

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

POLIT-BAROMETER

Year 24 Issue 4
April 1st – May 6th

Boris Popivanov



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1

FOREIGN POLICY DYNAMICS

Geopolitical continuity. Changes of governments in Bulgaria sometimes bring revisions or at least changes in foreign policy priorities. The new office of Dimitar Glavchev, who took office on April 9, is not an example of this. The continuity of foreign policy, and especially with regard to the country's international commitments, has been officially declared and implemented in practice. At a meeting with the ambassadors of Ukraine Olesya Ivaschuk and of Germany Irene Maria Plank, the new Prime Minister explicitly stressed that Bulgaria remains consistent in its support for Ukraine. The reason for this meeting is the forthcoming June conference in Berlin on the reconstruction of Ukraine. Informally, however, it can be said that Sofia adheres to the Ukrainian policy of Berlin and does not openly commit to a position towards the more radical announcements of Paris. The overall geopolitical context is unchanged and is confirmed, without exception, by events with a foreign policy profile. Defence Minister Atanas Zapryanov said there is a resource to provide additional excess Bulgarian armaments to Ukraine, as well as training military personnel. President Rumen Radev welcomed his Italian counterpart Sergio Mattarella, with whom he discussed the functioning of the multinational contingent in Bulgaria. This contingent, which falls under the operational leadership of Italy, is an important element in strengthening NATO's eastern flank in light of new security challenges since the beginning of the Ukrainian conflict. An amendment to the contract for the purchase of U.S. F-16 aircraft was approved, with which people started talking about the start of deliveries next year, in 2025. Radev also took part in the traditional forum of the Three Seas Initiative held in Vilnius and dedicated to connectivity and security in the whole region of the former socialist countries. It is known that "Three Seas" has the support of Bulgaria's Euro-Atlantic partners. A license was granted to the US company Westinghouse to supply nuclear fuel to the Kozloduy nuclear power plant. This, in a sense, is also a blow to Rosatom's positions. Last but not least, Bulgaria strongly supports Israel with regard to the war in Gaza. This strategy received concrete implementation not only in the process of voting at the UN, but also in the joint declaration of 18 countries, including the USA and Bulgaria, which calls

on the Hamas group to release the Israeli hostages as a necessary condition for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. If a symbolic expression of foreign policy continuity is to be given after April 9th, perhaps the most appropriate example is the renewed efforts to dismantle the Soviet Army Monument in Sofia, temporarily frozen since the beginning of the year.

"Crisis" in the Foreign Ministry. A superficial observer could be misled by the cross-party tensions in Bulgaria and turn a blind eye to these facts, leaving the impression that the political stakes are currently a foreign policy stake. This is the unprecedented scandal in the caretaker cabinet in connection with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A few days after he appointed former ambassador to Montenegro Stefan Dimitrov as Foreign Minister and publicly expressed confidence in him, Prime Minister Glavchev demanded his resignation as an imperative. The widespread motive that Dimitrov had made an insufficiently categorical Euro-Atlantic statement at an international conference is somewhat strange. Glavchev tried to find a more convincing explanation, pointing out that on the night of the Iranian missile strike against Israel he could not contact Dimitrov, whose phone was turned off, and therefore he could not rely on such a person. Glavchev's proposal for Dimitrov's successor was the former Foreign Minister and current Deputy Chairman of the largest party GERB Daniel Mitov. President Radev opposed Mitov's nomination, who himself described his choice as a "test for the geopolitical orientation" of the Head of State. Despite Glavchev's statements that he would not back down, two days later he proposed his own candidacy for Foreign Minister and received Radev's consent. As a summary of this plot, it is not a battle for the direction of Bulgarian foreign policy, but a competition in Euro-Atlanticism. Mitov's figure is GERB's message that it is they, and not their current government partners and current competitors from "We Continue the Change (Produzhavame Promianata) – Democratic Bulgaria" (PP-DB) who are guarantors of Bulgaria's Euro-Atlantic course, and that this can be made clear both inside and outside the country before the parliamentary and European elections scheduled for June 9th. Radev did not allow the operation of the care-

taker cabinet for the purposes of the election campaign. The resignation of Prime Minister Meglena Plugchieva's foreign policy adviser, announced as a result of Glavchev's self-nomination as Foreign Minister, further strengthened the President's view that

diplomacy needs professionals, not party improvisations. Despite speculation, however, the brief "crisis" in the Foreign Ministry has nothing to do with the global Russia-West conflict and the Bulgarian place in its coordinate system.

2

INSTITUTIONS AND THE PUBLIC AGENDA

The Officaretaker cabinet in the battle for power.

Dimitar Glavchev's cabinet from its very formation did not appear to be a calmer of political tension, but on the contrary, as its generator. The Prime Minister presented his ministerial candidates, claiming that together they constituted a "balanced" government that is equidistant from the political parties. There appear to be formal grounds for such a conclusion. Glavchev is a representative of the elite of GERB. Some of his ministers are former ministers in Nikolay Denkov's cabinet and as such are connected in the eyes of public opinion to the former PP-DB rulers. PP-DB led a fierce campaign against Interior Minister Kalin Stoyanov and took away their political confidence from Transport Minister Georgi Gvozdejkov, but it is still a fact that the figures proposed by this coalition retain their seats in the service cabinet, and Gvozdejkov is even charged with organising the electoral process. Minister of Tourism Evtim Miloshev has decades of professional cooperation with practically the entire leadership of the party "There is Such a People ("Ima Takuv Narod - ITN". The Minister of Innovation and Growth Rosen Karadimov is not only a former MP from the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), but only a few years ago he was an active participant in the media with sympathetic views of this party. Ministers of Culture Nayden Todorov and Justice Maria Pavlova are former ministers of President Radev, and especially Pavlova was until recently Deputy Chief Prosecutor. Glavchev really made efforts to construct a cabinet that built bridges to various camps in the political space. This reminds one of the influential ones in Bulgarian politics that it is necessary to put an end to the acute cross-party confrontation and for expert governments to rule with national agreement.

The aforementioned preconditions for a balanced transition to the elections and the new parliament did not materialise in practice. Since its first day, the cabinet has become the arena of a real battle for control. The particular thing about this battle is that none of the political forces and institutions are willing to take responsibility for government policy, but there are those who seek to exert an undisclosed impact on it. These are mainly GERB and the Movement for Rights

and Freedoms (MRF). The resignation of Foreign Minister Dimitrov came after a call from GERB leader Boyko Borisov for his removal. Later, the co-chair of MRF, Delyan Peevski, insisted that Mitov was suitable for this post and the President should immediately appoint him. The cabinet's decision for a new children's hospital caused public discontent and was revoked after Peevski and Borisov spoke out against it. It should be emphasised that Glavchev gave in to the pressure very early and lost the chance to create some political authority for his cabinet as an inevitable transitional institution to a new government. The disputes about whose cabinet it is further undermines its credibility and destroys its integrity. The parties even tried to drag the President into the game of mutual accusations by launching the rumour of Radev's "quotas", which include, for example, the Foreign Ministry, but also that of agriculture, where many suspected the economic interests of advisers to the head of state. With different rhetoric, PD-DB and BSP talk about the "cabinet of Borisov, Peevski and Radev" and comment on the formation of a new status quo, the spokesperson of which is the official prime minister. In fact, the dominance of GERB is unambiguous. It is not only visible from the political biography of the Prime Minister. The replacement of the so-called "second echelon" of power, which includes deputy ministers and regional governors, is indicative of the political profile of the government. One more fact can be mentioned. Before Glavchev announced his nominations for ministers, PP-DB had launched a campaign against the outgoing Interior Minister Kalin Stoyanov. The main message was that keeping Stoyanov in the new government would mean a definite intention to manipulate the elections. Regardless of the attacks, which risk blowing up the claim of "balance", Glavchev decided to keep Stoyanov. In this way, GERB leads PP-DB to understand that they will not be inclined to make any concessions to them. Glavchev proved to be the instrument for changing the trends in Bulgarian politics even before voters have their say on June 9th.

The pre-election parliament. The constitutional reform allowed the National Assembly to sit until the election of the next parliament. For many commenta-

tors, this was one of the positive aspects of the reform, ensuring continuity of the legislative process and control of the executive. Practice has shown two things.

First, when it is not dissolved after its inability to form a regular cabinet, the National Assembly inevitably becomes the platform of the party's election campaign. This increases the risk of chaos and irresponsibility, precisely because there can be no clear majority in the pre-election parliament – after all, the formal lack of majority has ultimately led to early elections. Here are two examples of the scale of risk. The constitutional absurdity emerged with the joint petition of BSP "There is such a people" and the party "Vazrazhdane" ("Revival") for a vote of no-confidence against the caretaker cabinet. Although it was not allowed to proceed to a vote, this idea has its roots in a certain logic: once the cabinet takes an oath in parliament, the parliament can propose that Radev replace it. Then, with ease, a majority was gathered to remove the president of the National Assembly Rosen Zhelyazkov. Thus, the parliamentary institution was left without a leader just at a time when it is unrealistic to expect a new one. The practical consequences of the fall of Zhelyazkov may be negligible, but the principle that a conjuncture majority of parties can make whatever decision it wants in the absence of a normal relationship between the government and the opposition sounds dangerous.

And secondly, Parliament did exactly what the constitutional reform was meant to avoid, namely, de facto disbanding itself approximately 40 days before the elections. And this is quite inevitable, given that a significant proportion of the active MPs are candidates for a new term and prefer to run their campaign.

The President. The Head of State was faced with the non-traditional role of appointing a caretaker cabinet, in whose composition and politics he has no say. The task that Rumen Radev set himself was double and, to a large extent, at least at the present moment, successfully fulfilled – to distance himself from any responsibility for the Glavchev cabinet and yet to demonstrate

his political influence. The first was achieved with the help of purposeful media behaviour, but also the idea that the cabinet should be sworn in in the National Assembly and not as before in the presidency. This gave a visible expression of the de facto responsibility of the parliamentary parties for the current situation. The second task came to the fore in the President's actions against the "crisis" in the Foreign Ministry. It could be seen that Glavchev could not do what he wanted without Radev's consent, and without the responsibility for what happened falling on Radev. On the contrary, Radev built his image as an institutional corrective, which protects the government from improvisations, and did not enter the trap that would have presented him as an accomplice in this process. Of course, the double task mentioned has not been completed and will probably take new forms. It is essential that Radev does not seem to have a favourite in the election campaign. This creates the risk that public opinion will increasingly begin to see him as an authoritative figure outside of real politics and real decision-making.

The Prosecutor's Office. Indictment has repeatedly been at the centre of media discussions. Scandals regarding suspicions of corruption against prominent representatives of the previous government have given enough reasons for this. Once again, the differences in the style of the current Chief Prosecutor Borislav Sarafov can be highlighted against the backdrop of his predecessor Ivan Geshev. Sarafov shows reactivity and flexibility and avoids presenting the prosecution as the initiator of any political plots. Moreover, constitutional reform seems to have allowed for the first time the reconciliation of positions between the various branches of the judiciary. If until recently it seemed that prosecutors and judges reside in some institutional tension, then now their disagreement with the new constitutional texts and the official draft of the Judicial System Act orders them side by side. Of course, this is beneficial for Sarafov, but also for the current Supreme Judicial Council, which clearly hopes in the conditions of political blockage to extend as much as possible their temporary or expired mandates.

3

THE STATE OF THE PARTY SYSTEM

GERB-UDF. The leading party in the current parliament have every prospect of repeating their leading position in the new elections, with a lead over their rivals, which has no analogue in the entire period of the political crisis. This reinforces GERB's responsibility for possible future governance, but does not provide easy answers to the party's intentions. At this stage, GERB clearly suggest that they intend to take over the role of the flagship of Euro-Atlanticism in Bulgaria and reject alliances with "nationalist and pro-Russian parties". There are not only general statements, but also joint actions with MRF (e.g. in conversations with miners and energy workers). It is known that GERB have always taken care not to get into a public coalition with MRF because of the potential negative consequences regarding image, but perhaps the time for such a step has come. However, it is likely that GERB will wait for the development of the situation to formulate their political plans more unequivocally.

Bulgarian society seems to have witnessed a political comeback by the leader Boyko Borisov. In relations with PP-DB, he is in a strong position after years of intense pressure and attempts at ostracism by the liberal political community. Perhaps this was most impactful in the scandal of leaked photographs of prominent figures from PP-DB, in which wads of banknotes are visible. We can remember a similar scandal with Borisov himself 4 years ago, when such wads were also photographed next to his bed. Today's commentary by Borisov "he who lives by the wad, dies by the wad" is indicative of his unwillingness to forget the attacks so far. At the same time, drawing up the lists for the upcoming elections suggests caution and adherence to the status quo. The elite of GERB will be replicated in the new National Assembly, with small changes. It is noticeable that Borisov focuses on strengthening the structures and on personal loyalty to him. This can explain the new decisions in Sofia (where a serious failure was recorded in the local elections) and the new nomination of the former Speaker of Parliament Tsveta Karayancheva as leader of the list.

"We Continue the Change (Produlzhavame Promianata) – Democratic Bulgaria" (PP-DB). Unlike

GERB, which seem to be the anticipated winners, PP-DB create the impression of anticipated losers. Polls released after the election of the caretaker cabinet demonstrate a drastic ebbing of supporters in the coalition and do not even commit to predict whether they will retain their second place or collapse to third or even fourth. The past month has been marked by a series of media attacks on PP-DB, calling into question their moral and political appearance. Data on expensive watches, received by the former Secretary General of the Ministry of Interior and nomination of the coalition Zhivko Kotsev, were released. Photos of meetings of former Interior Minister Boyko Rashkov appeared with people accused of smuggling. Statements were made revealing the imbalance and propensity to physical aggression of the coalition co-chair Kiril Petkov with the respective suggestions of abuse of certain stimulants. Versions of dubious practices of Assen Vassilev in his capacity as Finance Minister were circulated. Again, the resistance of PP-DB to the immediate lifting of the derogation for Russian oil imports into Bulgaria was recalled.

The PP-DB election strategy does not seem to be fully clarified. So far, it is founded on three pillars. One is that Borisov has no political autonomy and represents Peevski's puppet. It seems that this is how they seek to awaken Borisov's leadership ego. The second pillar is based on claims that the plot of GERB and MRF against their governance worsens the economic situation of the country and causes severe negative effects, including the blocking of funds under the Recovery and Resilience Plan and a hypothetical postponement of euro area membership. In other words, the thesis is aired that in the name of narrow party interests GERB and MRF are working against the national interest. Thirdly, PP-DB are presented as a victim of the "permanent state", in which various institutions and security services are uncontrolled. The problem is that PP-DB can never paint a picture of their future plans after the elections. All their messages are subject to the understanding that they should rule again, and not be opposition. But at the same time, they are in no condition to indicate with whom they could govern, if not with GERB and MRF, who now fiercely reject this

idea. It is evident that the coalition will find it difficult to offer a solution that is no longer compromised, and their greatest chance lies in possible mistakes of their opponents. In particular, there is some limit beyond which the attacks of GERB and MRF can start to produce the opposite effect, and if they cross it, PP-DB will be able to save part of their public image of the “victim of the status quo”.

The mass belief in the impending electoral failure of PP-DB provokes a preliminary war for their legacy. From an electoral point of view, these circumstances may seem peripheral, but a psychological sense of decay they may prove more important. The Middle European Class Party, which was once the mandate holder of PP-DB, left the coalition. The Green Movement, which was a far more important partner, and which contributed significantly to the progressive appearance of PP-DB, also left. The resistance of the Greens to the new investment law, which limits the place of environmental assessments, showed that they are on the agenda of Bulgarian politics and cannot be written off lightly. Disappointed with DB, the “old right” who took their first steps in a joint coalition of the local elections in Sofia will now participate under the name “Blue Bulgaria” in the national elections as well. With their fierce anti-communism in the right space, they are reminiscent, in a mirroring way, of the communist parties in the left space in relation to BSP, but they have their own voters and should not be underestimated either.

Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF). The intentions of MRF have long been popular after a ten-year pause to officially enter power as part of a coalition. This requires marginal electoral mobilisation and they are ready to achieve it. The two co-chairs of the party carried out a kind of division of labour: Delyan Peevski will be responsible for the national campaign and for the first time will lead the list in the significant Kardzhali fortress, while Dzhevdet Chakarov will embody the party’s firm European commitment as the leader of the list for MEPs. Two details are curious. One is the inclusion of the current BSP MEP Elena Yoncheva in the European list of MRF. Yoncheva’s decision, which caused many negative comments, is indicative not only of the ambition of MRF to maintain an anti-corruption façade, but also of the ease with which the hated “Turkish” party can attract famous names. The second detail is the participation of Hussein Hafazov, a companion of former leader Lyutvi Mestan, in the national lists of MRF. Whatever the motives for this move may be, they hint at a new step towards the party’s rapprochement to official Ankara, but also remind of the ambitious goal of MRF to surpass the 100,000-vote barrier of Bulgarian citizens in Turkey.

“Vazrazhdane” (“Revival”). The party’s agenda is geopolitical, aimed at leaving NATO, cessation of

military assistance to Ukraine, renegotiation of EU membership, and rejection of the eurozone. At least at this stage, social and economic accents are lacking, which probably means an intention to maximise political flexibility in the campaign. Kostadin Kostadinov’s party will need flexibility because it is experiencing a period of instability marked by splits and quakes in local structures. For the first time in three years, there is no feeling that “Vazrazhdane” will continue their electoral rise. Of course, the campaign can create an atmosphere in which the deficits of “Vazrazhdane” turn into positives. The most discussed event related to the party is the attraction of popular journalist Peter Volgin to the list for the European elections. This is indeed a good opportunity for anti-elite and anti-Euro-Atlantic messages.

The Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP). The party goes to the national and European elections in poor political and organisational conditions. So far, three messages from the Socialists have been heard in the public space, none of which is able to regain the confidence of the voters. The first is that BSP is the only party that has not entered into any behind-the-scenes arrangements. However, it can be read back that BSP is a party in isolation, which stands aside from all the important processes in the Bulgarian political life. In fact, we will not meet scenarios that discuss future configurations with any involvement of BSP. The second message is that BSP will participate in the next reformist majority. Trends at this stage make it extremely unrealistic to expect such a majority. And thirdly, there are frequent reports from representatives of the party leadership that it is not to be excluded that the chairwoman Korneliya Ninova will run for a third term in the autumn. This in itself means that a change in the unpopular party line is hardly likely to happen.

BSP presented the leaders of lists for the National Assembly and provoked many disappointments. It is enough to mention that figures close to Ninova unexpectedly receive a second leading place. It is obvious that due to a possible lower result, the same people could not even enter the National Assembly from the regions they have so far represented. Rather, the polls do not raise hopes that BSP could have more than one MP in a constituency. Therefore, the disincentive of local structures becomes inevitable. They are forced to mobilise for a parliamentary representation of the party leadership, with a minimal chance of their local candidates making a breakthrough. The situation is particularly severe in Sofia and Plovdiv-district. Ninova’s strike against the Sofia party structure, which led to the removal of its leader Ivan Takov and his replacement with Diana Tonova, who is loyal to the party headquarters, is likely to demobilise party activists in the capital. And the resistance to Veska Nencheva who had been sent by the leadership to assume the position of leader in the region of Plovdiv led to the

withdrawal of the entire party list in the constituency. The consequences for the election result can also be predicted. Last but not least comes Ninova's decision to nominate her close political scientist Kaloyan Metodiev as MP. Metodiev, as a former prominent actor of the anti-communist right, certainly does not enjoy the support of party supporters, but, moreover, his nomination raises concerns that Ninova's personal considerations prevail over any political calculations.

Nationalist and conservative leitmotifs will obviously dominate the BSP campaign. The conclusion applies even more to the European campaign, where, despite Kristian Vigenin's leading position in the list, the course to distinguish from the Party of European Socialists and the European Left is undoubted and difficult to reverse. The question is whether there is a viable alternative in the left. Rather, we are witnessing a deepening fragmentation. The coalition "The Left", which tried unsuccessfully to challenge the hegemony of BSP a year ago, split and was left by the party "Rise" of former ombudsman Maya Manolova. Manolova was not only a bright figure in this coalition. Without it, only the parties "Alternative for Bulgarian Revival" by Rumen Petkov and "Movement 21" by Tatyana Doncheva, politicians who were known for their severe mutual insults, remain in practice in "The Left". Left alone in a coalition, they are exposed to logical doubts about their political principle. Individuals with a left-wing biography, but also aspirations for left-wing positioning, can also be identified in the pre-election alliance between the party of former Prime Minister Stefan Yanev "Bulgarian Rise" and "Bulgarian Progressive Line" of former Socialist Krasimir Yankov.

The big news in the left space, however, is the decision of trade unionist Vanya Grigorova to run for the

National Assembly and for the European Parliament in a coalition with Maya Manolova's party. The new formation, named after the organisation of Grigorova "Solidarna Bulgaria", provokes an understandable interest. Still, everyone remembers Grigorova's remarkable breakthrough in the local elections half a year ago, when she was almost elected mayor. Grigorova's first messages are now anti-elitarian ("end this elite's mandate") and trade unionist ("protect the workers"). There is no doubt about the differences between the other parties. However, it should be pointed out that Grigorova is in a worse position today than six months ago. At that time, her nomination for mayor expressed the first unification of the left after Rumen Radev's election as President, while today's nomination for MP is an immediate product of a new leftist disunion. Grigorova's chances should not be underestimated, especially against the background of the general disappointment with BSP. But she will need a huge effort and a very precise campaign to impose herself in the new situation. It is not without importance that there are very few prominent left-wing politicians willing to stand behind her now. Accusations of autocracy came even from circles that are rather benevolent to Grigorova.

"There is such a people" ("Ima Takuv Narod" - ITN). Slavi Trifonov's party, as is traditional for them, are already on the verge of entering the next National Assembly. They paradoxically combine two tendencies – powerful anti-elitarianism and willingness to cooperate with the elites. This would probably make them a preferred partner in the next parliamentary configuration. It is not unimportant that President Radev chose to give ITN the third mandate to form a government in this parliament and thus legitimise the formation as a serious participant in the political process.

4

MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND FORECASTS

Discussions on Bulgaria's foreign policy dilemmas continue to yield mainly domestic political dividends and have no direct impact on the country's foreign policy. At the start of the official election campaign, it can be argued that there is no parliamentary configuration that would call into question the country's international commitments. Claims could be reiterated that the collapse of the coalition between GERB and PP-DB will be negatively perceived by Sofia's Euro-Atlantic partners. There are no strong grounds for such claims. In Bulgaria there is dominance of political parties with a Euro-Atlantic profile, there are caretaker cabinets with the same foreign policy vision, and according to the constitutional reform there is also a permanently functioning parliament, which, if need be, can take the necessary decisions at any time. Such a situation is largely analogous to that of a regular government and a regular parliament.

The European elections, which for the first time in Bulgaria will coincide with a general election, as a rule has secondary importance for the political debate, and now the secondary nature of this will probably be even more pronounced. Concerns in Western Europe about the breakthrough of nationalist and radical parties may have grounds, but they are alien to Bulgarian political practice. In Bulgaria, unlike France or Italy for example, anti-European sentiment is expressed in non-voting in European elections, not in mass voting for anti-European parties. In other words, no significant breakthrough of parties such as "Vazrazhdanel" can really be expected. However, the electoral issue should not overshadow the public case. The tendency for the spread of xenophobic, anti-Semitic and neo-fascist sentiments and actions across the country is evident.

The caretaker cabinet started to function on the brink of constitutional crisis and has been continuing to do so up until now. The risks of resignation and threats of non-recognition of elections are an element of this situation caused by the constitutional reform, which

was not entirely thought out. New turmoil in the cabinet is possible, including because the Prime Minister and his ministers seem to have reconciled that the party and lobbying battle in the country is unfolding on their ground. At the same time, due to its peculiarities, a caretaker cabinet in the same or similar format should not be ruled out as a formula for future government, formally expert and party-directed.

The other version of the political perspective, which is emerging at the beginning of the campaign, is governance revolving around GERB and MRF, perhaps with other smaller parties, in which PP-DB, for international reasons, would be offered marginal participation. Whether it should come to such a formula would depend mainly on whether GERB and MRF might be able to secure, together with a possible third party, a majority of 121 MPs in the elections, so that the participation of PP-DB would appear to be a mercy measure, and not a necessity. If that does not happen, then yet more early elections are also a potential scenario.

The context of the campaign is already marked by battles for moral discrediting of the opponent and accusations of corruption. It is very likely to continue in the same way. The question is whether everything will remain at the level of the charges, or will it be radicalised as far as actions of the prosecution. In a political sense, the campaign has been characterised by a clear crisis of two political camps – that of the liberal community and that of the left. The result of the trends of crisis will also produce the future political picture.

Against this background, the latest data from the Eurobarometer survey were published, which shows that 48% of Bulgarians point to poverty and social exclusion as a very significant problem, while for 34% this is the state of public health. The figures are clearly above the European Union average. Once again, the Bulgarian parties are entering a campaign with an agenda different from that of the majority of their voters.

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ABOUT THIS STUDY

FES Bulgaria has been publishing the „Polit-Barometer“ since 2000, analyzing current and long-term political processes and identifying trends in Bulgarian politics with a special focus on the political parties as democratic actors. In a situation where

the quality and neutrality of Bulgarian media is under question, we aim to provide a scientific basis for a political discussion for Bulgarian and international readers.
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Further information on the topic can be found here:
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