

Rumen Radev, the candidate supported by the Socialist Party is elected President of the Republic of Bulgaria

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Results
2nd Round

Rumen Radev, supported by a committee of voters and by the Socialist Party (BSP), won the 2nd round of the presidential election in Bulgaria on 13th November. With 59.37% of the vote (still partial results), he drew ahead of Tsetska Tsacheva, who represented the Prime Minister in office Boyko Borisov's party, the Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria (GERB), who won 36.16% of the vote. This is a serious setback for the head of government who witnessed the defeat of his candidate by over 20 points (23.18).

4.48% of the voters chose to vote "for none of these candidates" – an option now offered to them during the elections that take place according to a majority vote, like those in which the President of the Republic and MPs are appointed.

Rumen Radev came out ahead in the first round of voting on 6th November with 25.44% of the vote. His adversary won 21.96%.

According to some exit polls Rumen Radev was said to have rallied 92% of the voters, who had chosen Plamen Oresharski in the first round (6.63% of the vote) and 60% of those who voted for Krassimir Karakachanov, the candidate running for the United Patriots Coalition (14.97% of the vote). His adversary is said to have rallied just over half of Traycho Traychkov's electorate, the candidate running for the Reformist Bloc (RB), who won 5.87% of the vote.

In line with the promise that he had made to withdraw if his party's candidate did not win the election ("if we lose in the second round I shall resign," he announced), Prime Minister Boyko Borisov, who turned the presidential election into a vote of confidence for his government, whilst the chief of State's role remain mainly an honorary one in Bulgaria, announced his resignation after the presidential election. "The results clearly show that the coalition in office does not hold the majority. Tomorrow or the day after, on parliament's first working day, I shall hand in my resignation," he declared.

Since outgoing President of the Republic

Rossen Plevneliev cannot dissolve parliament in the last three months of his mandate, which will end on 22nd January 2017, the general elections following the resignation of the head of government will not take place before next spring.

"Democracy has won over apathy and fear," maintained Ruman Radev, when the first results granting him victory were announced.

He indicated that he would actively counter corruption – a scourge that is undermining Bulgaria – the transparency of the institutions and the management of migration. In the face of an influx of people in Europe fleeing conflict in the Middle East and Africa he defends a firm stance. "We are obliged to help refugees, but migrants from Afghanistan and Pakistan have to be sent back. Except if we want to follow the example of France, Belgium and Germany and have integration problems as a result," he said. Nicknamed "the Red General" by his opponents, Rumen Radev announced that he would develop economic cooperation with Russia. He supports lifting economic sanctions imposed by the EU on Moscow after its annexation of the Crimea and its military intervention in the East of Ukraine. He said that he wants to "work closely with the

government and his colleagues in the EU, in view of lifting sanctions against Moscow.”

“A necessary improvement of relations with Russia is not a regression in Euro-Atlantic relations,” he indicated. “I am neither pro-Russian nor pro-American but pro-Bulgarian,” he stressed adding that “to be pro-European did not necessarily mean being anti-Russian.” Rumen Radev likes to recall that he “is a NATO General trained in the US,” and that for him “Bulgaria’s membership of the European Union and NATO is non-negotiable.” He stands as a defender of Bulgaria’s position of being “active and not submissive” within these two organisations.

The election of Rumen Radev is however, after the victory of Republican Donald Trump on 8th November as the American President, the second good piece of news for Russian President Vladimir Putin (United Russia, ER).

Aged 53 and from Dimitrovgrad (South East), Rumen Radev, is a newcomer to politics. He is a graduate of several establishments: the School of Mathematics of Haskovo (1982), the airforce universities (1987), the Squadron Officers School (1992), the Rakovski Defence University (1996) and the University of Air Warfare at the Maxwell Air Force base (US) (2003). His entire career has been spent in the Bulgarian army and he was appointed chief of the air force in 2014, a post that he gave up in 2016 so that he could run for the presidency of the Republic. In 2014, he gave his resignation to Prime Minister Boyko Borisov in protest against the State’s weak support to the air force and after the government launched a draft law which would enable NATO to intervene in Bulgaria’s air force. He took back his resignation after he

had been received by the head of government. As she faced Roumen Radev, Tsetska Tsatcheva stood as the guarantee for stability, as the certainty of protecting Bulgaria’s European and Euro-Atlantic orientation. Many people did however criticise Boyko Borisov’s choice in this presidential election, arguing that the leader of Parliament, appointed late as a candidate, was severely lacking in charisma that was vital to win the election.

“People have had enough of hearing the GERB boasting, whilst they see no improvement in their standards of life,” stressed Antony Todorov, professor of Political Science at the New Bulgarian University. Parvan Simeonov, Director of the Gallup Institute, spoke of “a protest vote in an international context that is encouraging a desire for change: the collapse of the traditional authorities in Western Europe, radical change in the US, an increase in Russia’s ambitions.” “It is not just a protest vote,” said Kansho Stoychev, who works at the same institution, “it is a vote for change. The Bulgarians have shown that they no longer want attend a ‘one man show’”.

Rumen Radev’s victory therefore marks the end of the presidential campaign but also the beginning of the legislative campaign. According to Prime Minister Boyko Borisov, if there is a snap election, the alternative coalition to his government would be an alliance between the Socialists and the Movement for Rights and Freedom (DPS) led by Lyutvi Mestan, a party representing the Turkish minority. “A coalition that would isolate Bulgaria from an international point of view and would end in the freezing of European funding,” stressed the head of government, whose party is still running favourite in the upcoming elections.

Presidential election results of 6th and 13th November 2016 Bulgaria

Turnout: 56.28% (1st round)

Candidates	Number of votes won (1st round)	% of votes won (1st round)	Number of votes won (2nd round)	% of votes won (2nd round)
Rumen Radev (Socialist Party, BSP)	973 754	25,44	2 049 260	59,35
Tsetska Tsacheva (Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria, GERB)	840 635	21,96	1 249 043	36,17
Krassimir Karakachanov (United Patriots Coalition)	573 016	14,97		
Vesselin Mareshki	427 660	11,17		
Plamen Oresharski independent	253 726	6,63		
Traycho Traykov (Reformist Bloc, RB)	224 734	5,87		
Ivaylo Kalfin (Kalfin Committee)	125 531	3,28		
Tatiana Doncheva (21 Movement National Movement for Stability and Progress)	69 372	1,81		
George Ganchev (Christian Democratic Union)	27 928	0,73		
Velizar Enchev (Movement for Radical Change-Bulgarian Spring)	18 213	0,48		
Dimiter Marinov (independent)	14 974	0,39		
Rumen Galabinov (independent)	10 286	0,27		
Plamen Paskov (independent)	10 103	0,26		
Alexander Tomov (Bulgarian Social Democrats-Euroleft)	9 513	0,25		
Gospodin Tonchev (Bulgarian Democratic Community)	6 855	0,18		
Kemil Ramadan (Balkan Democratic League)	6 089	0,16		
Kamen Popov (independent)	5 212	0,14		
Diana Dimitrova (independent)	4 362	0,11		
Nikolai Banev (independent)	4 196	0,11		
Yordanka Koleva (independent)	4 182	0,11		
Bisser Milanov (independent)	3 215	0,08		

Source : Electoral Commission <http://results.cik.bg/pvrnr2016/tur2/president/index.html>

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