

Press release – Bulgaria: MEPs calls for EU values to be fully and unconditionally respected



In a [resolution](#) adopted with 358 votes in favour, 277 against and 56 abstentions, MEPs express their “unequivocal support for the people of Bulgaria in their legitimate demands and aspirations for justice, transparency, accountability and democracy”. They condemn the police violence and “disproportionate intervention”, in particular any use of force against women and children and journalists, as well as the “unlawful and excessive audits” into private businesses that support the protests.

European values under threat

The text notes a “significant deterioration of respect for the principles of rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights, including the independence of the judiciary, separation of powers, the fight against corruption and freedom of the media”. It focuses also on persisting systemic issues in the judiciary, especially the lack of a framework to hold the Supreme Judicial Council and the Prosecutor General accountable.

Other concerns include:

- constitutional reform, which should be in line with international standards
- possible changes to electoral law, close to the next parliamentary elections
- legislation adopted too hastily
- investigations into high-level corruption without tangible results
- the state of fundamental rights, e.g. as regards hate speech, gender and sexual discrimination, the rights of Romani people and asylum seekers.

Media freedom and EU funds

MEPs condemn smear campaigns and violence against journalists. They are deeply concerned by the deterioration in media freedom, transparency and the lack of diversity in media ownership, and worried that EU funds are allegedly more likely to be given to government-friendly outlets. They highlight the need for stricter controls on EU spending and want concerns over taxpayers' money being used to enrich those close to the ruling party to be addressed immediately.

Quote and debate

"The rule of law means separation of powers, but allegations of judicial corruption and politically-driven prosecutions proliferate. It means media freedom, but we witness the government exerting increasing influence on public media and applying clientelism when it comes to private media. It means upholding civil rights, but we are witnessing police brutality and the suppression of the rights of minorities", said rapporteur [Juan Fernando López Aguilar](#) (S&D, ES).

Catch up with the recorded debate (Monday, 5 October) [here](#) – around the 19.39 mark.

Background

Protestors in Bulgaria have called for Prime Minister Boyko Borissov and chief prosecutor Ivan Geshev to resign, as citizens grow increasingly more frustrated over systemic political corruption.