European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook **64**: 64–87, 2025
doi: 10.1111/2047-8852.70025

Bulgaria: Political Developments and Data in 2024

Elections, EPlections, Elections!

MARIA SPIROVA
Universiteit Leiden, Leiden, the Netherlands

Abstract

This entry deals with developments in the electoral arena, coalition politics, and within political parties in Bulgaria. In 2024, Bulgarian politics remained marked by instability, fragmentation, and public distrust, mirroring 2023. The collapse of the coalition Cabinet and two election rounds left incumbent *Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria* dominant, while *We Continue the Change–Democratic Bulgaria* declined in influence, despite sharing the incumbency position. Smaller parties faced leadership and organizational challenges, complicating coalition-building. A key political fault-line centered on DPS leader Delyan Peevski, who remained influential despite being sanctioned under the US Magnitsky Act. Despite internal strife, Bulgaria achieved progress toward EU integration, joining Schengen and advancing Eurozone accession. However, Euroskepticism grew, fuelled by pro-Russian sympathies among some parties. Contentious issues such as LGBTQ+ rights, migration, and domestic violence continued to polarize society and dominate political debate.

Introduction

The political year 2023 in Bulgaria ended with the infamous *sglobka* (makeshift) *Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria* (GERB–*We Continue the Change–Democratic Bulgaria* (PP-DB) coalition Cabinet in power, which experienced challenges from the parliamentary opposition and society at large (Spirova 2024). During 2024, political instability returned and intensified with the failure of the Cabinet, two new rounds of national elections, and a caretaker Cabinet still in power on 31 December 2024. Polarization continued with more nationalist parties making it into Parliament, and social ambivalence toward Russia, LGBTQ+ rights, and migration.

At the same time, Bulgaria made progress toward its European Union integration: It became a member of the Schengen Area for air and sea travel on 31 March 2024, with checks at air and sea borders being lifted. After a process that lasted more than a decade, the entry of the country into the Eurozone also came closer, despite substantial domestic debate.

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.
This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Election report

European Parliament (EP) elections

EP elections were held on June 9, together with the first early elections for the national Parliament. This allowed the EP elections to benefit in terms of turnout, which, at 33.78 per cent, was slightly lower than for the national elections but maintained similar levels to the last 2019 EP elections (32.64 per cent). Thirty-one parties competed for 17 seats in the EP, and results largely mirrored the national elections outcome (Table 1).[1] All in all, Bulgaria sent six MEPs to the European People's Party, three to the liberal Renew Europe, three to the Europe of Sovereign Nations group, two to the Socialists & Democrats, one to the European Conservatives and Reformists group, and two MEPs remained non-affiliated (European Parliament 2025). More than usual, competition for the EP seats was dominated by the issues of the national elections, as the saga of four years of never-ending elections would suggest.

Parliamentary elections

June elections

Two rounds of early parliamentary elections took place during 2024, putting the tally of elections at seven for the 2021–2024 period, of which six were early elections. In March 2024, the *sglobka* Cabinet fell apart (see section on Cabinet). With other parties unable to produce a Cabinet, on 9 April, President Rumen Radev called an early election and began consultations to appoint a caretaker Prime Minister.

The Central Election Commission started the registration process for political parties participating in both the national and EP elections on 15 April. Parties were required to submit at least 2500 valid voter signatures and could use a single list for both elections. Thirty-two parties registered and competed for the votes of 34.41 per cent (2,268,849) of the Bulgarian electorate. The failure of the GERB-SDS/PP-DB *sglobka* Cabinet impacted the two constituents in a different way. The campaign continued to be dominated by the conflicts between the two parties, but GERB-SDS seemed to emerge stronger, while PP-DB seemed to have disappointed its supporters by both joining and leading the coalition and declined in popularity (Petrov 2024).

Seven parties crossed the electoral threshold to enter the 50th National Assembly (Table 2). Six of them had been in the previous Parliament. GERB-SDS secured the highest share of votes, at 24.70 per cent, and maintained its plurality position in the National Assembly. The Turkish-dominated *Movement for Rights and Freedoms* (DPS) emerged as the second parliamentary group with 17.07 per cent of the votes, leaving PP-DB with 14.33 per cent in third place. PP-DP lost about half of the votes it had held in 2023, clearly suffering from its participation in the *sglobka* Cabinet. Nationalist and pro-Russian *Vazrazhdane* lost a bit but maintained a solid 13.78 per cent and kept its substantial presence in Parliament. At 7.06 per cent the *Bulgarian Socialists* (BSP) continued its downward trend (it received 15.01 per cent in April 2021), while *There is Such a People* (ITN) increased its vote share to 5.96 per cent, but both generally maintained their positions from the previous legislature. Among Bulgarians voting abroad, DPS emerged as the leading political force, securing 31.74

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Table 1. Elections to the European Parliament in Bulgaria in 2024

Date of election		9 June 2024	Previous election	26 May 2019						
Electorate		6,170,472	Total seats	17						
Total votes cast		2,074,220	Turnout	33.8%						
Valid votes cast		1,949,250	Share of valid vote	94.0%						
Party			EP group	Votes			Seats			
				N	%	Δ%	*N*	%	Δ*N*	Δ%
Citizens for European Development–Union of Democratic Forces	Coalition Grazhdani za evropeysko razvitie na Balgariya	(GERB-SDS)	(EPP)	474,059	23.5%	−6.6%	5	29.4%	−1	−10.6%
Movements for Rights and Freedoms	*Dvijenie za prava i svobodi*	(DPS)	(Renew Europe)	295,865	13.5%	−2.6%	3	17.6%	2	11.0%
Coalition We Continue the Change–Democratic Bulgaria	*Koaliciya Produlzhavame Promyanata–Demokratichna Bulgaria*	(PP-DB)	(EPP)	290,865	14.5%	100.0%	1	5.9%	0	0.0%
Coalition We Continue the Change–Democratic Bulgaria	*Koaliciya Produlzhavame Promyanata–Demokratichna Bulgaria*	(PP-DB)	(Renew Europe)	290,865	14.5%	100.0%	2	11.8%	2	11.8%

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

Table 1. (Continued)

Date of election	9 June 2024	Previous election	26 May 2019	
Electorate	6,170,472	Total seats	17	
Total votes cast	2,074,220	Turnout	33.8%	
Valid votes cast	1,949,250	Share of valid vote	94.0%	

Party			EP group	Votes			Seats			
				N	%	Δ%	*N*	%	Δ*N*	Δ%
Revival	*Vazrazhdane*		(NI)	281,434	14.2%	100.0%	3	17.6%	0	0.0%
Bulgarian Socialist Party for Bulgaria	*Bulgaraska socialisticheska partiya za Bulgaria*	(BSP)	(S&D)	141,178	7.1%	−16.4%	2	11.8%	−3	−17.6%
PP There are such people	*PP Ima takuv narod*	(ITN)	(NI)	121,572	6.2%	100.0%	1	5.9%	0	0.0%
Other parties	*Drugi partii*	(DP)		405,737	20.3%	12.3%				

Notes:
1. There is no distinction of where the votes of PP-DB went. Therefore, no information about how many to EPP and how many to Renew Europe.
2. 2024 is the year with least percentage of women elected (23.43%), compared to 2009 with 44%.
3. There is a difference of two spots between the constitutive session and the outgoing Parliament.
Sources: https://results.cik.bg/europe2024/rezultati/index.html.

Table 2. Elections to Parliament (50-to Narodno Sabranie) in Bulgaria in 2024

Date of election	9 June 2024	Previous election	2 April 2023
Electorate	6,594,593	Total seats	240
Total votes cast	2,074,220	Turnout	34.4%
Valid votes cast	1,949,250	Share of valid vote	94.0%

Party			Votes			Seats			
			N	%	Δ%	*N*	%	Δ*N*	Δ%
Citizens for European Development–Union of Democratic Forces	*Grazhdani za evropeysko razvitie na Bulgaria–Sayuz na democratichnite sili*	(GERB-SDS)	530,658	24.7%	−1.8%	68	28.3%	−1	−0.5%
Movements for Rights and Freedoms	*Dvijenie za prava i svobodi*	(DPS)	366,310	17.1%	3.3%	47	19.6%	11	4.6%
Coalition We Continue the Change–Democratic Bulgaria	*Koaliciya Produlzhavame Promyanata–Demokratichna Bulgaria*	(PP-DB)	307,849	14.3%	−10.3%	39	16.3%	−25	−10.3%
Revival	*Vazrazhdane*		295,915	13.8%	−0.4%	38	15.8%	1	0.4%
Bulgarian Socialist Party for Bulgaria	*Bulgaraska socialisticheska partiya za Bulgaria*	(BSP)	151,569	7.1%	−1.8%	19	7.9%	−4	−1.7%
PP There are such people	*PP Ima takuv narod*	(ITN)	128,007	6.0%	1.9%	16	6.7%	5	2.1%
PP Greatness	*PP Velichie*		99,862	4.7%	4.7%	13	5.4%	13	5.4%

Source: Central Election Commission (2024; https://results.cik.bg/europe2024/rezultati/index.html).

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

per cent of the overseas vote, followed by PP-DB with 19.69 per cent (see Spirova 2024, for details on the parties).

The big surprise of the elections was the entry of *Velichie* (Greatness) in Parliament, with 4.65 per cent of the votes. The party that had not even appeared as a potential option to support in the opinion polls, as nobody had seen it as promising to reach the 4 per cent electoral threshold, needed to enter Parliament. It was formed around the personality of Ivelin Mihaylov, a businessman from the Varna region, who had developed a historical patriotic amusement park in the village of Neofit Rilski, near Varna. Allegedly, he and his followers had organized to stop the building of a wind electric turbine. The party campaigned on patriotism, EU skepticism, and populism (Zapryanov 2023).

Given this distribution of mandates in Parliament and the continuing unresolved animosities among the parties, Cabinet negotiations promised to be difficult. Cabinet formation failed again, with neither GERB-SDS nor any of the other leading party factions able to secure the political support for its proposed Cabinets. On 27 August, President Radev scheduled new early elections for 27 October 2024.

October elections

Twenty-nine parties competed at the elections in October, and eight entered Parliament, one more than in June[2] (Table 3). Turnout was 38.94 per cent, slightly up from June. Election Day proceeded without major disruptions, and the Central Electoral Commission reported no significant violations. Technical issues with voting machines were reported in a small number of polling stations—95 machines in total (91 in Bulgaria and four abroad) were taken out of use due to malfunctions such as printing errors, paper jams, or startup failures. In all affected locations, voting continued using paper ballots.

The effective number of parliamentary parties remained above seven (7.55 in June and 7.2 in October), signaling a highly fragmented Parliament and a difficult government formation situation. There were two main reasons for the sustained and even further fragmentation of Parliament.The first one was the major split in one of the few perennial parties in Bulgaria—the party traditionally representing the Turkish minority, DPS. Following a major leadership crisis in the summer of 2024 (see Political Party Report), two entities competed in October 2024:DPS–*New Beginning*, led by the Delyan Peevski, and *Alliance for Rights and Freedoms* (APS), led by the DPS founder Ahmed Dogan. Both parties did well and increased their combined share of votes and percentage points. However, bitter personal and organizational disputes tarnished even further the image of the party in the political system.

The other reason was the continued fragmentation in the extreme right segment of the political system. In the 2023 elections, *Vazrazhdane (Revival)* was the only party of an openly nationalist position in Parliament, but in 2024, two parties took away from its votes and made it into Parliament: *Velichie* in June and *Moral, Edinstvo, Chest/Morality, Unity, Honor* (MECh, meaning sword in Bulgarian) in October. The newest entry into Parliament, MECh, is a nationalist, populist and euroskeptic party founded earlier in 2024 by Rosen Vasilev, former MP from ITN and PP. Similar to *Velichie*, MECh obtained a lot of votes among the younger voters, using TikTok to promote its anti-establishment messages. The story of MECh is very typical of new party formations in the country.

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Table 3. Elections to Parliament (51-vo Narodno Sabranie) in Bulgaria in 2024

Date of election	27 October 2024	Previous election	9 June 2024
Electorate	6,601,262	Total seats	240
Total votes cast	2,570,690	Turnout	38.9%
Valid votes cast	2,436,456	Share of valid vote	94.8%

Party			Votes			Seats			
			N	%	Δ%	*N*	%	Δ*N*	Δ%
Citizens for European Development–Union of Democratic Forces	*Grazhdani za evropeysko razvitie na Bulgaria–Sayuz na democratichnite sili*	(GERB-SDS)	642,973	26.4%	1.7%	69	28.8%	−1	0.5%
Coalition We Continue the Change–Democratic Bulgaria	*Koaliciya Produlzhavame Promyanata–Demokratichna Bulgaria*	(PP-DB)	346,063	14.2%	−0.1%	37	15.4%	−2	−0.9%
Revival	*Vazrazhdane*		325,466	13.4%	−0.4%	35	14.6%	−3	−1.2%
Movement for Rights and Freedoms-A New Beginning	*Dvijenie za prava i svobodi-Novo Nachalo*	(DPS-NN)	281,356	11.5%	−5.6%	30	12.5%	−17	−7.1%

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

Table 3. (Continued)

Date of election	27 October 2024	Previous election	9 June 2024
Electorate	6,601,262	Total seats	240
Total votes cast	2,570,690	Turnout	38.9%
Valid votes cast	2,436,456	Share of valid vote	94.8%

Party			Votes			Seats			
			N	%	Δ%	*N*	%	Δ*N*	Δ%
Bulgarian Socialist Party-United Left	*Bulgaraska socialisticheska partiya za Bulgaria-United Left*	(BSP-OL)	184,403	7.6%	0.6%	20	8.3%	1	0.4%
Alliance for Rights and Freedoms	*Alians za prava i svobodi*	(APS)	182,253	7.5%	−9.6%	19	7.9%	−28	−11.7%
Political party There are such people	*PP Ima Takuv Narod*	(PP ITN)	165,160	6.8%	0.8%	18	7.5%	2	0.8%
Political party Morale, Unity, Honour	*PP MECh*	(MECh)	111,965	4.6%	4.6%	12	5.0%	12	5.0%

Notes:
1. DPS split since the last election to DPS-NN and APS. Calculated by new party result − old party. In other words, numbers of those parties refer to APS result − DPS result and DPS-NN result − DPS result.
2. BSP-OL was previously called BSP for Bulgaria.
Source: Central Election Commission (2024; https://results.cik.bg/pe202410/rezultati/index.html).

Cabinet report

Cabinet instability and a new mechanism of appointing caretaker Cabinets were the most important aspects of Bulgaria's politics in 2024. The Denkov Cabinet (Table 4) was an unusual and innovative set-up: a rotating Prime Minister formula was introduced, with PP-DB's Nikolay Denkov serving as PM and GERB-SDS's Maria Gabriel as Vice PM for the first nine months, then set to swap roles in March 2024. From the start, the coalition faced skepticism due to the parties' prior pledges not to govern together, with critics—especially BSP, ITN, and *Vazrazhdane*—dismissing it as a fragile, foreign-influenced arrangement (see Spirova 2024, for details). Nicknamed the *sglobka* Cabinet, it became synonymous with political collusion.

When the time for the rotation came in March, trouble also started within the coalition. As the constitution does not allow for the power-sharing set-up that was created, Denkov had to resign for Gabriel to be appointed as PM. GERB-SDS used the opportunity to try to re-negotiate the agreed manner of distributing seats in the Cabinet, as well the major regulatory bodies. Also of significance, although unspoken and of importance, was the role permitted for DPS-affiliated people to play in the government. On 19 March, Gabriel submitted a proposal for a Cabinet that was not approved by PP-DB. Follow-up negotiations failed, and on 25 March, GERB-SDS declared that its attempt to form a coalition was unsuccessful. Following constitutional procedure, ITN received the third mandate to form a new Cabinet, but returned it unfulfilled to the President, officially confirming that Bulgaria was heading for another early parliamentary election (see June Elections).

A new caretaker Cabinet had to be appointed by the President, and for the first time under the new constitutional rules, was adopted in December 2023 (Spirova 2024). The constitutional amendments significantly limited the President's options for appointing a caretaker Prime Minister, as only specific officeholders—such as the Speaker of Parliament, the Governor or Deputy Governor of the Bulgarian National Bank, members of the National Audit Office leadership, and the Ombudsman or their deputies—could be appointed to the role. This constraint raised concerns about potential delays in organizing the elections, especially if a suitable candidate could not be promptly identified or willing to serve, and also concerns, of course, about the party leaning of these candidates, most of whom are appointed to their original positions by Parliament. On 9 April, caretaker PM Glavchev was appointed by Radev. Glavchev had been GERB MP in previous Parliaments, and since July 2023, was chairman of the National Audit Office. For the first time in the post-1990s political history of the country, the President openly appointed a politician of the governing party as caretaker PM rather than a figure of their own choosing.

Two ministers of Glavchev I were replaced within a week of the Cabinet taking office. GERB's deputy chairman, Daniel Mitov, replaced Stefan Dimitrov as Foreign Minister, while Georgi Takhov, considered close to President Rumen Radev, replaced Kiril Vatev as Agriculture Minister. This effectively gave GERB control of the Foreign Ministry, while President Radev gained influence of the Agriculture Ministry, which distributes major EU funds. Vice President Iliana Yotova expressed concerns about the changes, suggesting that if the caretaker Cabinet proved to be partisan rather than independent, suspicions would grow (Mediapool 2024).

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

Table 4. Cabinet composition of Denkov I in Bulgaria in 2024

Duration of Cabinet	Inception	6 June 2023	Dissolution	19 June 2024					
Period covered by table	From	1 January 2024	Until	19 June 2024					
Type of Cabinet	Minimum winning coalition								
A.	Party/gender composition on 1 January 2024			Seats in Cabinet		Seats held by women		Seats in Parliament	
				N	%	*N*	% of party	*N*	%
	Independent	*Bezpartien*		12	60.0%	1	8.3%	4	1.7%
	Coalition We Continue the Change–Democratic Bulgaria	*Koaliciya Produlzhavame Promyanata–Demokratichna Bulgaria*	(PP-DB)	7	35.0%	2	28.6%	63	26.3%
	Citizens for European Development–Union of Democratic Forces	*Grazhdani za evropeysko razvitie na Bulgaria–Sayuz na democratichnite sili*	(GERB-SDS)	1	5.0%	1	100.0%	69	28.8%
	Totals			20	100.0%	4	20.0%	136	56.8%
B.	Composition of Denkov I Cabinet on 1 January 2024								
	See previous editions of the Political Data Yearbook for Bulgaria or http://politicaldatayearbook.com								
C.	Changes in composition of Denkov I Cabinet during 2024								
	Ministerial title		Outgoing minister		Outgoing date		Incoming minister		Comments
	NONE								

Table 4. (Continued)

D.	Party/gender composition on 19 June 2024			Seats in Cabinet		Seats held by women		Seats in Parliament	
				N	%	*N*	% of party	*N*	%
	Independent	*Bezpartien*		12	60.0%	1	8.3%	4	1.7%
	Coalition We Continue the Change–Democratic Bulgaria	*Koaliciya Produlzhavame Promyanata–Demokratichna Bulgaria*	(PP-DB)	7	35.0%	2	28.6%	63	26.3%
	Citizens for European Development–Union of Democratic Forces	*Grazhdani za evropeysko razvitie na Bulgaria–Sayuz na democratichnite sili*	(GERB-SDS)	1	5.0%	1	100.0%	69	28.8%
	Totals			20	100.0%	4	20.0%	136	56.8%

Sources: Government website (2024; www.gov.bg/); previous table from 2024 (2023 data).

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

On 1 July, following the June legislative elections, GERB party leader Boyko Borissov proposed a minority government with Rosen Zhelyazkov as Prime Minister, including key ministers from the current caretaker government. The proposal was unsuccessful. On 22 July, PP-DB received the second mandate to form a Cabinet and returned it unfulfilled to President Rumen Radev, as it did not receive support for the coalition's proposed package of anti-corruption measures and solutions. The third mandate was given to ITN, which also returned it unfulfilled after five days of negotiations for a possible regular Cabinet (Ficheva 2024). This opened the door for a second caretaker Cabinet for the year and new elections.

More drama followed in early August, again demonstrating the changing relations between GERB and the DPS, led by Peevski. In early August, Rumen Radev refused to sign the decree with the Cabinet composition proposed by Goritsa Grancharova-Kozhareva, the nominated caretaker Prime Minister. The refusal was brought around by the retention of Interior Minister Kalin Stoyanov in his position. His appointment, which GERB-SD had insisted upon, was seen as an open link to DPS. The head of state offered Kozhareva more time to reconsider the decision and propose a new candidate for Interior Minister, but she refused. In an unprecedented step, Radev had to choose a new candidate as caretaker PM (Capital 2024).

Ultimately, Glavchev remained as PM, and Glavchev II was formed as caretaker Cabinet until the October elections (Tables 5 and 6). Ministerial portfolios were reshuffled, but the make-up of the Cabinet remained mostly unchanged.

Parliament report

The year 2024 saw three separate Parliaments: the tail end of the 49th National Assembly, the short-lived 50th Parliament, and the 51st one, elected in late October. Unlike previous years with prolonged caretaker Cabinets, the Parliament remained in session, in compliance with the 2023 constitutional amendments. Despite this, parliamentary activity was relatively limited. The make-up of the legislature remained mostly similar throughout the year, as the same parties returned at both elections (Table 7). The percentage of female MPs declined, however, across all party factions to just over 21 per cent overall. Control over the executive was limited to questions to the Cabinet. All in all, legislative activity reflected the political instability and infighting among the leading parties.

Maybe most indicative of the difficult political situation was the election of the Chair of the 51st National Assembly. The Chair is usually elected from within the largest parliamentary faction in the first session of Parliament. This time, it took 26 days, 11 elections, including second rounds, and re-counts to find a political compromise that would be supported by a majority of MPs. Natalya Kiselova, proposed by the Socialists and supported by GERB-SDS, PP-DB, BSP, and APS-Dogan, was elected on 6 December (Dariknews 2024). Key to her election was an agreement to form a *cordon sanitaire* around Delyan Peevski and his DPS-*New beginning*. The long period of unsuccessful attempts further strengthened public distrust in the legislature among the Bulgarian public.

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Table 5. Cabinet composition of Glavchev I in Bulgaria in 2024

Duration of Cabinet	Inception	9 April 2024	Dissolution	27 August 2024	
Period covered by table	From	9 April 2024	Until	27 August 2024	
Type of Cabinet	Nonpartisan				

A.	Party/gender composition on 09 April 2024			Seats in Cabinet		Seats held by women		Seats in Parliament	
				N	%	*N*	% of party	*N*	*N*%
	Independent	*Bezpartien*		17	89.5%	4	23.5%	4	1.6%
	Citizens for European Development–Union of Democratic Forces	*Grazhdani za evropeysko razvitie na Bulgaria–Sayuz na democratichnite sili*	(GERB-SDS)	2	10.5%	0	0.0%	69	28.8%
	Totals			19	100.0%	4	21.1%	73	30.4%

B.	Composition of Glavchev I Cabinet on 9 April 2024			Minister		
	Ministerial title					
	Prime Minister	Dimitar	Glavchev	1963	Male	GERB
	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance	Lyudmila	Petkova	1967	Female	Independent
	Minister of Interior	Kalin	Stoyanov	1981	Male	Independent
	Minister of Defence	Atanas	Zapryanov	1950	Male	GERB
	Minister of Foreign Affairs	Stefan	Dimitrov	1966	Male	Independent
	Minister of Justice	Mariya	Pavlova	1971	Female	Independent
	Minister of Health	Galya	Kondeva	1963	Female	Independent
	Minister of Education and Science	Galin	Tsokov	1962	Male	Independent

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

Table 5. (Continued)

B. Composition of Glavchev I Cabinet on 9 April 2024 Ministerial title		Minister				
Minister of Agriculture and Foods		Kiril	Vutev	1958	Male	Independent
Minister of Transport and Communications		Georgi	Gvozdeykov	1976	Male	Independent
Minister of Environment and Waters		Petar	Dimitrov	1949	Male	Independent
Minister of Energy		Vladimir	Malinov	1976	Male	Independent
Minister of Tourism		Evtim	Miloshev	1968	Male	Independent
Minister of Economy and Industry		Petko	Nikolov	1957	Male	Independent
Minister of Regional Development and Public Works		Violeta	Koritarova	1968	Female	Independent
Minister of Culture		Nayden	Todorov	1974	Male	Independent
Minister of Youth and Sports		Georgi	Gluchkov	1960	Male	Independent
Minister of Electronic Governance	*Ministerstvo na Elektronnoto upravlenie*	Valentin	Mundrov	1978	Male	Independent
Minister of Innovation and Growth	*Ministerstvo na Inovaciite i raztezha*	Rosen	Karadimov	1963	Male	Independent

Table 5. (Continued)

C.	Changes in composition of Glavchev I Cabinet during 2024		Outgoing minister	Outgoing date	Incoming minister	Comments
	Ministerial title					
	Minister of Agriculture and Foods	*Ministerstvo na Zemedelieto i Hranite*	Kiril Vutev (1958, male, Independent)	22 April 2024	Georgi Tahov (1971, male, Independent)	Cabinet reshuffle
	Minister of Foreign Affairs	*Ministerstvo na Vunshnite Raboti*	Stefan Dimitrov (1966, male, Independent)	22 April 2024	Dimitar Glavchev (1963, male, GERB)	Cabinet reshuffle

D.	Party/gender composition on 27 August 2024			Seats in Cabinet		Seats held by women		Seats in Parliament	
				N	%	*N*	% of party	*N*	%
	Independent	*Bezpartien*		16	84.2%	4	25.0%	4	1.6%
	Citizens for European Development–Union of Democratic Forces	*Grazhdani za evropeysko razvitie na Bulgaria–Sayuz na democratichnite sili*	(GERB-SDS)	3	15.8%	0	0.0%	69	28.8%
	Totals			19	100.0%	4	21.1%	73	30.4%

Source: Government website (2024; www.gov.bg/).

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

Table 6. Cabinet composition of Glavchev II in Bulgaria in 2024

Duration of Cabinet	Inception	27 August 2024	Dissolution	Still in office at the end of the year				
Period covered by table	From	27 August 2024	Until	31 December 2024				
Type of Cabinet		Nonpartisan						
A.	Party/gender composition on 27 August 2024			Seats in Cabinet		Seats held by women		Seats in Parliament
				N	%	*N*	% of party	*N*	%
	Independent	*Bezpartien*		17	89.5%	5	29.4%	39	16.3%
	Citizens for European Development–Union of Democratic Forces	*Grazhdani za evropeysko razvitie na Bulgaria–Sayuz na democratichnite sili*	(GERB-SDS)	2	10.5%	0	0.0%	68	28.3%
	Totals			19	100.0%	5	26.3%	107	44.6%

B.	Composition of Glavchev II Cabinet on 27 August 2024					
	Ministerial title			Minister		
	Prime Minister	Dimitar	Glavchev	1963	Male	GERB
	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance	Lyudmila	Petkova	1967	Female	Independent
	Minister of Interior	Atanas	Ilkov	1981	Male	Independent
	Minister of Defence	Atanas	Zapryanov	1950	Male	GERB
	Minister of Foreign Affairs	Ivan	Kondov	1968	Male	Independent
	Minister of Justice	Mariya	Pavlova	1971	Female	Independent
	Minister of Health	Galya	Kondeva	1963	Female	Independent
	Minister of Education and Science	Galin	Tsokov	1962	Male	Independent

Table 6. (Continued)

B.	Composition of Glavchev II Cabinet on 27 August 2024 Ministerial title	Minister				
	Minister of Agriculture and Foods	Georgi	Tahov	1971	Male	Independent
	Minister of Transport and Communications	Krasimira	Stoyanova	1976	Female	Independent
	Minister of Environment and Waters	Petar	Dimitrov	1949	Male	Independent
	Minister of Energy	Vladimir	Malinov	1976	Male	Independent
	Minister of Tourism	Evtim	Miloshev	1968	Male	Independent
	Minister of Economy and Industry	Petko	Nikolov	1957	Male	Independent
	Ministter of Regional Development and Public Works	Violeta	Koritarova	1968	Female	Independent
	Minister of Culture	Nayden	Todorov	1974	Male	Independent
	Minister of Youth and Sports	Georgi	Glushkov	1960	Male	Independent
	Minister of Electronic Governance	Valentin	Mundov	1978	Male	Independent
	Minister of Innovation and Growth	Rosen	Karadimov	#birthyear	Male	Independent

C.	Changes in composition of Glavchev II Cabinet during 2024 Ministerial title	Outgoing minister	Outgoing date	Incoming minister	Comments
	NONE				

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

Table 6. (Continued)

D.	Party/gender composition on 31 December 2024			Seats in Cabinet		Seats held by women		Seats in Parliament	
				N	%	*N*	% of party	*N*	%
	Independent	*Bezpartien*		17	89.5%	5	29.4%	40	16.7%
	Citizens for European Development–Union of Democratic Forces	*Grazhdani za evropeysko razvitie na Bulgaria–Sayuz na democratichnite sili*	(GERB-SDS)	2	10.5%	0	0.0%	69	28.8%
	Totals			19	100.0%	5	26.3%	109	45.4%

Source: Government website (2024; www.gov.bg/).

Table 7. Party and gender composition of Parliament (49-to, 50-to i 51-vo Narodno Sabranie) in Bulgaria in 2024

Party			1 January 2024				19 June 2024 Parliamentary lections				31 December 2024			
			ALL		Women		All		Women		All		Women	
			N	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Citizens for European Development–Union of Democratic Forces	*Grazhdani za evropeysko razvitie na Bulgaria–Sayuz na democratichnite sili*	(GERB-SDS)	69	28.8%	18	26.1%	68	28.3%	16	23.5%	69	28.8%	17	24.6%
Coalition We Continue the Change–Democratic Bulgaria	*Koaliciya Produlzhavame Promyanata–Demokratichna Bulgaria*	(PP-DB)	63	26.3%	19	30.2%	39	16.3%	12	30.8%	37	15.4%	9	24.3%
Movements for Rights and Freedoms	*Dvijenie za prava i svobodi*	(DPS)	36	15.0%	9	25.0%	47	19.6%	13	27.7%				
Revival	*Vazrajdane*		37	15.4%	7	20.6%	38	15.8%	9	23.7%	35	14.6%	5	14.3%
Bulgarian Socialist Party for Bulgaria	*Bulgaraska socialisticheska partiya za Bulgaria*	(BSP)	23	9.6%	6	26.1%	18	7.5%	5	27.8%	20	8.3%	4	20.0%
PP There are such people	*PP Ima takuv narod*	(ITN)	11	4.6%	1	9.1%	16	6.7%	3	18.8%	18	7.5%	5	27.8%
Independent	*Nezavisimi*		1	0.4%	0	0.0%	1	0.4%	0	0.0%	*	*	*	*

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

Table 7. (Continued)

Party			1 January 2024				19 June 2024				31 December 2024			
							Parliamentary lections							
			ALL		Women		All		Women		All		Women	
			N	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Movements for Rights and Freedoms-New Beginning	*Dvijenie za prava i svobodi-Novo Nachalo*	(DPS-NN)									30	12.5%	9	30.0%
Aliance for Rights and Freedoms	*Alians za Prava i Svobodi*	(APS)									19	7.9%	1	5.3%
Political party Morale, Unity, Honour	*PP MECh*	(MECh)									12	5.0%	1	8.3%
PP Greatness	*PP Velichie*						13	5.4%	6	46.2%				
Totals			240	96.6%	60	25.0%	240	100.0%	64	26.7%	240	100.0%	51	21.3%

Notes:

*. By the start of the 51st National Assembly, the count of Independents rose to 40 people (from 1 in the beginning). This is due to the division of DPS as two parties. The rest are people from PP Greatness.

1. A second change was due to elections in October. The 49th National Assembly ended on 19 June, 50th National Assembly ended on 11 November.

2. BSP was later renamed BSP-United Left (in June/October).

3. DPS was divided into DPS-NN and APS

Source: Parliament Bg (2024 ; www.parliament.bg/en/MP).

Political party report

The year 2024 was also more tumultuous than most other years in terms of party development in Bulgaria (Table 8). In addition to the emergence of a brand new party, MECh, already described in the Election Report, the BSP experienced a leadership change and, probably most significant of all, the DPS split into two organizations. Moreover, in June 2024, Hristo Ivanov resigned as leader of the *Yes, Bulgaria* party and co-chair of the DB coalition, also giving up his parliamentary seat due to the poor election results of the PP-DB coalition in the June elections.

In a significant step, in February 2024, Delyan Peevski, a provocative politician with alleged corrupt networks, was elected co-chair of DPS. By the summer, he was in open conflict with Ahmed Doga, the founder and honorary Chairman of the party. In July, Peevski expelled 17 deputies loyal to Ahmed Dogan from the DPS, reducing the group's size in Parliament and leading to losing its status as the second-largest party faction. Further conflicts between Dogan and Peevski continued, with the party ultimately splitting in two. Open battles over the party name, organization, property and communication channels ensued, and at the October elections, two separate DPS offshoots had emerged. Peevski managed to preserve the original name and registered his party as *Movement for Rights and Freedoms-New Beginning*. The camp of Honorary Chairman Ahmed Dogan submitted documents for the registration of the coalition APS. At the October elections, the DPS votes split between the two formations with ethnic Turks favouring Dogan at a higher rate while non-Turkish DPS supporters favoured Peevski. Peevski appeared to have the upper hand, gathering a higher percentage of the vote (see Election report), but both parties preserved a significant presence in Parliament.

On the BSP front, Ninova resigned as party Chairperson on June 11 2024, and Atanas Zafirov was elected as acting Chairman. In September and following court battles between the two about who can represent the BSP, Zafirov was granted the right to represent the BSP and Ninova was expelled from the party.

Institutional change report

There were no major new institutional changes in the country during 2025. On 26 July 2024, the Constitutional Court struck down most of the judicial provisions that had been adopted with the 2023 constitutional amendments (Spirova 2024), while allowing dual-citizenship measures and caretaker government rules to remain.

Issues in national politics

Politics in Bulgaria during 2024 did not differ much from 2023. Political instability, fragmentation, corruption and public distrust in the government continued to plague the political process. Following the failure of the GERB-SDS/PP-DP coalition and two rounds of elections, GERB managed to preserve its plurality position in the party system, while PP-DB shrunk in influence substantially. The other, smaller parties suffered from various

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

Table 8. Changes in political parties in Bulgaria in 2024

A.	Party institutional changes in 2024							
Movements for Rights and Freedoms	*Dvijenia za Prava i Svobodi*	(DPS)	Split		Division of the party to APS with chairperson Dzhevdet Chakarov and DPS-NN with chairperson Delyan Peevski			
Movements for Rights and Freedoms-New Beginning		(DPS-NN)	Became an officially registered party	Delyan	Peevski	1980	Male	This is the party that kept the name. Mostly newer members of DPS and the first non-Turkish chairperson, Delyan Peevski
Alliance for Rights and Freedoms	(APS)	Became an officially registered party	Dzhezvet	Chakarov	1960	Male		The part of the party that took a new name. Mostly created by and with the creators of DPS
Political party Morale, Unity, Honour	(MECh)	Became officially a party in October 2023, first time in elections in June 2024	Under the leadership of	Radostin	Vasilev	1985	Male	MECh

B.	Party leadership changes in 2024												
Bulgarian Socialist Party-United Left	BSP OL	Leader	Korneliya	Ninova	1969	Female	Resigned as leader of BSP for Bulgaria	15 June	Atanas	Zafirov	1971	Male	BSP OL

Note: BSP OL and BSP are the same party.

Source: Deutsche Welle (2024; www.dw.com/bg/noviat-vozd-na-dps-brutalna-sila-no-trudno-novo-nacalo/a-71142332); Mediapool (2024; www.mediapool.bg/prevrat-v-bsp-noviyat-vremenen-lider-atanas-zafirov-uspokoi-che-nyama-ryazane-na-glavi-news360198.html).

leadership and organizational issues, making a governing coalition very difficult to form and maintain.

The main issue of contention that impacted party relations was the position of DPS leader Delyan Peevski. Peevski had long been associated with various corruption scandals, and in early 2023 had been put on the infamous Magnitsky list by the United States. Despite this, he continued to play a very important role in Bulgarian politics: as a leader of the DPS and as a politician who officially calls many other shots in the political process. Cooperating with him or not remains the most important divide in Bulgarian party politics.

During 2024, Bulgaria made major strides toward EU integration, with its membership in Schengen a reality and progress on the admission to the Eurozone. However, EU skepticism also increased with quite a few of the Bulgarian parties taking an openly or covertly pro-Russian stance, displaying an ambivalent attitude toward Ukraine, and remaining critical of Brussels. Divisions within the country on LGBTQ+ rights, migration, minority rights and domestic violence continued to plague political discourse and create social tensions. Economically, the country continued to experience sustained inflation and declining standards of living, which further contributed to domestic skepticism about the potential impact of the introduction of the euro in 2026.

Note

1. Data collected by Lyuba Nicheva.
2. In early 2025, a re-counting of the votes led to the entry of *Velichie* as well, making the 51st Bulgarian Parliament the most fragmented ever, with nine parties.

Sources

Capital. (2024). Президентът отхвърли МВР министъра на Пеевски. Търси се нов служебен премиер [The president rejected Peevski's interior minister. A new caretaker prime minister is being sought]. *Capital*, 19 August 19. Available online at: https://www.capital.bg/politika_i_ikonomika/bulgaria/2024/08/19/4665052_smeliiat_hod_na_rumen_radev_shte_otloji_izborite_za/

Dariknews. (2024). С чии гласове бе избрана доц. Киселова за председател на Народното събрание [With whose votes was Assoc. Prof. Kiselova elected chair of the National Assembly]. Dariknews, 6 December. Available online at: https://dariknews.bg/novini/bylgariia/s-chii-glasove-be-izbrana-doc.-kiselova-za-predsedatel-na-narodnoto-sybranie-snimka-2402999

European Parliament. (2025). *MEPs by Member State and political group*. Available online at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/search/table

Ficheva, R. (2024). Третият мандат се провали, предстоят седмите предсрочни избори [The third mandate failed, seventh snap elections ahead]. Dnevnik, 30 July. Available online at: https://www.dnevnik.bg/politika/2024/07/30/4657183_pri_minimalen_shans_za_kabinet_ima_takuv_narod/

Mediapool. (2024). Пакетна смяна в кабинета: Даниел Митов става външен министър, но земеделието отива в човек на Радев [Cabinet reshuffle: Daniel Mitov becomes foreign minister, but agriculture goes to a Radev appointee]. *Mediapool*, 16 April. Available online at: https://www.mediapool.bg/paketna-smyana-v-kabineta-daniel-mitov-stava-vanshen-ministar-no-zemedelieto-otiva-v-chovek-na-radev-news358264.html

Nova News. (2024). Откъде дойдоха гласовете за МЕЧ [Where did the votes for MECH come from]. Nova News, 28 October. Available online at: https://nova.bg/news/view/2024/10/28/475119/%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%BA%D1%8A%D0%B4%D0%B5-%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%B9%D0%B4%D0%BE%

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

D1%85%D0%B0-%D0%B3%D0%BB%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%B5-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%BC%D0%B5%D1%87/

Petrov, A. (2024). Избори 2024: Кой къде е на старта на кампанията [Elections 2024: Who stands where at the start of the campaign]. Webcafe, 9 May. Available online at: https://webcafe.bg/vlast/izbori-2024-koi-sa-osnovnite-igrachi-na-starta-na-kampaniyata.html

Spirova, M.S. (2024). Bulgaria: Political developments and data in 2022: Yet another year of instability. *European Journal of Political Research* 62(1): 55–67. https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.12415

Zapryanov, J. (2023). Партия "Величие": политическото лице на "Исторически парк" [Party "Velichie": The political face of "Historical Park"]. Capital, 19 July. Available online at: https://www.capital.bg/politika_i_ikonomika/bulgaria/2023/07/19/4508965_politicheska_partiia_istoricheski_park/

© 2025 The Author(s). *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Consortium for Political Research.

https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.70025 Published online by Cambridge University Press