

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

POLIT-BAROMETER

Year 23 Issue 5
May 1st – June 5th

Boris Popivanov



The most expected option for a government has been realised, but after scandals, eroding its legitimacy from the very beginning.



The new majority seeks to achieve consolidation around two causes: geopolitical (support for Ukraine) and institutional (limiting the President).



The problems in the judiciary dictate a significant part of the agenda of the Bulgarian parties and politicians.

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1

THE DYNAMICS OF FOREIGN POLICY

The tension with North Macedonia. Bulgaria's relations with its south-western neighbour continue to remain at "freezing point". Mutual criticism and accusations have been escalating for some time now. North Macedonia refused to allow Bulgarian citizens, including MEP Andrey Kovachev, into its territory for the celebrations of the revolutionary Gotse Delchev, under the pretext that they represented "a risk to public peace and security". Later, Prime Minister Dimitar Kovachevski completely forsook diplomatic tone by comparing Bulgaria's approach to his country with that of Russia to Ukraine. The obvious inappropriateness of this statement should be seen in the context of the new efforts of Sofia to internationalise the issue and consolidate external support against Skopje. There is practically no high-level global or European forum in recent weeks where Bulgarian officials have omitted to raise the issue of the violations of the rights of ethnic Bulgarians in North Macedonia. At a Council of Europe summit in Reykjavik, Vice President Iliana Yotova spoke of "black lists" of Bulgarians drawn up by those in North Macedonia. At a summit meeting of the European political community in Moldova, President Rumen Radev spoke out strongly against the "provocations" from Skopje. At ceremonies in Sofia, Bulgarian citizenship was solemnly awarded to North Macedonian citizens who had participated in the activities of the Bulgarian cultural clubs suspended by Skopje.

Two additional things should be noted. For the first time, Sofia suggested an option in which Albania would be separated from the "package" with North Macedonia, and received the green light to start the negotiation process for membership in the European Union (EU). This hypothesis would indicate a long-term intention to block North Macedonian integration into the Union. And the second, relations with North Macedonia have again become an important part of Bulgarian domestic policy. The claims of Bulgarian security services that an adviser to the former Prime Minister Kiril Petkov illegally passed on information to Skopje about the Bulgarian position in the negotiations draw this topic into the clash between the political parties and the presidential institution. The current Bulgarian course towards Skopje is iden-

tified to a decisive extent with the figure of President Radev. In other words, any change of course would be perceived not just as a change, but as an attack on Radev.

The Ukrainian background of Bulgarian politics.

The war in Ukraine has drawn a dividing line between Bulgarian politicians and society from its very beginning. There have been no political decisions in the past few weeks. On account of this, the battle for interpretations is escalating. Against the background of this battle, the negotiations to form a regular government are also taking place. More decisive and unequivocal support for Kyiv has become one of the leading causes of the negotiating "Euro-Atlantic parties" GERB-UDF and "We Continue the Change (Produzhavame Promianata) - Democratic Bulgaria" (PP-DB). Such a foreign policy goal, supposedly important for Bulgaria's place in the EU and NATO, is presented as worthy of justifying numerous political compromises between the parties that could not otherwise be made. The cause has also been constructed in a negative way, by defining a common enemy in the face of the Russian "fifth column" in Bulgaria. President Radev is presented as its main exponent, accused of making every effort to wrench Bulgaria from the European orbit. With the means of such propaganda, the topic of a future cabinet no longer looks like a perspective for government, but more like a kind of "parliamentary referendum" to preserve Bulgaria's membership in the EU and NATO.

At the same time, reactions against the "pro-Ukrainian cause" are intensifying. They have received two escalations in the past month – on the streets and politically. In the first case, one of the series of "peace and neutrality marches" held in Sofia led to vandalism of the building of the representation of the European Commission. In the second case, the leader of the nationalist party "Vazrazhdane" Kostadin Kostadinov developed a series of accusations against the US embassy that it not only conducted the negotiations to form a government in Bulgaria, but was also pushing the country towards involvement in the Ukrainian conflict. In view of the candidate discussed for future

minister of defense, the famous anti-Russian “hawk” Todor Tagarev, fears that not weapons, but manpower, could be about to be sent to Ukraine have come to the fore again. These fears have been surprisingly legitimised by former Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov, who warned in an interview that he would be the first to take to the streets to protest against such a decision.

The clash of viewpoints has gradually been brought to absurdity. From one direction come suggestions that if a regular government of the “Euro-Atlantic” parties were not formed immediately, this would lead to Bulgaria leaving the EU and NATO. On the other side, they present the thesis that the EU and the USA are directly organising a regular Bulgarian government in order to send the Bulgarian army to Ukraine.

2

THE INSTITUTIONS AND THE AGENDA OF SOCIETY

The President. The head of state, Rumen Radev, has stepped up his rhetoric against the political parties, taking advantage of the scandals accompanying the negotiations to form a regular government. Leaked information from a meeting of the National Council of “We Continue the Change” (PP), leading to suspicions of engineered illegal practices, prompted the President to declare the mandate to form a PP-DB cabinet “discredited” and call for it to be returned unfulfilled. There followed acute criticism of Radev for exceeding his constitutional powers. Again the threat that he would be impeached began to circulate. Viewed formally, there is little basis for the accusations. According to the Constitution, the President has the right to a political position. Not only Radev, but also his predecessors have taken advantage of this, for example Rosen Plevneliev, who took part in the protests against the government of Plamen Oresharski in 2013. Substantially, the accusations are founded on a triple argument - that Radev is working in favour of Russia to hinder the chances of a “Euro-Atlantic” government, that he “enjoys” his power and does not want to part with it, and that he uses a double standard in his relations with the parties. Answers can easily be found for all three statements. Personally and through his caretaker governments, Radev has done a lot to deepen the European integration of Bulgaria (prioritising the topics of membership in the Eurozone and Schengen) and for its energy diversification (with the construction of the interconnector with Greece, the launch of the “Ring of Solidarity” project, the negotiations with Azerbaijan and Turkey). It is clear that the “enjoyment of power” is an attempt to transfer the problem from a “sick” head to a “healthy” one. The power of Parliament to end this “enjoyment” by electing a regular government has not for one moment been questioned. Why parliament has so far failed to do so is a question for the parties, not the President. And as for the double standard, it consists in the belief that Radev treated the first mandate of GERB far more kindly than the second mandate of PP-DB. However, not only did the scandalous information about the PP meeting come out before the handing over of the second mandate, but Radev himself subsequently commented on the

possible coalition, saying that “he does not expect the kiss between (GERB leader) Borisov and (PP leader) Petkov to spawn anything else except disgust”.

The fact is that even within the current 49th National Assembly, the President preferred not to be an arbiter in the cabinet negotiations, nor to facilitate or encourage them in any way. This could be perceived as a minus against the background of expectations for a constructive role in the political crisis. The thesis of Radev that the mandate of PP-DB is discredited acquires new meaning when a regular cabinet is formed with this mandate. Thus, from the very beginning, Radev positioned himself as an opponent of a “discredited” government. Taking into account Radev’s ambitions of the last year to establish his leading role in the spheres of defence (an important symbol in this regard was the military parade on May 6th) and energy (recently - the talks in Turkey), future points of political tension around the head of state are already emerging.

The Chief Prosecutor. The assassination attempt against the chief prosecutor Ivan Geshev placed the prosecutor’s office permanently at the centre of the political and public debate in Bulgaria. There is an undoubted institutional crisis of the public prosecution. It is expressed in a kind of “internal war” with unprecedented ferocity. The three pillars of the status quo in this sphere have been shaken, namely the support for Geshev in the leadership of the prosecutor’s office, in the Supreme Judicial Council and in the National Assembly. Here are the facts in broad strokes. Deputy Chief Prosecutor Borislav Sarafov distanced himself from Geshev, demanded his resignation and even stated that he was afraid that Geshev would kill him (!). Sarafov’s deputy Yassen Todorov went against Sarafov and demanded his resignation. Six appellate prosecutors submitted a request to remove Geshev and for the first time evened the forces in the Supreme Judicial Council. There was a purely declarative agreement in the parliament for a mechanism to control the chief prosecutor, in the form proposed by the minister of justice Krum Zarkov. This declarative agreement suddenly led to the adoption of the mech-

anism, and at an unprecedented speed, in just one week. A turnaround in the attitude towards Geshev occurred in the two parties that most strongly stood behind him: GERB and the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF). The candidate for Prime Minister, originally nominated by GERB, Maria Gabriel, unexpectedly raised the removal of Geshev as her priority, and MRF expressed their agreement.

Against the background of these processes, Geshev himself declared that “there’s going to be a fight” and made several statements to emphasise his determination and intention to complete his term of office. Two lines of conflict emerged: institutional, between the prosecutor’s office and the National Assembly, and personal, between Geshev and GERB leader Boyko Borisov. On the first line, for now, there is mostly aggressive rhetoric: threats by the chief prosecutor that he will “sweep the political garbage” out of the parliament, and that he will not allow them to “touch the Constitution with greasy fingers”. On the second line,

we observe an attempt to attack Borisov, concentrated in the so-called Barcelonagate: a forgotten money laundering case. Geshev not only promised to bring the case to an end, but also officially demanded the immunity of Borisov as a representative of the people.

The whole confrontation, exposing a long-standing fusion between the judiciary and party politics in Bulgaria, is taking place in parallel with unclear events in the underworld: the murder of the famous accused businessman Krasimir Kamenov - “Kuro” in South Africa, the escape of those considered close to power during the GERB era Petar Petrov – “Pepi the Euro” in the United Arab Emirates, the death announced in Bulgaria of persons wanted by Interpol outside the country Angel Hristov – “Brother Galev”. The public information available does not allow conclusions about the connection of these events with the processes in the judiciary, but in any case it speaks of serious upheavals, which are likely to have continuations in the coming months.

3

THE CONDITION OF THE PARTY SYSTEM

GERB-UDF. The political tactics of GERB leader Boyko Borisov, formed in the last two months, have borne fruit, although perhaps in a context unexpected for everyone. GERB managed to dictate the course of all talks about a regular cabinet. Sincerely enough, the party insisted that for them the best possible partner was PP-DB. PP-DB were politically “disarmed” after agreeing to discuss a common legislative programme with GERB and officially withdraw their proposals for a “minority cabinet”. In itself, this fact marked the first erosion of the claim of PP-DB to be a radical alternative to GERB. Analogically, the refusal of GERB to support this format also marked the first symbolic defeat of PP-DB in the struggle for supremacy between the two main formations. Then GERB nominated none other than the Bulgarian European Commissioner Maria Gabriel as a candidate for Prime Minister. This candidacy itself could hardly raise objections in the PP-DB, because it embodies a commitment at the highest level, an undoubted loyalty to “Euro-Atlanticism” and a distancing from the practices of her party in Bulgaria. Gabriel’s candidacy and her call for the resignation of the Chief Prosecutor suggested that GERB could even seize the PP-DB platform and govern without them, but in their name. Cabinet negotiations with MRF, the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) and “There Is Such a People” (“Ima Takuv Narod” - ITN) turned out to be fictitious, but clearly worried PP-DB and they returned to the dialogue table with GERB to come up with the formula for a “rotational government”. This would mean that for nine months the Prime Minister named by PP-DB would be Nikolay Denkov, and then for nine months - Maria Gabriel, put forward by GERB. In brief, Borisov seems to have achieved practically everything he wanted - agreement on an effective coalition with PP-DB, and indeed one in which he has the right to negotiate the staff composition of the cabinet, to gain control over the Ministry of the Interior, which is very important to him, and he even has a deputy Prime Minister with the prospect of becoming Prime Minister. For a first political power under normal conditions, this may sound insufficient, but under current circumstances it is the way out of international and internal isolation. The unexpected context was born from the sudden war of the chief prosecutor Geshev

against Borisov. Of course, the responsibility should be sought first from Borisov. We cannot judge for sure whether Borisov overestimated his strength, deciding that now was the time to get rid of Geshev and the damage to image associated with him, or whether he wanted to demonstrate his “Euro-Atlantic” loyalty in a categorical way. In any case, the expectations that Geshev would reconcile and give way have been refuted. This is an additional motive for Borisov to insist on the formation of a government. In a conflict with the Chief Prosecutor, it is always better to be part of a party in power than a politician in an election campaign. Borisov’s behaviour seems too much like a project for personal survival. There are comments that his actions will not be well received within his own party, especially in light of the upcoming local elections. Despite everything, assumptions about tremors in GERB at this stage sound exaggerated.

“We Continue the Change (Produlzhavame Proimianata) - Democratic Bulgaria” (PP-DB). For the second time in two years, it seems that the “forces of change” will form a cabinet with their own mandate and with their own Prime Minister - in this case Academician Nikolay Denkov. However, the price of this success is not low. It is as if the legacy of the protests of the summer of 2020 has been completely consumed. PP and DB were the two formations that most embodied in public opinion the struggle of “change” against the “status quo”: negation of GERB and MRF and partnership with President Radev. Today, the same two formations enter into a *de facto* coalition with GERB, seek support from MRF for changes in the Constitution and declare President Radev as their main enemy. The reasons are hardly rooted only in a pragmatic reading of the election results.

PP-DB in the last month have been devoted to crisis PR. Two main events have provoked this behaviour. First was the decision of GERB to start negotiations with MRF, BSP and ITN for a government. Suddenly, the PP-DB seemed to have decided that they were losing the game and that they could end up as an isolated opposition to a self-proclaimed pro-European government. Moreover, they would appear to be an

opposition that was already compromised with its initial dialogue with GERB and could not honestly claim consistency and intransigence. That is why PP-DB gave signals that they were inclined to revise their previous position and even change the draft cabinet they had announced. All this, of course, was accompanied by declarations about the sacrifices to be made in the name of "Euro-Atlanticism". The second event created a far greater scandal. A recording was leaked of a meeting of the leadership of PP, where the future intentions of the party sound from the first person: to immediately change the heads of departments "legally or illegally", to have them consult with "embassies", to protect Borisov from the investigations of the prosecutor's office, to make ministers to "sign in blood" that they would purge the people of GERB and the President. PP first stated that the recording was a conspiracy by the security services, then admitted its authenticity and announced that they were proud of it. The political reaction of GERB was to "freeze" the cabinet negotiations, but soon afterwards the negotiations were "unfrozen" and brought to a final agreement. The subject of the recording clearly showed PP-DB that if they did not form a government now, they would be in danger of electoral and political collapse.

In this way, the two leading formations in the 49th National Assembly reached joint governance - in the name of their party or survival of the leadership. And, just as with GERB this will hardly lead to party disintegration, so with PP-DB it is unlikely that centrifugal processes can be expected. The ambition for power seems strong enough to reconcile the parties in the coalition and their supporters to serious compromises.

"Vazrazhdane" ("Revival"). The option outlined for a government of GERB-UDF and PP-DB is good news for "Vazrazhdane". Firstly, because it confirms their constant position that GERB and PP-DB are not actual opponents in Bulgarian politics, but two wings of the same external forces. Second, because the recording of the meeting of PP supports the version of "Vazrazhdane" with examples, that what is happening in Bulgaria is guided and coordinated by the US Embassy. Thirdly, because in parliamentary terms, the new coalition extricates "Vazrazhdane" from the delicate moment of doing joint opposition actions with one of the two big parties. "Vazrazhdane" have a chance to establish themselves as the main parliamentary opposition. MRF, BSP or ITN cannot boast of such a principled disagreement to take part in governance with the leading parties. On the contrary, each of the other three parliamentary powers have until recently engaged in negotiations for participation.

For "Vazrazhdane" a path has really been opened towards political and electoral ascendancy. However, this occurs with increasingly clear anti-American and now even anti-European radicalisation of the

party, which in turn increases the risk of a "sanitary cordon". The rhetoric of "national betrayal" used by "Vazrazhdane" is ceasing to be just rhetoric, and this is evidenced by the report to the prosecutor's office against the leaders of PP.

Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF). The effects of the political process on MRF involve contradictions. We can look first at the governmental context. For the first time since the beginning of the political crisis, MRF got involved in real talks about a coalition cabinet, in the case of GERB, but not only did they not lead anywhere, but they also created the impression that the party was being used by Borisov as an alibi for returning to negotiations with PP - DB. The irate reactions of MRF later against the "unprincipled agreements" with PP-DB betrayed, as it were, the dissatisfaction with this "trickery". Party leader Mustafa Karadayi even threatened riots if a GERB cabinet with PP-DB was formed, though he quickly moved to softer formulation of the wording.

At the same time, the role of MRF should not be underestimated. The meeting of the negotiating teams of GERB and PP-DB with MRF on the issues of future constitutional reform was apparently aimed at calming the tension. MRF spoke of a "collapse of statehood" and called for a Grand National Assembly. In this way, the party clearly wanted to suggest that they would not allow themselves to play a passive role in a constitutional debate, but would try to lead it. In any case, the place of MRF in the future parliamentary configuration remains undefined. An interesting detail is an excerpt from the PP recording, in which it is claimed that in a few weeks Karadayi would be replaced. This was followed by a letter from MRF Honorary Chairman Ahmed Dogan defending the chairmanship of Karadayi. However, the impression that this ends speculation about the party leadership is probably premature. Dogan's letter states nothing other than the well-known practice of MRF of not allowing forces outside the party to pre-decide their own issues regarding personnel.

Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP). The party is preparing to build an image of principled opposition against the "union of the right" from GERB and PP-DB. Such a coalition probably creates hopes for the party leadership in at least two directions - first, immediate new pre-term elections will be avoided, which would hardly end favourably for BSP, and second, a government at such a time will be burdened from the very start with big negatives, which would give BSP a chance to stand out as an alternative again.

The probability that BSP will overcome the electoral and political decline is, however, not great for now. Here are at least three reasons for this. An ambiguous attitude towards power is the first one. The par-

ty leadership entered into talks with GERB about a cabinet, discussed leadership meetings and even announced an internal party poll for future participation in the government. The negotiations were then abruptly broken off, and the poll cancelled. But the claims of Ninova and her cronies that any comments about a coalition with GERB, as always, were lies of the enemies, are clearly frivolous. They do not give an answer to the obvious question as to what the negotiations with GERB were about and what the subject of the poll would be. In other words, Ninova could not hide the impression that she was ready to govern with Borisov. The second reason concerns the attitude towards the Attorney General. Ninova has always avoided making the issue of Geshev's resignation a priority. However, two events gave rise to the belief that this was not by chance. The declaration of BSP that it was breaking off talks with GERB came just hours after Geshev's first press conference, in which he resolutely attacked Borisov. And shortly after this, when parliament was discussing the mechanism of control over the chief prosecutor, Ninova, under a strange pretext, withdrew the party's MPs from the hall, and thus BSP turned out to be the only parliamentary force that actually supported Geshev, even if simply by not participating. Of course, there is no data (yet) explaining Ninova's possible support for Geshev, but in any case, these episodes also undermine the claim of BSP to being principled. The third reason is related to the constant fierce criticism by the party leadership of the President and caretaker governments. Ninova uses literally every opportunity to cast doubt on Radev's policies on a huge range of topics: from the fairness of elections to the spending of pension funds. It can definitely be said that there is no formation in Bulgaria, not even PP-DB, which is so fiercely mobilised

against the head of state. If one bears in mind that the positions of Radev and BSP on a number of issues are close or coincide, many come to the conviction that it is a matter of personal vendetta, which has no place in serious politics.

The behaviour of BSP once again suggests not intentions of unification and consolidation, but ambitions to ostracise and remove. The trend of losing confidence in municipal councillors in localities is continuing – and this just before local elections. A drastic example is the decision of the National Council of the party to exclude any member of BSP who has been appointed in the new caretaker cabinet of President Radev. Obviously, this was preparation for mob law, with figures such as Krum Zarkov, Yavor Gechev and Vesela Lecheva. It is true that the prospect of a new caretaker cabinet has subsided for now, but the policy of party purges has not been abandoned and this does not bode well for BSP in the coming months.

“There is Such a People” (“Ima Takuv Narod” - ITN). The information that ITN were holding talks with GERB for a joint government seemed to be heading towards placing Slavi Trifonov's party in the position of “Bulgarian Rise” of the last parliament: a small force that had compromised its cause and deservedly lost electoral support. However, the change in GERB's behaviour actually “rescued” ITN. The party took on its favourite role of criticising the “GERB model” and the MRF MP Delyan Peevski, this time supposedly standing in the same camp as the “PP traitors”. The immediate and effective messages with which the transformation was carried out at ITN is a good indicator of their impending perspective as an active and flexible participant in the political process.

4

MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND FORECASTS

The tension with North Macedonia and the dilemmas surrounding the war in Ukraine are not new topics in Bulgarian politics. However, their context is evolving and changing. In the last year, there has been a definite increase in nationalist rhetoric in Bulgaria. This is partly due to the rise of the party “Vazrazhdane”, but not only this. Assessments of events from a “national” perspective are no longer just partisan. The rhetoric of “external pressure” and “national betrayal” has spread out of marginality and into widespread use. The official Bulgarian position in relation to North Macedonia and Ukraine is largely clear, but there is no clear perspective in it. The North Macedonian case is in deadlock - it seems that nothing else can be done on the chosen path, except for the non-stop exchange of claims and counter-claims. The nuanced behaviour of the Bulgarian institutions in relation to the military aid to Ukraine, in turn, leaves both camps - pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian - dissatisfied. However, a more decisive change in Bulgarian politics could drastically increase public tension and deepen the political crisis.

With a government formed by GERB and PP-DB, such a political change is expected, but highly risky. This government would take office in a climate of low trust and acute confrontation. In previous editions of *Politbarometer*, we have pointed out that the union between the two leading formations is the most realistic (although perhaps temporary) way out of the spiral of pre-term elections. Despite everything, this union is turning out to be extremely unstable, charged with internal tension and mutual mistrust between the partners. An imminent “divorce” does not inevitably follow from this. But the two leading formations constitute a majority under the most unfavourable conditions possible for them, with public opinion convinced that it is not a matter of a union in the name of some policy, but of a union in the name of mutual salvation - on one side from prosecution, and on the other side from an electoral collapse, and both together from the pressure exerted on them to see eye to eye. A new Bulgarian line regarding North Macedonia and Ukraine would not only meet strong resistance, but would also further bring the new coa-

lition into confrontation with President Rumen Radev, who has identified himself with the previous line.

In reality, the great intrigue of the new union is the problem of the “revision” of Radev’s “legacy” in the executive power - whether such a revision will take place, in what areas it would develop, how far it would be ready to go, whether it would cover the topics that are of key importance to the President, and whether there would be a more serious clash with unpredictable institutional and political consequences. The two formations are striving to legitimise their union, at least in part, as anti-presidential. Radev can be described in their propaganda as an enemy from whom parliamentary democracy must be saved with no matter what means and compromises. It is not clear, however, whether this will remain mostly rhetoric, or be transformed into real actions.

The problems facing a future majority of GERB and PP-DB are diverse. This is a majority that has been formed without a clear platform, if we do not count the rather vague legislative programme from the first days of the 49th National Assembly. The legitimisation of the majority often goes round in a vicious circle – “we have to make a cabinet because we have to make a cabinet”. The new majority also has no clear budget concept, apart from the general belief that taxes should not be raised and the deficit should not be high. This essentially means a move towards a right-wing budget, although this has not been officially announced. Social and economic revitalisation in this sense is questionable. The new majority are trying to mask their political uncertainty with ambitious plans for constitutional reform. That is why discussions of the judiciary are likely to occupy a major share of political messages in the coming months. The new majority has already been accused of betraying the civic energy of 2020. The effort to compensate for this could encourage social adventurism and spectacular initiatives, on the one hand, and maintaining a high degree of confrontation, on the other. The new majority have also received the “blessing” of a number of significant figures from the past such as Alexey Petrov and Stoyan Denchev, thereby reviving public suspicions behind

the scenes. The new majority is ultimately faced with at least two stumbling blocks. One is related to the local elections, when the coalition partners will have to face each other at grass roots level. The other stems from the adopted "rotation" mechanism, whereby sometime in March 2024 the government will have to resign in order for another to be elected with another Prime Minister. This in itself is a prerequisite for political upheavals. And then the proximity of March 2024 to the European elections in May of that year will increase the temptations for new pre-term elections (2 in 1) in which each of the partners tries to prevail over the other.

All these ideas, of course, are hypotheses that are subject to clarification and change depending on the situation. For now, at least, two immediate things stand out. One is the problem with the Chief Prosecutor Ivan Geshev - whether he should be removed and replaced by a similar figure with similar engagements - such an attitude undoubtedly exists - or whether this should become an occasion for a real reform of the prosecutor's office, which guarantees the rule of law, on which the acting Minister of Justice Krum Zarkov has been insisting for a long time...

And what the place of Geshev himself in one or the other version would be. The second thing is the kind of competition in opposition, which seems to have already started in the National Assembly. The parties that are not part of the new majority are very keen to be perceived as their implacable opposition. This raises the central question of where the dividing line in the Bulgarian political debate will be - between the parties in the National Assembly, or between the government and the President.

The weakness of the Socialist Party largely predetermines the unprincipled basis of the political process in the past weeks. It can be seen that there is no one to unequivocally state the essential problems of Bulgarian society, caused above all by inflation and budget unpredictability, and therefore it is easy for the parties to replace these problems with all kinds of other plots. The sunset of the divide between "status quo" and "change" that we are witnessing in the current parliament is a huge chance for a left to break out of this dilemma and point to the possibility of a different agenda. However, under the leadership of Korneliya

Ninova, BSP is unable to fulfill this role.

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