

THE EMERGENCE OF NEW SMALL PARTIES
AND THEIR ROLE IN THE POLITICAL ARENA –
THE CASES OF REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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Author's Declaration

I, the undersignedIva Popova..... hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. To the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted as part of the requirements of any other academic degree or non-degree program, in English or in any other language.

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Abstract

Republic of Bulgaria and the Czech Republic are Central Eastern European countries, as well as members of the European Union. They experienced similar communist past and transition to democracy period in the early 1990s. Currently the countries are parliamentary democracies with multi-party systems. In their recent history they both experience the phenomenon of fast emergence of new small political parties, which equally fast dissolve from the political arena or transform into different fractions. The purpose of this paper is to analyze this process by identifying the reasons behind its existence as well the role of such parties in the policy agenda setting in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic.

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Introduction

The exact number of recognized countries in the world is different according to various sources, but the figure that is usually cited is 193 – that being the number of member states of the United Nations (2013). The question of democracy is explicitly discussed in the literature and it will be a side in the research in this paper.

The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) in its annual reports measures the level of democracy in 165 independent states and two territories by creating an index of democracy that is founded on five aspects of democracy – “electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, the functioning of government, political participation, and political culture” (2013). Based on the levels of these criteria measured in each of the countries the EIU divided the countries in four groups – “full democracies, flawed democracies, hybrid regimes and authoritarian regimes” (ibid). The two countries which will be analyzed and compared in this work are also part of the report – namely Republic of Bulgaria (classified as “flawed democracy” – ranks N54) and the Czech Republic (classified as “full democracy” – ranks N17). The similarities between the two types of democracies according to EIU are mostly related to recognition of civil liberties in both forms, whereas the basic differences cover the limited political culture, participation and good governance in general in the flawed democracy types (2013).

The huge difference in the ranking between the two countries reflects on the current political situation and the realities in the arena of decision-making, but still they share plenty of common history and features. Three of them are: a long totalitarian communist rule – 41 years for the Czech Republic (1948-1989) and 45 years for Bulgaria (1944-1989), transition to democratic rule and free market economy in 1990s, accession to the European Union – the Czech Republic (2004) and Bulgaria (2007), the current political system in both is a multi-party parliamentary democracy. In addition to the already mentioned

similarities, there is a phenomenon that is observed in the current political history in both countries – namely the emergence of new small political parties which are formed rather quickly, and then equally abruptly fade away.

These processes of emergence, the reasons behind the support of the voters as well as the role of the new small parties in the policy agenda setting will be in the focus of this thesis work. In an attempt to explain the specificities of the issue after the primary and secondary research that was conducted, several clarifications need to be presented, in order for the audience to be properly introduced into the topic. First, it is highly important to be determined what does “new” party mean, when used in this paper. The basic feature of a new party in the cases of Bulgaria and the Czech Republic is its emergence shortly before elections. In addition, new parties cannot be reproached for their past actions, since they don’t have any (Toka 1998). However, it is not always the case that only new political figures enter those new parties (ibid) and voters usually hold them responsible for their individual political past actions, when they were part of different party. Second, the period which will be covered in the thesis is the post-Communism and more specifically the last 8 years (2005-2013) during which two parliamentary elections were held in both countries and the phenomenon of new parties, which does not exist in their initial form for more than one-two mandates, can be observed and will be analyzed in this paper.

In order for the topic to be discussed and developed in depth the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What enables the rapid emergence of new small political parties in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic followed by their quick dissolution?
2. What is the role of these new small parties in policy agenda setting in these two countries?

Chapter 1: Literature Review and Methodology

Section 1: Literature Review

1. Emergence of new parties

The following part of the literature review will present the theoretical framework which is used to address the first research question of this paper:

What enables the rapid emergence of new small political parties in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic followed by their quick dissolution?

The main difference when the emergence of new parties is discussed in the party politics literature is the type of democracy where the process is taking place, which determines not only the number of newly formed parties, but also their effectiveness at the political arena. Therefore, one of the hypothesis of this paper is that the reason why there is way higher number of new small parties in CEE compared to Western Europe is the fact that the countries in CEE are mostly new democracies, where the environment and acceptance of new political projects seems to be way higher than the one in the already established democracies of the West. The progress and successful performance during elections of the new parties can be considered rather common than exception in the new CEE democracies in contrast to the established democracies where there is hardly any proliferation of new actors on the party arena (Tavits 2008). In order to address the issue of the first research question in this paper, several theories will be introduced and discussed. M. Tavits (ibid) outlines the major reasons for emergence of new parties very precisely and in a relevant manner to the cases of Bulgaria and the Czech Republic – “new party entry is more likely when the cost of entry is low, the benefit of office is high and the perceived level of electoral viability is high”. The three factors that Tavits emphasizes represent the current reality in both countries and to a high degree can explain the existence of

numerous new small parties. Starting with the low cost of entry, in both countries the articles of the Constitution and the pieces of legislation that address political parties are rather simplified and the procedure of creating a party seems completely achievable at rather low cost, which creates strong incentives for creation of new parties. When it comes to the benefit of the office, in addition to the general prestige of being in politics and attempting to reach a decision-making level, there is the motivation of acquiring the state subsidy. It is accrued to parties that have gained more than 1% voters support during elections in Bulgaria and 1.5% voters support in the Czech Republic (Bertoa and Spirova 2013). This rather low threshold that if overcome provide for state subsidy shows clearly the benefit of the office and can also be considered as a strong incentive for the emergence of new parties. Bertoa and Spirova added that: “The relationship between the availability of state financing of parties and their development is far from irrelevant”, which comes to show that the subsidy plays a very important role for the preservation of these small parties. Therefore, the lack of state subsidy can explain the fast fading away of some of the small parties, which were not able to maintain the required support for two consecutive terms and lost the privilege of state subsidies. Last but not least, the high levels of electoral viability discussed by Tavits (2008) in relation to the creation of small parties can be explained by the fluctuations of voting preferences in new democracies, where the level of disappointment with the ruling parties is more visible, which explains the high volatility in voting preferences and redistribution of votes towards smaller new parties with the expectation of new options and better solutions offered by the new ruling elites.

Another theoretical perspective that is relevant in the case of the emergence of new parties is the cleavage theory. The classic piece of analysis that is referred when cleavage theory is being implemented is that of Lipset and Rokkan (1967) who differentiate four major cleavages, which lay the ground for further analysis of party emergence – center/periphery, land/industry, owner/worker and church/state.

In the case of Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, the first three cleavages can be considered relevant when we observe the creation of new parties. The center/periphery cleavage corresponds very well to the differentiation between capital cities (Sofia and Prague) and big cities in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic and smaller cities and rural areas, which usually support different party entities. This theory is a clear example of how new small parties find their niche and voters, but corresponding to the needs and demands of the population, representing certain cleavage in the society. The limitations of Lipset and Rokkan's cleavage theory when applied in CEE counties are discussed in N. Sitter's (2002) work, where the author outlines three major specificities of the party politics in the region:

First,...the role of actors – parties and their strategic choices – emerges as stronger than in most interpretations of Lipset and Rokkan's model. Cleavages, institutions, voting patterns, and to some extent even party organisations, are parameters within which parties' strategic decisions impact on the development and stabilisation of party systems. In East Central Europe, these factors have combined to produce a setting that enhances the importance of how parties chose to compete... Second, the development of competitive multi-party systems in East Central Europe has been driven by the contest between parties to define the postcommunist 'right'... Third, the development of more or less stable party systems has been largely a party-driven process.

Sitter places more importance on the parties themselves, than on the surrounding factors and also stresses on the importance of the voters' volatility which seems to be different from the case of the Western European countries. The major relationship between party-voter is also being put into the center, where special attention is given to each micro case that is forming the major picture. This approach depicts the specificities of the region and adds value to the implementation of the cleavage theory in the case of parties in CEE.

Going back to the application of the cleavage theory, Marks and Wilson (2000) use it to explain the European integration processes in the region. The fact that most countries in CEE joined the European Union with the last two enlargements (including both the Czech Republic and Bulgaria), makes the process of European integration and the position of different new parties on this matter crucial when it comes to voters' preferences. It is interesting that both pro-European and Eurosceptic parties experienced success in the last two elections in both countries, showing that the population in

Bulgaria and the Czech Republic still is not united in its opinion of the union and both types of parties have an opportunity to win votes supporting each of the two positions.

2. Policy Agenda Setting

The following part of the literature review will present the theoretical framework which is used to address the second research question of this paper:

What is the role of these new small parties in policy agenda setting in these two countries?

The agenda setting process represents one of the foundation steps in the policy process (Jann and Wegrich 2007). The authors present different versions of the policy process model discussed in the literature and choose to use the most common one where the basic different phases are: agenda setting, policy formulation, decision making, implementation, evaluation and termination. Jan and Wegrich stress on the importance of the interconnection of the stages on the policy process, on which the policy proposal rely in order to be accomplished. The authors stress on the fact that the identification of a problem is key, so that it reaches the agenda setting stage and the work on it is being initiated. When it comes to Bulgaria and the Czech Republic and the agenda setting role of the new small parties, the reality shows that in the last 8 years, all small parties have tried hard to propose topics for the political agenda to address, but these issues hardly passed the identification part and almost never got addressed in Parliament (Spirova 2005 and Sikk 2012).

Section 2: Methodology

The variety of different political systems in Europe and their degree of success has been a substantial topic debated in the literature. A particular trend can be observed – Western European countries were

mainly in the focus (Tavits 2008) with their established democracies and political potential. This pattern began to slightly change after the fall of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), in the beginning of the 1990s when political scientists began to shift the focus and to concentrate on these new democracies. The process of transition from one-party to multi-party systems in the region opened the debate and these new processes of democracy building driven by the choice opportunities that people were provided with, materialized to be in the center of academic research in the field.

The current multi-party systems and more specifically the emergence and role of the new small parties in the last 8 years in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, is in the focus of this work and will be analyzed with qualitative methods. Secondary data will be used, such as scholarly articles, books, analysis and opinions of researchers published in journals and periodicals. In addition, semi-structured interviews with academics, political scientists, sociologists, politicians, journalists from Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, conducted by me will be used in order to illustrate the current situation with small parties in both countries. The methodology of the analysis, precisely the juxtaposition and comparison of the existing literature with the opinion of interviewees will add value to the work in an attempt to answer the research questions presented in the introduction.

The interviewees were selected by reason of their relevant expertise and knowledge of the topic. I have tried to contact various professionals from both countries in order to present different opinions from several sectors related to party politics. The main reason for the choice of conducting interviews in addition to the literature review in the paper present the attempt to contribute to the field with the findings of the analysis, benefiting from the variety of quantitative methods used.

The literature review will focus on three primary aspects and theories which are considered most relevant to the topic of research. First, the current state of the political arena in the CEE in comparison

to the common past will be reviewed, with a particular emphasis on the two countries of interest. This broad discussion will set the scene for the reader and will provide the necessary preliminary information required for understanding the issue. Second, the emergence of new small parties in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic will be discussed in relation to the cleavage theory. This theoretical framework will support the analysis and address directly the first research question about the emergence and dissolution of small new political parties. Third, the agenda-setting theory that is part of the policy process will be discussed and analyzed in order for the second research question to be addressed – namely the role of these parties in relation to policy agenda setting.

Chapter 2: Overview of the political systems (2005 – 2012)

The case of Bulgaria

Bulgaria was under Communist regime for 45 years (1944-1989) and when the regime fell, there was a period of transition to democracy and free market economy (Spirova 2005). The country became part of the European Union in 2007 with the last enlargement phase so far.

The country is multi-party parliamentary democracy where both the president (5 years mandate) and the unicameral parliament (4 years mandate) are elected directly from the citizens. There are 240 members of parliament who are parts of different political parties or coalitions.

The results in the 2005 parliamentary elections are presented in the following table (Savkova 2005):

Party Name	Percentage of Votes %	Number of MPs
Coalition for Bulgaria	34.17	82
National Movement Simeon II	22.08	53
Movement for Rights and Freedoms	14.17	34
Coalition Union Attack	8.75	21
Union of Democratic Forces	8.33	20
Democrats for Strong Bulgaria	7.08	17
Bulgarian People's Union	5.43	13
Total	100	240

22 parties and coalitions entered the parliament and the political arena seemed rather fragmented. The government was formed through a coalition between Coalition for Bulgaria (Socialists), National Movement Simeon II (Liberals) and Movement for Rights and Freedoms (Liberal, considered the strongest ethnic party supported by the Turkish population in Bulgaria). The main conclusion is the fact that NMSS which was a small new party in the previous elections, lost a lot of its power and voters support, therefore they were second power in these elections and had to form an undesired coalition.

In 2009 the big winner were Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB) which being a rather small new party won 39.72% of the votes (Savkova and Stoyanov 2009). It is interesting that this party was a fraction that separated from NMSS and the prime-minister Boyko Borissov was a very charismatic person who managed to reach this impressive result through populist talking and huge promises.

The case of the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic was under Communist regime for 41 years (1948-1989) and when the regime fell, there was a period of transition to democracy and open markets (Tavits 2011). The country became part of the European Union in 2004 during the big CEE enlargement.

The country is multi-party parliamentary democracy where both the president (5 years mandate) and the bi-cameral parliament are elected directly from the citizens. The parliament has a Chamber of Deputies with 200 representatives (4 year term) and a Senate with 81 representatives (6 year term, where 1/3 of them are replaced every 2 year) (websites of the Czech Chamber of Deputies and the Senate 2013).

The results for the elections for the Chamber of Deputies in 2006 and 2010 is represented in the tables below:

June 2-3, 2006 Chamber of Deputies Election Results - Czech Republic Totals (Source: <http://electionresources.org/cz/>)

Registered Electors	8,333,305
Envelopes Issued	5,372,449 64.5%
Envelopes Submitted	5,368,495
Valid Votes	5,348,976 99.6%

Party	Votes	%	Seats
Civic Democratic Party (ODS)	1,892,475	35.4	81

Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD)	1,728,827	32.3	74
Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM)	685,328	12.8	26
Christian and Democratic Union - Czechoslovak People's Party (KDU-ČSL)	386,706	7.2	13
Green Party (SZ)	336,487	6.3	6
SNK European Democrats (SNK ED)	111,724	2.1	0
Freedom Union - Democratic Union (US-DEU)	16,457	0.3	0
Others	190,972	3.6	0

May 28-29, 2010 Chamber of Deputies Election Results - Czech Republic Totals (Source: <http://electionresources.org/cz/>)

Registered Electors	8,415,892
Envelopes Issued	5,268,098 62.6%
Envelopes Submitted	5,263,822
Valid Votes	5,230,859 99.4%

Party	Votes	%	Seats
Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD)	1,155,267	22.1	56
Civic Democratic Party (ODS)	1,057,792	20.2	53
Tradition Responsibility Prosperity 09 (TOP 09)	873,833	16.7	41
Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM)	589,765	11.3	26
Public Affairs (VV)	569,127	10.9	24
Christian and Democratic Union - Czechoslovak People's Party (KDU-ČSL)	229,717	4.4	0
Party of Citizens' Rights - Zemanovci (SPOZ)	226,527	4.3	0
Sovereignty - Jana Bobošíková Bloc	192,145	3.7	0
Green Party (SZ)	127,831	2.4	0
Others	208,855	4.0	0

The Senate elections will not be covered in this work because for the purposes of this paper Chamber of Deputies represents enough the participation of small parties in the government. The major new actors on the arena were Christian Democrats, TOP09, the Green party and the democratic Union which were newly formed and managed to get into parliament.

Chapter 3: Analysis

The analysis of the topic is based on the qualitative methods – secondary data and in-person interviews. When asked how would they explain the emergence of new parties in both countries most interviewees suggested similar reasons – the new changes introduced in the political system, the desire for adequate representation, the disappointment with the old established parties, the dissolution of bigger parties into smaller entities, etc.

James Pardew explained the process in Bulgaria in the following way:

The number of small political parties in Bulgaria represents an attempt to fill a void on the center right. To me, Bulgaria has only one national party, the BSP. It has been around for 100 years, it has a clear agenda and it has an effective national organization and national leadership. (The MRF is a special case because of its association to the Turkish community in Bulgaria) The UDF had the potential to be the primary party on the center right, but the UDF lost sight of its political enemy (BSP) and destroyed itself with bad governance when in power and destructive internal fighting afterwards. The UDF committed suicide. On the right, the small parties are personality based: Kostov, Simeon, Borisov...When the personality is no longer favored by the voters, the party fades as well and new parties with various personalities and agendas pop up in their place.

Dr. Sean Hanley on the same question in the Czech Republic concluded:

I think on the whole proliferation is related to the change in rules concerning electoral deposits and election campaign funding. The fading away of even successful new parties is not particularly surprising – it is the norm and relates to their lack of organisation, experience, clear programme (or real difference from established parties) and (often) limited resources the fact that they are often chosen by voters as a means of protesting and/or as a novelty. New parties that established themselves and endure are the more surprising and interesting phenomena.

Maxmilián Strmiska for the Czech Republic:

- a) There are amounting problems both with "representation quality" and accountability, thus there is a space for new parties or at least for new party projects.
- b) However, these new parties have been unable (or, in fact, might be even unwilling) to bring or enforce real changes (to improve representation and accountability).

When asked about the driving incentives behind the voters' support in the last years usually give the crisis are a reason, the new modern thinking of the small parties and the desire for representation.

Nikolay Vassilev for Bulgaria:

Voters are not happy with any of the large parties who have already been in power in the past. Also, many new potential leaders are willing to try to become a factor in the political life in the country.

Ondrej Cisar for the Czech Republic:

Search for new alternatives.. the phenomenon of "newness" which tends to work one term only.

James Pardew for Bulgaria:

In some cases, it is the appeal of the individual who represents the party, a personality cult if you will. In some cases, these parties represent a very specific agenda (the Green Party, the Agrarians). In some cases, they are protest votes against the established parties. Voters are disappointed or disgusted with the big party and find an alternative in the small party.

When asked about the volatility in the voters preferences the main reasons given by the interviewees

were the disappointment with the status quo effect, the protest vote, new economic interests, etc.

Maxmilián Strmiska for the Czech Republic:

It would be suitable to differentiate. Regarding the electoral fortunes of new parties, the major problem is that they have not been able neither to substitute the established parties and to give new life to the established party system, nor to change it and/or to open a distinctly new path. Moreover, the most known and discussed new Czech party (Věci veřejné) has somewhat compromised, not forever, of course, the idea and vocation of new parties - in both mentioned respects. That should be taken into account when assessing the reactions of not-so-loyal or undecided voters.

James Pardew for Bulgaria:

Some aspects of the Bulgarian electorate are very predictable. The BSP probably has 15-20 % it can always count on in an election. The MRF vote is fairly fixed. Ataka probably has 3-5 %. That leaves a majority of Bulgarians on the center-right but without a fixed major party (see point 1 above). Within the center-right the competition has revolved around personalities, and the personalities go down if they do not govern effectively when in power.

Bulgaria is a center-right country. There is only one real left party and its support is solid but limited. The rest is fragmented. The trend as I see it in Bulgaria is for a center-right party to win an election and fail to govern effectively. They became viewed as corrupt, failed to deliver economic development, rule of law and allowed the mafias to flourish. A disenchanted population then threw them out in favor of the default party, the BSP. The BSP then governed effectively and the cycle repeated itself with a new personality on the right.

In the last election, if you take away the 50% of eligible voters who did not vote and the 25% of those who did but voted for parties which are not in parliament, a lot of Bulgarians are not represented in this parliament. There is a great opportunity for someone who can capture the disgusted voters in Bulgaria.

Dr Seán Hanley for the Czech Republic:

When voters have supported new parties (1998, 2006, 2010) it has been related to dissatisfaction with one or both of the main established parties and a perception that the new parties in question are politically credible and stand a

chance of being elected. This is in turn related to the new parties' abilities to accumulate enough publicity and resources to get their message across to the electorate.

I don't have any explanation other than the obvious point that they are undecided – more generally in the Czech Republic as elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe there very few voters who identify strongly with a political party.

Conclusion

The emergence of new small parties is a phenomenon that is widely spread in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic in the last decades. It started after the fall of Communism and is particularly tangible since the last two parliamentary elections in the countries. The secondary literature research as well as the primary findings from the conducted interviews show several trends which lead to the following particular conclusions.

First, new parties emerge easily because there is need for change. The population in both countries is dissatisfied with the status quo and show willingness to support any change that is offered in the political arena. New politicians use very capably this fact and exercise their creativity in political promises in order to gain political trust, which later on is visible through votes during elections.

Second, the high number of new small parties creates the feeling of infinity of the political stage and different people with various backgrounds decide that they can fill a particular niche, hoping to get enough votes during elections if not to enter the parliament, at least to reach the minimum level that allows for receiving state subsidy. The discussion with specialists in the field convinces me that, the incentive for small parties to be created because of the subsidy appears to be very strong. Both countries have rather small threshold – 1% for Bulgaria and 1.5% for the Czech Republic, which seems fairly achievable for the tempting benefits that the subsidy allows for.

Third, both Bulgaria and the Czech Republic nations are looking for the figure of the leader, who will come and solve all the complicated political riddles in front of the countries. The examples of small parties who are led by messiah leaders are numerous and they usually achieve very impressive results during elections – Bulgaria (significant examples: NMSS, GERB) and Czech Republic (significant examples: TOP09 and Veci Verjene).

Naturally, an obvious reason for the creation of new parties is also the breakup of already existing party in several fragments. Usually, the reason behind this is the conflict created between several strong figures in the party who seek dominance. They form different circles of influence around themselves which usually lead to the creation of new political formation. The examples from Bulgaria and the Czech Republic shows that such parties in general could not maintain long political life and even if they manage to enter the parliament, they are not reelected in the elections, which leads to their disappearance.

When it comes to the quick fading away of such small parties in both countries – the reasons are also pretty similar. The major one is the fact that usually parties that are formed rather quickly shortly before elections usually don't have the necessary time and political experience to create stable and feasible platform, which will offer actual solutions, instead of only pointing out the weaknesses of the current political decisions. The role of the platform is key for the future of any party, therefore its qualities are determinant for the success during and after elections.

As far as the agenda setting is concerned, it appears that the role of the new small parties is rather insignificant in both Bulgaria and the Czech Republic. The agenda setting literature as well as the interviewees were definitive that only the big parties have a say in the agenda setting process in the countries. Small parties, usually reach the stage of identifying certain problems, but that is usually the farthest they can reach, therefore these issues does not enter the agenda setting process.

When it comes to the future of new small parties, the experts who took part of the interview process did not engage with definite predictions, but the overall expressed opinions show that these parties will continue to rise and fall quickly until the moment when the model is completely changed, which is nowhere in the near future.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

How would you explain the quick emergence of a large number of rather small parties, which also equally abruptly fade away, in the recent Bulgarian/Czech political history (last 8 years)?

2. Do you find the communist past (one ruling party, no actual voting choice) as a factor influencing the creation of new parties (confidence that there will always be at least some voters' support/the choice factor that is always important to contemporary Europeans)?

3. According to you, what are the potential reasons for the difference in political atmosphere between Bulgaria and the old established democracies in terms of allowing new actors to influence the decision making process?

4. Do you think there is a correlation between entering the EU (large EU party families supporting their MS representative parties) and the growing number of new parties? Do newly elected small parties in parliament have more confidence in their ability to influence the agenda setting in the country if they manage to become part of a European Parliament represented party?

5. What are the potential driving incentives behind the voters' support for small parties in the country?

6. How would you explain the volatility in the voting preferences of undecided voters who tend to support different party in each following elections?

7. Do you think that a possible incentive for the creation of small parties in the country might be the generous state support for every party that passed the 1% voters' support threshold?

8. What are your predictions for the near future and do you think that this trend of emerging of new parties, which usually stay in parliament for not more than 1-2 terms, will continue to exist?

Interview List

(Interviews conducted in the period 7 May – 21 May 2013)

	Name	Position	Previous position (if relevant)	Discussed country
1.	Adelina Marini	Editor-in-chief EU Inside online media		Bulgaria
2.	Boryana Dimitrova	Managing partner at Alpha Research – Marketing and Social Research Agency		Bulgaria
3.	James W. Pardew	US Diplomat	Former US Ambassador to Bulgaria (2002-2005)	Bulgaria
4.	Kolyo Kolev	Chief sociologist at Mediana – Political, Marketing and Social Studies Research Agency		Bulgaria
5.	Lenka Andrysova	Member of the Chamber of Deputies in the Czech Parliament; member of LIDEM political party	Former member of Veci Verejne political party (until 2012)	Czech Republic
6.	Lubomir Kopecek, Ph.D.	Associate professor at the Department of Political Science and International Institute of Political Science; Faculty of Social Studies; Masaryk University; Brno		Czech Republic
7.	Maria Divizieva	Chief of Cabinet of the Prime Minister in Bulgaria; Member of NMSS political party	Former Deputy Minister of State Administration and Administrative Reform (2005-2009)	Bulgaria
8.	Maxmilian Strmiska, Ph.D.	Professor at the Department of Political Science; Faculty of Social Studies; Masaryk		Czech Republic

		University; Brno		
9.	Nikolay Vassilev	Managing partner at Expat Capital; Member of NMSS political party	Former Deputy Prime Minister (2001-2005); Minister of Economy (2001-2003); Minister of Transport and Communications (2003-2005); Minister of State Administration and Administrative Reform (2005-2009)	Bulgaria
10.	Ondrej Cisar, Ph.D.	Editor-in-chief of “Czech Sociological Review”, Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic; Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science; Charles University; Prague		Czech Republic
11.	Peter Stoyanovich	Minister of Culture	Former leader of Gergiovdan political party (2007-2010)	Bulgaria
12.	Dr. Sean Hanley	Senior Lecturer in the School of Slavonic and East European Studies; University College London		Czech Republic
13.	Tsvetozar Tomov	Managing sociologist at Skala – Political and Social Research Agency		Bulgaria

