



11 HOURS OF CHAOS IN PARLIAMENT END WITH VOTE THAT CUTS BULGARIANS ABROAD OUT OF THE POLLS

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After a marathon sitting lasting more than ten hours, Bulgaria's National Assembly adopted amendments to the Electoral Code on second reading, significantly reducing the number of polling stations abroad in countries outside the European Union. Under the new rules, no more than 20 polling stations may be opened outside Bulgarian diplomatic and consular missions in non-EU states. The debate was dominated by sharp disputes over whether the changes restrict the voting rights of Bulgarians living abroad.

The proposal, introduced by "Revival", was strongly criticized by "We Continue the Change-Democratic Bulgaria (WCC-DB), which described it as a deliberate attempt to curtail the rights of Bulgarian citizens outside the EU. WCC [REDACTED] MP Nadezhda Yordanova argued that the amendments lacked clear justification and were the result of opaque political arrangements, aimed at punishing voters abroad who had withdrawn support from certain parties in previous elections.

From a different perspective, the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) defended the changes on financial grounds. BSP parliamentary group leader Dragomir Stoynev questioned why the state should fund elections for citizens who live abroad and do not pay taxes in Bulgaria, suggesting that if voting abroad is to be expanded, the costs should be borne by the voters themselves. This prompted WCC-DBs Martin Dimitrov to counter that Bulgarians living abroad send substantial sums back to the country, which ultimately benefit the state budget.

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