

European  
Elections monitor

from **Corinne Deloy**  
translated by Helen Levy

**ANALYSIS**  
1 month before  
the poll

# The ruling party's candidate, Rossen Plevnelyev, favourite in the Bulgarian presidential election on 23rd and 30th October next

On 15th June last the National Assembly, the only chamber in Parliament, announced that the first round of the next presidential election would take place in Bulgaria on 23rd October. If necessary a second round will take place one week later, i.e. 30th October. 6.5 million Bulgarians are being called to ballot to appoint the successor to Georgi Parvanov, who, at the end of his second term in office, cannot run again. This presidential election, although important, should not have any significant effect on the country's domestic or foreign policy. On 23rd and 30th October next the Bulgarian electorate will appoint their local representatives (mayors, regional representatives and town councillors).

## The Presidential Office

The President of the Republic and his Vice President (with whom he forms a ticket) are elected for a five year term in office which is renewable once only. Candidates for the supreme office can be presented either by political parties or by voters' committees. The position is essentially an honorary one, but the Head of State does however have the power of veto enabling him to send a draft law back to the National Assembly for renewed debate. The President of the Republic is the head of the army, concludes international treaties and represents the country abroad. The Constitution prohibits the Head of State from belonging to any type of political party. Moreover the president and the vice-president cannot come from the same party. To everyone's surprise the former leader of the Socialist Party (BSP) Georgi Parvanov was elected to the presidency for the first time on 18th November 2001 with 54.01% of the vote, against 45.90% for his rival, outgoing head of State, Petar Stoyanov (United Democratic Forces). Parvanov was re-elected on 29th October 2006 with 75.94% of the vote, ahead of the far right leader, Volen Siderov (Ataka), who won 24.05%. In the first round of voting on

22nd October, Georgi Parvanov easily won with 64.04% of the vote but turnout (42.51%) was insufficient for the vote to be valid (the electoral law demands a minimum turnout of half of those on the electoral rolls for the candidate to be appointed in the first round). Between the two rounds of voting the outgoing head of State Georgi Parvanov refused all debate with his rival, Volen Siderov, "out of respect for the dignity of the presidential office," he said, adding that Bulgaria needed "patriotism that united rather than divided the nation."

Georgi Parvanov is the first president of the Bulgarian Republic to have undertaken two consecutive terms in office since the communism in the country came to an end. Angel Marin was his Vice-President for ten years. In a speech in Krivodol (north), Georgi Parvanov spoke of his return to the Socialist Party at the end of his mandate. He did however say that he would not run for a seat in Parliament.

## Candidates running and the presidential campaign stakes

18 people have registered as candidates for the supreme office, each in a ticket with a Vice-President. 12 are put forward by political parties and 6 by voters' committees.

## Presidential Election in Bulgaria 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> October 2011

---

On 4th September last the Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria (GERB, "blazon" in Bulgarian), the party of Prime Minister Boyko Borissov, appointed Rossen Plevnelyev, Regional Development and Public Works Minister, as the candidate for the supreme office. The latter immediately resigned from office and was replaced by Deputy Minister, Liliana Pavlova. He forms a ticket with Justice Minister Margarita Popova. Neither are GERB members.

Margarita Popova declared that she wanted to continue and complete ongoing legal reform in the event of victory. She said she wanted the practice of the presidential veto, which is only formal, since it can be followed by another vote in parliament, to be re-examined so that the Head of State can take greater part in the writing of the laws.

When interviewed about his own aspirations in the presidential election Prime Minister Boyko Borissov said that "it would be a betrayal with regard to GERB voters and an abdication from responsibility on his part". The head of government did for some time think of putting forward Tsevtan Tsevtanov, GERB's second most important personality and present Interior Minister. "I really need him," said Boyko Borissov in justification of his choice.

Some political analysts have said they are concerned about Rossen Plevnelyev's inexperience and about the danger of the division of power if he wins the presidential election. "In this case we would have a weak President with the total concentration of power in the hands of the government and a powerful Boyko Borissov," stresses Antony Todorov, political scientist. Johanna Deimel, Deputy Director of the Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft in Munich, said that the Prime Minister had decided to appoint Rossen Plevnelyev to drive a political rival out of government. Likewise the appointment of Margarita Popova as Vice-President would enable him to remove one of his main opponents, since the Justice Minister often disagrees with the measures implemented to counter crime.

Ivaylo Kalfine, MEP and former Foreign Minister (2005-2009) in the government led by Serguey Stanichev, will be running for the Socialist Party (BSP). He is standing with Stefan Danaylov, a

famous actor (he is one of the heroes of the TV series, Stuklen Dom, the Glass House) and former Culture Minister (2005-2009), who refused to run in first position. "Bulgaria needs a different politics, politics of dialogue, leadership alternatives," he declared indicating that the Socialist Party had to counter "the policy of pressurising institutions" undertaken by the GERB, which simply "defends the interests of the business world," likewise the aggressiveness of the ruling party towards "anyone who thinks differently."

Serguey Stanichev, the Socialist Party leader threatened to resign from office "if the Socialist Party did not succeed in re-establishing confidence amongst traditional voters in the upcoming local and presidential elections."

On 6th June last, Meglena Kuneva, former European Affairs Minister (2002-2006) and European Commissioner for Consumer Protection (2007-2009), announced that she was standing. "I shall rally the majority of change to my name. I am not looking for the support of any party, I am defending the interests of no lobbyist or politician, I shall not commit to any party," she declared. The committee who put Ms Kuneva forward is chaired by film director Igljika Trifonova and comprises 53 people, including singers, Mariana Popova, Doni and Kotseto Kalki, actors, Yoanna Bukovska and Petar Popyordanov, economists, musicians, sports personalities of the National Movement for Stability and Progress (MNSE), a party led by Christina Christova.

Positioned in the centre of the political scale and close to the European institutions, Meglena Kuneva is a popular personality in Bulgaria, notably because, as the country's first European Commissioner, she witnessed Sofia's entry into the EU. She may attract a young, urban electorate. She has chosen to form a ticket with economist Lubomir Christiv. The latter has worked for the Bulgarian Central Bank and the World Bank.

Ataka's leader, Volen Siderov, will, as in 2006 be standing. Ataka, which is Boyko Borissov government's official ally, has however distanced itself greatly from the GERB. This summer Volen Siderov warned the Prime Minister's party. "If it conti-

nues to work for capital rather than for the people, the GERB may end like the National Movement for Stability and Progress (MNSE)", he declared. After having led Bulgaria from 2001 to 2005, this centre-right party is in total decay. Volen Siderov has formed a ticket with Pavel Chopov.

Rumen Christov was appointed to stand in the presidential election for the Blue Coalition, an alliance formed by the Union of Democratic Forces (DSB) led by Ivan Kostov (as well as three other parties) on 12th June last after a primary election organised by his party in which he won 55.47% of the vote. His rival, Svetoslav Malinov (DSB), won 44.26% of the vote. All Bulgarians were allowed to take part in this vote. A dispute arose over the turnout of the Rom community in support of Rumen Christov. The chair of the Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria, Ivan Kostov spoke of "vote purchasing".

Rumen Christov is standing with former Interior Minister (1999-2001), Emanouïl Yordanov.

But the Bulgarian right, which in 2009 joined forces within the Blue Coalition, is again in danger of being divided. The leader of the Union of Democratic Forces, Martin Dimitrov, signed an agreement for the presidential election with the Community of Democratic Forces, a movement that rallies several organisations and which is led by former Mayor of Sofia Stefan Sofianski, Yevgueni Bakardjiev and Lyuben Dilov junior, without informing Ivan Kostov,. This new alliance was baptised "the Union of Rightwing Forces (ODS). The Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria, another party in the Blue Coalition, are against this alliance because of their agreement with the Union of Democratic Forces in the local elections. Both parties came to agreement to support the candidate, Proshko Proshkov (DSB), the present Mayor of Lozénets in the capital and winner of the primary elections (ahead of Ventseslav Kissyov, ODS), in the town hall of Sofia, whilst the Community of Democratic Forces has its own candidate in this election.

The Party for Order, Law and Justice (RZS) led by Yaney Yanev selected its Vice-President, Atanas Semov as its candidate in the presidential election on 23rd October. "I am launching myself courageously into the ring for the conquest of the hearts

of my fellow countrymen, or at least the hearts of those Bulgarians who attach great importance to the teacher's ruler than the policeman's truncheon," he declared as the electoral campaign started. Atanas Semov is forming a ticket with Poly Stancheva, town councillor in Sofia. The latter has said she chose to support the Order, Law and Justice Party because it was the only one to support a change in the Bulgarian Constitution.

The other candidates in the presidential election on 23rd and 30th October are:

- Maria Cappone and Nikola Kissyov (United People's Party);
- Pavel Chernev and Anelia Delcheva (the People's Party);
- Sali Ibryam and Valentina Gotseva (National Unity Movement);
- Krassimir Karakatchanov and Daniela Simidcheyeva-Dimitrova (Internal Revolutionary Macedonian Organisation -Bulgarian National Movement, VMRO-BND);
- Stefan Solakov and Galina Vassileva (National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria, NDSO);
- Nikolaï Nentchev and Jeko Ivanov (Union populaire des agriculteurs, BZNS) ;
- Andreï Chorbanov and Anguel Mirchev (Bulgarian Demcoratic Community);
- Ventsislav Yossifov and Emilian Dimitrov;
- Dimitar Kutsarov, former policeman and owner of a security company, and Kamelia Todorova, jazz singer;
- Alexey Petrov and Nikolay Gueorgyev;
- Svetoslav Vitkov and Ventsislav Mitsov;
- Nikolay Vassilev and Vladimir Savov.

According to the most recent poll by Mediana, the ruling party's candidate Rossen Plevnelyev, is due to win 29.1% of the vote in the first round, ahead of Ivaylo Kalfine who is due to win 21.9% of the vote and Meglena Kuneva, who is due to win 14.1% of the vote. 81.4% of those voting for Rossen Plevnelyev are GERB sympathisers; 78.1% voting for Ivaylo Kalfine support the Socialist Party and finally 62.5% of those voting for Meglena Kuneva say they support no political party, 22.1% support the Socialist Party and 12.5% the GERB.

**Reminder of the results of the Presidential Election on 22nd and 29th October 2006 in Bulgaria**

**Turnout: 42.51% (1st round) and 41.20% (2nd round)**

Candidates	No. of votes won (1st round)	% of votes won (1st round)	No. of votes won (2nd round)	% of votes won (2nd round)
<b>Georgi Parvanov</b>	1 780 119	64,04	2 050 488	75,94
<b>Volen Siderov (Ataka)</b>	597 175	21,48	649 387	24,05
<b>Nedelcho Beronov (United Democratic Forces-Democratic Party for a Strong Bulgaria, (ODS-DSB)</b>	271 078	9,75		
<b>Georgi Markov (Order, Law and Justice Party, RZS)</b>	75 478	2,71		
<b>Petar Beron</b>	21 812	0,78		
<b>Grigor Velev (Nationalist Alliance)</b>	19 857	0,71		
<b>Ljuben Petrov</b>	13 854	0,49		

Source : Bulgarian National Electoral Commission

## The candidate of the ruling party, Rossen Plevneliev, running favourite in the presidential election in Bulgaria just one week before the vote

**D-7**  
7 days before  
the poll

The Bulgarians are being called to elect the successor to Georgi Parvanov to the Presidency of the Republic on 23rd and 30th October. On the same dates they will also be appointing their local and regional representatives. In Bulgaria, the head of State (and his Vice-President, with whom he forms a ticket) is elected for a five year term in office that is renewable once (outgoing president Georgi Parvanov is coming to the end of his 2nd mandate and therefore he cannot stand again).

Many polling stations will be open to the Bulgarians living abroad in various countries (46 in Turkey, 23 in Spain, 14 in the USA, 7 in Moldova etc ...) 135,000 Bulgarians living abroad voted in the last general elections on 5th July 2009.

The candidate of the party in power, Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria (GERB, "shield" in Bulgarian), Rossen Plevneliev, is running favourite in the election and should, according to all of the polls, win on 30th October next. The number of candidates (18 in all) makes it highly unlikely that any of the candidates will win in the first round.

18 people are running for the supreme office, including 12 who are being put forward by political parties and six by voters' committees:

– Rossen Plevneliev, former Regional Development and

Public Works Minister in the government led by Prime Minister Boyko Borissov (GERB), was appointed as the GERB's candidate, a party which he does not belong to, on 4th September last. He was chosen to form a ticket

with former Justice Minister Margarita Popova;

- Ivaylo Kalfine, MEP and former Foreign Minister (2005-2009) in the government led by Serguey Stanichev, is the Socialist Party's candidate (BSP), of which he is not a member (he belongs to the Social Democratic Party, which is not to the taste of some socialists). He is standing with Stefan Danaylov, a famous actor (he is a hero in a TV series *Stuklen Dom*, the Glass House), and is former Culture Minister (2005-2009);
- Meglena Kuneva, former European Affairs Minister (2002-2006) and former European Commissioner for Consumer Protection (2007-2009) announced that she was running on 6th June last. Situated at the centre of the political scale, she is running as an independent. She chose to form a ticket with economist Lubomir Christiv, who worked for the Bulgarian Central Bank and also the World Bank;
- Volen Siderov, the far right leader of Ataka (A), parliamentary support to the government led by Boyko Borissov, which also rallies the GERB, the Blue Coalition, an alliance formed by the Union of Democratic Forces (ODS), led by Martin Dimitrov and the Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria (DSB). Loser in the last presidential election on 22nd and 29th October 2006, Volen Siderov did however reach the second round in which he won 24.05% of the vote against 75.94% for Georgi Parvanov. The nationalist leader forms a ticket with Pavel Chopov;
- Rumen Christov, the Blue Coalition's candidate is standing with former Interior Minister (1999-2001), Emanouïl Yordanov ;
- Atanas Semov is running under the banner of the Party for Order, Law and Justice (RZS) led by Yané Yanev. He is forming a ticket with the town councillor of Sofia Polia Stancheva;
- Maria Cappone and Nikola Kissiov (the United People's Party);
- Pavel Tchernev and Anélia Deltchéva (the People's Party);
- Sali Ibriam and Valentina Gotseva (National Unity Movement);
- Krassimir Karakatchanov and Daniela Simidcheyeva-Dimitrova (Macedonian Domestic Revolutionary Organisation-Bulgarian National Movement, VMRO-BND);
- Stefan Solakov and Galina Vassileva (the National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria, NDSO);

- Nikolay Nenchev and Jeko Ivanov (Farmers' Popular Union, BZNS);
- Andreï Tchorbano and Anguel Mirtchev (Bulgarian Democratic Community);
- Ventsislav Yossifov and Emilian Dimitrov;
- Dimitar Koutsarov, former policeman and owner of a security company and Kamelia Todorova, a jazz singer;
- Alexey Petrov and Nikolay Gueorguyev;
- Svetoslav Vitkov and Ventsislav Mitsov, who are both famous rock singers;
- Nikolai Vassilev and Vladimir Savov.

The Commission responsible for investigating people affiliated to the former State security services prior to 1989 declared that four candidates – Alexey Petrov, Krassimir Karakachanov, Stefan Solakov and Ventsislav Yossifov – had belonged or worked with the State security services at the time Bulgaria was a communist country.

"The priority is to improve people's lives and on this point we are different from Rossen Plevneliev who takes great pride in projects such as the European Union, the building of motorways and the signing of building permits. I think that people are not interested in this since they have other problems. The State's priorities must be the creation of jobs, increasing salaries, access to healthcare, the country's security, the image of Bulgaria amongst its partners," declared the Socialist candidate Ivaylo Kalfine. In his opinion the GERB candidate Rossen Plevneliev would be unable to guarantee the unity of the nation if he were elected. "We have a man – Prime Minister Boyko Borissov – who imposes himself on the entire State," says Ivaylo Kalfine, who is trying to convince his fellow countrymen of the destructive nature if power is concentrated in the hands of the GERB and of the danger that the election of Rossen Plevneliev as President of the Republic would represent. He says he supports the enhancement of the role of the President of the Republic, by example via the establishment of new laws on the referendum or on the right to veto (the head of State has the right to veto enabling him to reject a draft law towards the National Assembly, thereby obliging MPs to open debate on it once more).

"Ivaylo Kalfine is not running for the presidential election, but to become Prime Minister. But we are not voting for general elections. The head of State does

## Presidential Election in Bulgaria 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> October 2011

---

not give money out, does not decide on salaries or wages. We need a national plan for the development of our economy and our social sector," said Rossen Plevneliev, who qualified the practice of holding referenda as being "a nuclear bomb for democracy".

On 11th October Rossen Plevneliev and Ivaylo Kalfine faced each other in a debate that was broadcast by the channel TV7. Half of the viewers (47.5%) believed the ruling party's candidate was more convincing, 31% spoke in favour of the socialist candidate according to a poll published by the daily Dnevnik.

Ivan Kostov, former Prime Minister (1997-2001) and leader of the Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria declared that he was supporting Rumen Christov, the Blue Coalition candidate, in the first round of the presidential election. "I shall show my political loyalty and I will do what I have to do," he declared. Recent tensions that disrupted the Bulgarian right after the leader of the Union of Democratic Forces, Martin Dimitrov signed an agreement for the presidential election with the Community of Democratic Forces without his partner, Ivan Kostov knowing about it, nearly led to a break-up between the two parties. The leader of the Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria believes that it would be damaging, if not dangerous, for the GERB to monopolise all of the power.

The Movement for Rights and Freedom (DPS) led by Ahmed Dogan, who represents the Turkish minority in Bulgaria (around 9% of the population) has, as is his custom, announced that he would support none of the candidates, and that he would say after the first round which of the two remaining candidates he would like see come to office as President of the Republic.

The last weeks of the electoral campaign have been marked by incidents that followed the death of Angel Petrov (19 years old) on 23<sup>rd</sup> September; he was knocked down by a car, which was being driven by someone close to the Kiril Rachkov family, otherwise known as King Kiro, the local patriarch of the Roma community in Katunitsa (13km from Plovdiv in the south of the country). After this dramatic incident there were riots in several towns, including in Sofia and Plovdiv. The houses of the Kiril Rachkov family were burned and the police did nothing to calm the demonstrators. 127 people were arrested, including King Kiro. Prime Minister Boyko Borissov and President of the Republic Georgi

Parvanov went to the scene of the events. The head of government, who did not condemn the demonstrators, recalled that "ethnic peace is the country's most precious asset".

"Before being a Roma Kiril Rachkov is an oligarch, a Mafioso – like dozens of others, he is a result of the democratic transition. Having said this it has to be admitted that the affair would not have got to this stage if Kiril Rachkov had not been a Roma," indicates anthropologist Haralan Alexandrov.

A legal inquiry was launched into six companies held by Kiril Rachkov and his acolytes, as well as twelve people and two foundations that have links with the same man. King Kiro has been accused of threatening the lives of others and may also be prosecuted for tax fraud if it is proven, as the Bulgarian judges believe; that he and his entourage have not paid their taxes for several years. The statute of limitations for this crime is 10 years in Bulgaria.

According to the National Statistics Institute 325, 343 people, i.e. 4.9% of the country's total population is Roma (4.2% say that Romany is their mother tongue) after a census dating back to February. Experts believe that the Roma population in Bulgaria lies at around 10%. Around 560,000 people (8.8% of the population) say they are members of the Turkish speaking minority and 84.5% (5.6 million) say they are Bulgarian. Around one Bulgarian in ten (9%) does not want to declare which ethnic group he/she belongs to.

The National Assembly, the only Chamber in Parliament, decided to suspend its plenary sessions between the 12th and 21st October with the aim of avoiding any electoral propaganda.

According to the most recent poll by the institute Alpha Research, one third of the Bulgarians (32%) are about to vote for Rossen Plevneliev (GERB). Ivaylo Kalfine (PSB) is due to win 18%, Meglena Kuneva, 9%, Volen Siderov (Ataka), 4%, and Rumen Christov, 3%.

Rossen Plevneliev holds the majority amongst the most qualified Bulgarians and amongst those living in the major towns and cities. The socialist candidate has the support of the elderly and the less qualified, such as the Roma and the Turkish speaking minority.

The polls reveal that Rossen Plevneliev is due to win the presidential election in the second round with 46% of the vote, if he faces Ivaylo Kalfine (23% of the vote)

and by 43%, if he faces Meglena Kuneva (27%). After ten years with Georgi Parvanov as their president, everyone is expecting change. The socialists hope to reach the second round of voting. Just two years from

the next general elections, (planned in 2013), the results on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> October will provide a wealth of useful information for both of the country's main parties to learn from.

## Rossen Plevneliev easily comes out ahead in the first round of the Bulgarian Presidential election.

The ruling party's candidate, Rossen Plevneliev, easily won the first round of the presidential election that took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> October in Bulgaria. The former Regional Development and Public Works Minister in the government led by Boyko Borissov (Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria – GERB) won 39.8% of the vote. He drew ahead of the Socialist candidate (BSP), Ivaylo Kalfin, MEP and former Foreign Minister (2005-2009) in the government led by Serguey Stanichev (BSP) who won 29.2% of the vote. Independent candidate, former European Affairs Minister (2002-2006) and European Commissioner for Consumer Protection (2007-2009), Meglena Kuneva, came third with 14% of the vote.

Volen Siderov, leader of the far-right party, Ataka, which provides parliamentary support to Boyko Borissov's government, did not succeed in repeating his success of the last presidential election on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> October 2006. Whilst back then he managed to enter the second round after winning 21.48% of the vote in the first round, he had to settle for 4% of the vote this year. Therefore he did not take advantage of the inter-ethnic tension that upset Bulgaria in the last few weeks of the electoral campaign (riots broke out between "Bulgarians" and Roma after the death on 23<sup>rd</sup> September of a Angel Petrov, who was run over as he walked his dog by a car driven by a close friend of the Kiril Rachkov family – the so-called King Kiro – a local patriarch of the Roma community in the town of Katunitsa).

In spite of the fact that local elections were taking place on the same day as the presidential election, turnout remained low. Less than half of the Bulgarians turned out to vote (around 48%).

Results  
first round

*"It is the first time in the post-communist history of Bulgaria that the government party has won such great support mid-mandate,"* said the GERB's candidate, Rossen Plevneliev. Prime Minister Boyko Borissov qualified the concentration of power in the hands of his party if its candidate won in the presidential election on 30<sup>th</sup> October next, as an "enormous responsibility". *"The fact that our candidates have achieved such good results (presidential and local elections together) in the midst of a serious financial crisis is the sign of the confidence the Bulgarians have in our political action.*

*It shows that we are on the right path and that we are going towards financial stability whilst other countries are heading towards bankruptcy,"* stressed the head of government.

*"The result achieved by Rossen Plevneliev is a personal victory for Prime Minister Boyko Borissov,"* declared sociologist Antony Galabov. *"In view of the high number of candidates (eighteen in all), the fact that he won more than 30% in the first round strengthens the GERB's legitimacy for the end of its term in office,"* he added. *"These election results consolidate Boyko Bo-*

Presidential Election in Bulgaria  
23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> October 2011

*rissov's power,"* indicated Andrey Raichev, director of the Bulgarian branch of Gallup International.

The Socialist Party candidate did not succeed in using the economic crisis to attract a majority of the electorate to the opposition. Ivaylo Kalfin may however be able to count on the support of the Movement for Rights and Freedom (DPS) in the second round – this party is led by Ahmed Dogan, the representative of the Turkish minority of Bulgaria (around 9% of the population).

Independent candidate Meglena Kuneva for her part has not (yet) given any voting instructions.

*"I can see three surprises in the first round of this presidential election. The first is the result achieved by Meglena Kuneva, who almost tripled the number of voters of the National Movement for Stability and Progress (MNSE) in the last general elections on 5th July 2009. Ivaylo Kalfin is the second surprise. He won around 250, 000 votes more than the Socialist Party in the last general elections. The third surprise is that Rossen Plevneliev failed to motivate all of the electorate who supported the GERB two years ago,"* analyses Antony Todorov, Political Science Professor at the New Bulgarian University in Sofia.

In the local elections that also took place on 23rd October, the GERB maintained its position. Hence the outgoing mayor of Sofia, Yordanka Fandakova, was re-elected in the first round. The ruling party's candidates

were also re-elected on 23rd October in the towns of Bourgas (in the east of Bulgaria) where Dimitar Nikolov easily beat his rivals, Gabrovo (centre of the country) where Tanya Hristova won and Dobritch (north-east) where Detelina Nikolova won. The Socialist Party won the town of Shumen (north-east) with the victory of Krasimir Krastev and the Movement for Rights and Freedom won in its stronghold of Kardzhali.

Just two years from the next general elections (planned for the summer of 2013), Prime Minister Boyko Borissov can be pleased with the result his candidate has achieved in the first round of the presidential election. *"Victory for Rossen Plevneliev would put the GERB in a strong position before the general elections"* stresses James Goundry, an analyst with IHS Europe.

A discrete businessman, Rossen Plevneliev largely benefited from the popularity of the head of government. Except if something unexpected happens he should become the new president of the Republic of Bulgaria on 30th October next.

After ten years with Georgi Parvanov as their president, everyone is expecting change. The socialists hope to reach the second round of voting. Just two years from the next general elections, (planned in 2013), the results on 23rd and 30th October will provide a wealth of useful information for both of the country's main parties to learn from.

**Results of the first round of the presidential election on 23rd October 2011 in Bulgaria**

Turnout : around 48%

Candidates	% of votes won
<b>Rossen Plevneliev (Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria, GERB)</b>	39,8
<b>Ivaïlo Kalfine ( Socialist Party, BSP)</b>	29,2
<b>Meglana Kouneva (independent)</b>	14
<b>Volen Siderov (Ataka, A)</b>	4

Source : The Sofia Echo

# Rossen Plevneliev is elected President of the Republic of Bulgaria

09

As expected the party in office's (GERB) candidate, Rossen Plevneliev won the presidential election, the second round of which took place on 30th October in Bulgaria. The candidate supported by Prime Minister Boyko Borissov (GERB) won 52.56% of the vote and came out ahead of his rival, Ivaylo Kalfin (Socialist Party, BSP), who won 47.44% of the vote.

Turnout totalled 48.04%, an almost identical figure with that recorded in the first round on 23rd October (48.54%).

Results  
second round

*"Via its vote the Bulgarian people has given its support to the country's stability,"* analysed Prime Minister Boyko Borissov. *"If the results had been bad, if we had lost, a political crisis might have occurred. I do not want to think of this at a time when Europe is in upheaval due to a serious economic crisis,"* he added. The new president of the Republic, Rossen Plevneliev, promised to undertake reform on taking office on 23rd January next, notably in terms of justice, healthcare, retirement pensions as well as the civil service. He said he wanted to establish an internet information system within the Bulgarian institutions. He also promised to do everything he could for the EU's institutions to grant Bulgaria the necessary funds to modernise its infrastructures.. *"I know what the country needs, likewise its regions and its economy so that we can become a respectable member of Europe,"* declared Rossen Plevneliev.

Ivaylo Kalfin rapidly acknowledged his defeat. *"The result is clear. We did not win the presidential election,"* he declared. Between rounds the leftwing opposition candidate mentioned the threat presented by a victory on the part of Rossen Plevneliev with regard to Bulgarian democracy. *"The people have to know that this vote is not a problem of left and right, but it involves the protection of the democratic institutions in Bulgaria,"* he stressed adding, *"I think that it is important for Bulgaria's president to be independent, whose voice provides a counterweight to those in government."*

Socialist leader Serguey Stanichev indicated that he doubted the regularity of the presidential election. *"I shall not congratulate the election's victors because they won due to unprecedented manipulation, via political and police pressure and thanks to the massive purchase of votes,"* declared the opposition leader. Aged 47, Rossen Plevneliev, who is from Gotse, is a graduate in IT engineering. Entrepreneur and businessman he created the building company Iris International AD in 1990. Four years

later he founded a new building company, LinBulgaria OOD, then in 1998 he set up the investment company Lindner Iris Immobilien OOD. In this time (1991-1998), Rossen Plevneliev worked in Germany. In 1999, he created the Business Park Sofia EOOD. In 2001, he organised the merger of Iris International, LinBulgaria and Lindner Immobilien within Lindner Bulgaria OOD. Two years later he created Residential Park Sofia OOD, which invests in park building projects and in 2005 he established a new investment company Lindner Immobilien Management OOD. This prolific entrepreneur is a member of the Bulgarian Employers' Confederation.

In 2009, Rossen Plevneliev was part of the team that wrote out the GERB's economic programme. After the party's victory (which he has never joined) in the general elections on 5th July 2009, he was appointed Regional Development and Public Works Minister by Prime Minister Boyko Borissov. According to the polls, he was, in 2010 the most popular minister in the government, which partly explains why he was appointed candidate in the presidential election on 4th September. He was replaced in government by Liliana Pavlova.

Rossen Plevneliev will form a ticket with former Justice Minister Margarita Popova, who also does not belong to GERB.

Rossen Plevneliev's victory in the presidential election and that of GERB in the local elections in the second round of voting that also took place on 30th October (the party won at least 13 of 27 main towns, including Sofia in the first round, whilst it only held nine before the election) bear witness to the support that Prime Minister Boyko Borissov continues to enjoy. And so GERB controls all levels of power (presidential, legislative, local) and finds itself in a dominant position less than two years before the next general elections planned for the summer of 2013.

Rossen Plevneliev will take office and will replace Georgi Parvanov as head of State on 23rd January next.

**Presidential Election Results of 23rd and 30th October 2011 in Bulgaria**

Turnout: 48.54% (1st round) and 48.04% (2nd round)

Candidates	No of votes won (1st round)	% of votes cast (1st round)	No of votes won (2nd round)	% of votes cast (2nd round)
<b>Rossen Plevneliev (GERB)</b>	1 302 091	40.13	1 692 330	52.56
<b>Ivaylo Kalfin (BSP)</b>	935 586	28.84	1 527 383	47.44
<b>Meglana Kuneva (independent)</b>	455 800	14.05		
<b>Volen Siderov (Ataka)</b>	118 954	3.67		
<b>Stefan Solakov (NDSO)</b>	82 905	2.56		
<b>Rumen Hristov (Blue Coalition)</b>	62 936	1.94		
<b>Atanas Semov (RZS)</b>	60 606	1.87		
<b>Svetoslav Vitkov</b>	50 431	1.55		
<b>Sali Ibriam (National Unity Movement)</b>	39 129	1.21		
<b>Krassimir Karakachanov (VMRO-BND)</b>	32 183	0.99		
<b>Alexey Petrov</b>	30 955	0.92		
<b>Maria Cappone</b>	29 959	0.30		
<b>Nikolaï Nenchev (BZNS)</b>	9 698	0.24		
<b>Pavel Chernev (People's Party)</b>	7 694	0.21		
<b>Ventsislav Yossifov</b>	6 927	0.21		
<b>Dimitar Kutsarov</b>	6 902	0.19		
<b>Andrey Chorbanov (Democratic Bulgarian Community)</b>	6 228	0.17		

Source : The Sofia Echo

You can read all of our publications on our site:  
[www.robert-schuman.eu](http://www.robert-schuman.eu)

Publishing Director: Pascale JOANNIN

THE FONDATION ROBERT SCHUMAN, created in 1991 and acknowledged by State decree in 1992, is the main French research centre on Europe. It develops research on the European Union and its policies and promotes the content of these in France , Europe and abroad. It encourages, enriches and stimulates European debate thanks to its research, publications and the organisation of conferences. The Foundation is presided over by Mr. Jean-Dominique Giuliani.