedings. This institutional design broadens the informational resources available to Parliament and allows committees to evaluate governmental performance from multiple perspectives. Consequently, supervision debates should not be understood merely as another parliamentary procedure. (Дескоска, Ристовска, & Христовска, 2021). Rather, they represent an institutional mechanism through which Parliament may reduce informational asymmetries between the legislature and the executive and improve the quality of parliamentary scrutiny.⁴⁵ Recent legislative oversight scholarship supports this broader understanding of parliamentary debates. Maricut-Akbik argues that parliamentary oversight should be evaluated through the interaction between legislative demands for accountability and executive responsiveness rather than by reference to the formal existence of oversight mechanisms alone. The effectiveness of parliamentary scrutiny therefore depends upon the quality of information exchanged, the responsiveness of executive actors and the institutional capacity of parliamentary bodies to pursue follow-up action. Applied to the North Macedonian context, this perspective suggests that the constitutional value of oversight debates lies less in their procedural availability than in their ability to generate meaningful institutional learning and sustained executive accountability.

Comparative experience also demonstrates that debates are most effective where committee recommendations trigger structured governmental responses. (Korbayram & Hoca, 2024). Several European parliamentary systems have developed practices requiring governments to respond formally to committee findings within a specified period, thereby transforming parliamentary debates into an ongoing accountability dialogue rather than isolated parliamentary events. (Sandberg & Raunio, 2023). By contrast, where committee reports remain without institutional follow-up, parliamentary debates frequently produce political discussion without corresponding executive action. This distinction between information gathering and institutional follow-up represents one of the principal challenges facing contemporary parliamentary control. (Akbik & Migliorati, 2024).

From the perspective of North Macedonian constitutional law, the existing legal framework provides parliamentary committees with sufficient authority to organise supervision debates and obtain relevant information. The principal weakness appears elsewhere. Current legislation does not establish a comprehensive mechanism requiring the Government to report publicly on the implementation of committee recommendations or to explain why particular recommendations have not been adopted. (Elston & Zhang, 2023). Consequently, parliamentary oversight may conclude with the publication of committee findings without creating a continuing institutional dialogue between Parliament and the executive. Addressing this procedural gap would strengthen parliamentary accountability without altering the constitutional balance between the legislative and executive branches. (Gusheva, 2015).

1.5. Motion of Confidence of the Government

Among the constitutional instruments of parliamentary oversight, the motion of confidence represents the most direct expression of the principle of responsible government. Unlike parliamentary questions, interpellations or inquiry committees, which primarily facilitate political scrutiny, a vote of confidence directly concerns the constitutional legitimacy of the executive. (Korbayram & Hoca, 2024). Its purpose is not to obtain information or investigate governmental conduct but to determine whether the Government continues to enjoy the political confidence of the parliamentary majority. For this reason, comparative constitutional law generally regards the confidence mechanism as the ultimate guarantee of parliamentary responsibility within parliamentary systems. (Hazan & Rasch, 2022).

In North Macedonia, the Constitution regulates motions of confidence as an essential element of the parliamentary system, while the Rules of Procedure determine the procedural requirements governing their initiation and debate. From a constitutional perspective, this mechanism embodies the classical doctrine of ministerial responsibility, according to which a government unable to maintain parliamentary confidence cannot legitimately continue exercising executive authority. (Korbayram & Ibraimi, 2025). Nevertheless, contemporary parliamentary democracies demonstrate that the legal availability of confidence procedures does not necessarily translate into their frequent political use. Stable governing coalitions, coalition agreements and party discipline substantially reduce the likelihood that confidence mechanisms will function as routine instruments of parliamentary control. Consequently, the constitutional significance of confidence procedures lies less in their practical frequency than in their continuing constitutional availability as an ultimate accountability mechanism. (Becher & Brouard, 2022).

Comparative scholarship similarly suggests that confidence mechanisms exert influence even when they are rarely invoked. Their existence shapes the relationship between Parliament and the executive by encouraging governments to maintain parliamentary support throughout the legislative term. In this sense, confidence procedures possess an important preventive function. Rather than operating solely at moments of political crisis, they influence executive behaviour continuously by reinforcing the constitutional principle that governmental authority ultimately depends upon parliamentary confidence. (Norton, 2019) (Vrieze & Norton, 2020). This understanding is consistent with institutional approaches to parliamentary accountability, which emphasise that constitutional institutions frequently shape political behaviour through their potential use rather than through their repeated formal application. Philip Norton has likewise argued that the influence of parliamentary institutions cannot be assessed exclusively through the number of formal proceedings they generate but also through their broader capacity to discipline executive behaviour. (Norton, 2019).

From the perspective of North Macedonian constitutional practice, however, an important institutional question remains. Where governments command stable parliamentary majorities, confidence procedures seldom become an effective mechanism of day-to-day oversight. Political accountability is therefore transferred to ordinary oversight instruments such as parliamentary questions, committee hearings and interpellations. This institutional reality demonstrates that confidence procedures, although constitutionally indispensable, cannot alone guarantee effective parliamentary scrutiny. Instead, they should be understood as the final stage of a broader accountability system whose effectiveness depends primarily upon the operation of less coercive but more frequently used oversight mechanisms. This observation reinforces the central argument developed throughout this article: constitutional design provides the legal framework for parliamentary accountability, yet institutional effectiveness depends upon the interaction between

constitutional rules, parliamentary practice and political incentives. (Elston & Zhang, Implementing Public Accounts Committee Recommendations: Evidence from the UK Government’s ‘Progress Reports’ since 2012, 2023).

2. Parliamentary Control in Practice

The North Macedonian framework provides Parliament with a broad set of formal oversight powers. (Korbayram, Nuredin, Delev, & Hoca, 2025). Yet the available evidence points to a clear gap between legal capacity and institutional use. Parliamentary questions remain the most visible instrument. Parliamentary questions remain the most frequently used oversight instrument in North Macedonia. According to the official parliamentary e-system of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, 226 parliamentary questions were answered in 2021, while eight remained pending. In 2022, 225 parliamentary questions were answered and 19 remained pending, whereas 407 questions were answered and 21 remained pending in 2023. During the current parliamentary term (2024–2028), 70 parliamentary questions were answered in 2024, with three questions still pending, while 2025 recorded 288 answered parliamentary questions and 30 questions with “submitted” status. These figures indicate that parliamentary questions continue to represent the principal instrument of parliamentary oversight and demonstrate a consistently high level of executive responsiveness. At the same time, stronger oversight mechanisms, such as interpellations, inquiry committees and oversight debates, continue to be employed considerably less frequently, suggesting that parliamentary control remains concentrated on routine information requests rather than more demanding forms of political accountability. (<https://www.sobranie.mk/pratenicki-prasanja.nspix>, n.d.)

Moreover, during the 2020–2024 parliamentary term, six interpellation motions were submitted. None of them was adopted; three were rejected by Parliament, while the remaining three were withdrawn before adoption. (Mandaten izvestaj (2020-2024), n.d.). This contemporary evidence confirms an earlier concern identified in the domestic literature. Gusheva argued that North Macedonian governments, once assured of support from the parliamentary majority, could largely continue their policies despite opposition criticism. In formal terms, the Government remained accountable to the Assembly; in political practice, however, executive dominance over the legislative process substantially reduced the corrective force of parliamentary control. (Gusheva, 2015). The value of this observation lies in its continuing relevance. The number of questions asked or reports debated does not by itself demonstrate effective accountability. What matters is whether scrutiny compels the Government to provide substantive explanations, reconsider policy, implement recommendations or bear a visible political cost for refusing to do so. The practical record therefore supports a distinction between *control activity* and *control effectiveness*. North Macedonia clearly exhibits the former. Parliamentary questions are asked, annual reports are debated, and the legal framework permits interpellations, inquiry committees and oversight debates. Effective oversight, however, requires a complete accountability sequence: the identification of a problem, an executive response, parliamentary evaluation of that response, institutional follow-up and public disclosure of the outcome. Where this sequence ends after the first parliamentary debate, scrutiny may generate publicity but rarely produces lasting institutional consequences. (Korbayram, 2026).

3. Findings

The available statistical evidence indicates that parliamentary oversight in North Macedonia remains largely ineffective in practice. Although parliamentary questions are frequently used, stronger accountability mechanisms such as interpellations, inquiry committees and oversight hearings are employed only rarely and produce limited institutional consequences. Stable governing majorities significantly reduce

Parliament's capacity to hold the executive politically accountable while limiting the opposition's ability to exercise meaningful constitutional scrutiny.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that this weakness stems less from constitutional design than from institutional practice. Similar constitutional oversight mechanisms operate in Serbia and Slovenia, yet their effectiveness varies according to executive responsiveness, parliamentary committee capacity and systematic institutional follow-up. These findings suggest that improving parliamentary oversight in North Macedonia depends primarily on strengthening the institutional operation of existing constitutional mechanisms rather than introducing new constitutional oversight instruments.

4. Comparative Constitutional Analysis

The comparative cases were selected on the basis of their broad comparability with North Macedonia in terms of population size and socio-political context, while representing two distinct stages of European integration: Serbia as an EU candidate country and Slovenia as an EU Member State. This comparison seeks to determine whether the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight depends primarily upon constitutional design or upon the institutional mechanisms that ensure continuous executive accountability after parliamentary scrutiny has taken place.

Although the constitutions of all three countries recognise a broad range of parliamentary oversight instruments, contemporary constitutional scholarship increasingly argues that the practical effectiveness of parliamentary oversight depends not only on the existence of constitutional mechanisms but also on institutional follow-up, committee capacity and executive responsiveness (Auel & Höing, 2015; OECD/SIGMA, 2024).

Serbia - The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia recognises the National Assembly as the central representative institution and entrusts it with legislative and oversight powers, including parliamentary questions, interpellations, inquiry committees and motions of no confidence. These constitutional mechanisms are complemented by the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly, particularly Articles 83 and 84, which authorise parliamentary committees to organise public hearings both during the legislative process and for monitoring the implementation of legislation and the exercise of parliamentary oversight over the Government. Following each public hearing, committees prepare memoranda summarising the discussions and recommendations, thereby creating an institutional follow-up mechanism extending beyond plenary debate. (Kornberg & Siefken, 2023).

Recent institutional reforms have gradually strengthened the role of standing committees as permanent oversight bodies. Committees regularly examine ministers, assess the implementation of legislation and invite representatives of government, academia and civil society to public hearings. (Vukomanović, 2021), (Pejić, 2023). Nevertheless, OECD observes that the practical impact of these mechanisms continues to depend heavily upon political circumstances, particularly executive dominance and the extensive use of expedited legislative procedures, which limit Parliament's ability to exercise meaningful scrutiny. Similarly, successive European Commission enlargement reports have repeatedly emphasised that parliamentary oversight in Serbia remains constrained by limited parliamentary debate and insufficient follow-up of oversight activities despite the existence of an adequate constitutional framework. (Ruso & Filipovic, 2025).

Slovenia - Slovenia represents a comparatively more institutionalised model of parliamentary oversight within the European Union. The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia provides Parliament with classical

oversight mechanisms, including parliamentary questions, interpellations, parliamentary inquiries and votes of confidence. These constitutional instruments are reinforced through specialised parliamentary committees established under the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly, which continuously monitor the implementation of legislation, supervise governmental activities and organise hearings involving ministers, experts and civil society representatives. (The Constitution of Slovenia, n.d.).

Unlike systems where parliamentary oversight is concentrated primarily in plenary sessions, Slovenian parliamentary practice places considerable emphasis on committee-centred scrutiny throughout the policy cycle. Committees continue supervising governmental implementation after legislation has been adopted, while parliamentary inquiry commissions possess constitutionally recognised investigative powers in matters of significant public interest. Comparative research on parliamentary oversight identifies Slovenia as an example where committee structures contribute to sustained executive accountability by integrating oversight into the ordinary functioning of Parliament rather than limiting it to isolated political debates (Auel & Höing, 2015).

Comparative Assessment - The comparison demonstrates that constitutional regulation constitutes only the first layer of parliamentary oversight. Serbia and Slovenia recognise broadly similar constitutional oversight instruments, yet their institutional development illustrates that effective parliamentary control increasingly depends upon committee-centred supervision, systematic follow-up procedures and continuous monitoring of governmental implementation. While Slovenia demonstrates a more mature institutional model characterised by permanent committee oversight and stronger procedural continuity, Serbia illustrates an evolving system in which constitutional mechanisms are increasingly supported by committee practice but remain significantly influenced by political majorities. These comparative experiences suggest that future reforms in North Macedonia should focus less on introducing additional constitutional oversight instruments and more on strengthening procedural obligations requiring governmental responses, institutional follow-up and continuous committee monitoring after parliamentary scrutiny has concluded.

5. Institutional Reform Proposals for Strengthening Parliamentary Control

The comparative analysis demonstrates that the principal weakness of parliamentary oversight in contemporary parliamentary democracies is no longer the absence of constitutional oversight mechanisms but their limited institutional effectiveness. Although North Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia all recognise parliamentary questions, interpellations, inquiry committees and motions of no confidence, these instruments often fail to produce meaningful executive accountability when parliamentary majorities consistently support the government. (Jarrah Eissa Hashash Falah Ayed Alazemi, Muhammad Nazir Alias, & Anwar Fakhri Omar, 2025). Recent European Commission reports on the Western Balkans and OECD/SIGMA assessments similarly conclude that the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight depends less on constitutional design than on institutional follow-up, committee capacity and executive responsiveness (European Commission, 2024; OECD/SIGMA, 2024) (Jarrah Eissa Hashash Falah Ayed Alazemi, Muhammad Nazir Alias, & Anwar Fakhri Omar, 2025). Recent European practice therefore focuses not on introducing additional constitutional mechanisms but on strengthening the institutional framework surrounding existing oversight instruments. One of the most significant developments is the growing role of specialised parliamentary committees. (Dreyer, 2025). In several European democracies, committee scrutiny extends beyond legislative review and includes continuous monitoring of policy implementation, public hearings involving ministers and experts, and systematic examination of executive performance (OECD/SIGMA, 2024).

A second important reform concerns the introduction of mandatory governmental responses to parliamentary committee recommendations. Rather than allowing committee reports to remain without practical consequences, governments in several European parliamentary systems are required to provide formal written responses within a specified period. (Auel & Christiansen, 2015). This procedural obligation strengthens parliamentary accountability by ensuring continuous institutional dialogue between the legislature and the executive (OECD, 2023).

European parliamentary practice has also increasingly adopted *Post-Legislative Scrutiny (PLS)*, whereby parliamentary committees periodically evaluate whether enacted legislation has been effectively implemented and whether legislative objectives have been achieved. (Caygill, 2019). OECD/SIGMA identifies this mechanism as one of the most important recent developments in strengthening parliamentary oversight because it transforms parliamentary control into a continuous rather than episodic process (OECD/SIGMA, 2024).

Finally, independent parliamentary research services and transparent monitoring systems have become essential components of effective parliamentary oversight. Institutions such as the *European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS)* provide Members of Parliament with independent legal and policy analysis, while several European legislatures publicly monitor governmental implementation of parliamentary recommendations through digital follow-up systems. (Fitsilis, Koryzis, & Schebeck, 2022). These practices reduce parliamentary dependence on executive information and improve transparency and public accountability (European Parliament, 2025).

From the point of view of these comparative experiences, future reforms in North Macedonia should focus on strengthening specialised parliamentary committees, introducing mandatory governmental responses to committee recommendations, establishing a comprehensive Post-Legislative Scrutiny system, creating an independent Parliamentary Research Service, and improving the public monitoring of parliamentary recommendations. Such reforms would significantly enhance executive accountability without requiring substantial constitutional amendments. (Sargeant & Pannell, 2022).

6. Discussion and Future Research

The findings of this study reinforce the growing body of constitutional scholarship demonstrating that the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight cannot be assessed solely by the formal existence of constitutional mechanisms. Instead, effective oversight depends on the interaction between constitutional design and institutional practice, particularly executive responsiveness, committee capacity and systematic parliamentary follow-up. The comparative analysis of North Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia confirms that similar constitutional frameworks may produce substantially different levels of executive accountability depending on how oversight mechanisms function in practice.

The study also suggests that strengthening parliamentary oversight in North Macedonia does not necessarily require constitutional amendment. Contemporary European practice increasingly focuses on improving the institutional framework surrounding existing constitutional mechanisms rather than introducing new oversight instruments. In this respect, reforms such as stronger parliamentary committees, mandatory governmental responses to parliamentary recommendations, systematic post-legislative scrutiny, independent parliamentary research services and greater transparency in monitoring governmental implementation could significantly enhance parliamentary accountability while preserving the existing constitutional balance between Parliament and the executive.

Finally, the analysis highlights the continuing constitutional challenge of ensuring effective parliamentary oversight where stable governing majorities dominate legislative decision-making. Future research should therefore examine constitutional and institutional mechanisms capable of strengthening the oversight capacity of parliamentary opposition, particularly through enhanced committee procedures, procedural guarantees and follow-up mechanisms that promote meaningful executive accountability without undermining governmental stability.

Conclusion

Parliamentary oversight remains one of the fundamental constitutional guarantees of democratic governance by ensuring political accountability of the executive before the legislature. The findings of this study demonstrate that the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight cannot be explained solely by the constitutional recognition of oversight mechanisms. Although North Macedonia possesses a comprehensive constitutional framework, the practical operation of parliamentary oversight remains constrained by limited executive responsiveness, weak institutional follow-up and the political dominance of stable governing majorities.

The comparative analysis with Serbia and Slovenia confirms that constitutional similarity does not necessarily produce comparable levels of democratic accountability. Rather, the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight depends on the interaction between constitutional rules and institutional practice. In particular, specialised parliamentary committees, systematic follow-up procedures, governmental responsiveness and transparent monitoring emerge as key factors determining whether constitutional oversight mechanisms operate effectively in practice.

The principal contribution of this study is the development of an ***Integrated Constitutional Accountability Model***, which evaluates parliamentary oversight through the interaction of constitutional authorisation, parliamentary scrutiny, executive responsiveness, institutional follow-up and public transparency. This framework extends conventional constitutional analysis beyond the formal existence of oversight mechanisms and offers a broader analytical approach for comparative constitutional research.

Finally, the findings suggest that strengthening parliamentary oversight in North Macedonia does not necessarily require constitutional amendment. More immediate improvements may be achieved through institutional reforms that reinforce parliamentary committees, require formal governmental responses to parliamentary recommendations, introduce systematic post-legislative scrutiny and strengthen the oversight capacity of the parliamentary opposition. Although centred on North Macedonia, the proposed analytical framework may also provide a useful basis for evaluating parliamentary oversight in other parliamentary democracies facing similar challenges of executive dominance and limited legislative accountability.

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