

Press release – “Unequivocal support” for the people of Bulgaria in their legitimate demands



The Civil Liberties Committee approved, with 35 votes in favour, 30 against and one abstention, a [draft resolution](#) on the “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” in Bulgaria.

MEPs highlight the need for the Bulgarian Government to ensure stricter control of the way EU funds are spent and to address immediately the concerns that taxpayers’ money is being used to enrich those associated with the ruling party.

The text focuses also on persisting systemic issues in the judiciary, especially the lack of a framework in place to hold the Supreme Judicial Council and the Prosecutor General accountable and the failure to comply with over 45 European Court of Human Rights judgments by carrying out effective investigations.

MEPs are further concerned about a series of developments, including:

- the announced constitutional reform, which should be preceded by proper consultations and be in line with international standards
- potential changes in electoral legislation, close to the next parliamentary elections
- the hasty adoption of legislation by the governing majority
- investigations into high-level corruption not yielding tangible results and “corruption, inefficiency, and a lack of accountability”
- the serious deterioration of media freedom and working conditions for journalists in Bulgaria over the past decade

- allegations against the Bulgarian police regarding the use of force against women and children and journalists during demonstrations
- the state of fundamental rights in Bulgaria, e.g. as regards hate speech, gender and sexual discrimination, and the rights of Romani people and asylum seekers.

Quote

“European law matters; the rule of law matters. The rule of law is linked with defending the interests of the EU and fighting against corruption. Mapping corruption shows clearly that member states with structural deficiencies on rule of law are those most prone to resort to corrupt practices when managing EU budget and funds. That has to come to an end”, said rapporteur [Juan Fernando López Aguilar](#) (S&D, ES).

Next steps

The resolution is set to be voted on by the full house on 8 October.

Background

Protests in Bulgaria erupted on 9 July, with demonstrators calling for Prime Minister Boyko Borissov and chief prosecutor Ivan Geshev to resign, based on allegations of corruption and state capture. Citizens took to the streets following two incidents that have added to the public’s growing frustration over systemic political corruption.