

## Online Panel Discussion

### Scandal-Scattered Bulgaria after Snap Elections on 11 July - Quo Vadis?



Protesters with a poster of 500 Euro banknote and Prime Minister Boyko Borisov, 16 July 2020, Sofia/Bulgaria.  
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20 July 2021, 17.00 – 18.30

Online via Zoom

#### Panelists

**Daniel Smilov**, Assoc. Prof. Political Theory at the Political Science Department University “St Kliment Ohridski” Sofia; Program Director at the Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia

**Anna Krasteva**, Founder and Director of CERMES (Centre for Refugees, Migration and Ethnic Studies), Professor at the Department of Political Sciences at the New Bulgarian University, Sofia

**Ruslan Stefanov**, Program Director, Center for the Study of Democracy, Sofia

**Vessela Tcherneva**, Deputy Director of the European Council on Foreign Relations and Head of the Sofia office

#### Moderation

**Johanna Deimel**, Independent Analyst / Member of the Board Southeast Europe Association, Munich

## Topic

This event discusses the state of affairs of Bulgaria's 30 years of democratization against the backdrop of the results of this year's second parliamentary elections on July 11. These elections were necessary since neither Boyko Borisov's GERB nor the opposition parties were able to form a government after the elections on April 4.

Bulgaria has been under the radar of international attention for far too long. According to Freedom House, challenges on democracy and the rule of law persist. When it comes to media freedom, Reporters without Borders' Press Freedom Index scores the EU member state only on place 111 out of 180 countries. Bulgarian citizens, confronted with the COVID-19 crisis, held their breath when scandals, high corruption cases and wiretapping of nearly 80 opposition politicians became public almost on a daily basis. Will these scandals have an impact on the election results? Will elections bring real political change? Will the new political formations "There Is Such a People", the coalition formation "Stand Up! Thugs Out!" and "Democratic Bulgaria" confirm or even increase their election results?

For months, demonstrations demanded intervention by the EU against the abuse of power. Sanctions, however, only came now - from the United States. Should the EU use its stricter mechanism and stronger tools to ensure rule of law in its member states?

As if the domestic challenges were not enough, Bulgaria has additionally created a foreign policy problem with serious implications for the future of EU enlargement through the bilateral dispute with North Macedonia. Russia, with which Bulgaria has a special relationship in many respects, also plays a role in Bulgaria's state of play today.

There are thus plenty of reasons to take a closer look at the country. We invite you to join us!



### Registration

This event takes place online via Zoom.

Please register latest by 19 July 2021: [Registration Form](#)

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