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Sunday Oct 27, 2018

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"My activity as President for the next year will be dedicated to the protection of the democratic rights of the Bulgarians and the rule of law," Rumen Radev said earlier this year when he presented his report for his first year as a president. All of his statements after that contain a heavy assessment of the political system and the political regime in our country: "atrophied democracy", "violation of constitutional principles", "lack of transparency", "uncontrolled power". Meanwhile, Radev's master speeches contain statements that engage the institution as a counterpoint to the status quo: "an inclusive policy of institutions towards citizens for more transparency in governance," "a political environment that ensures broad, real and effective citizens' representation ", "protection of the public interest", "trust in institutions" and others.

Are Radev's righteous and beautiful phrases backed by actions showing a synchronicity of words and deeds, a connection between the proclamation and the reality when the president executes his powers and duties? Is the Radev-led administration adequately transparent and responsible when it comes to making the presidential decisions? Are there double standards in the work of Dondukov 2?

In July last month, the presidential administration approved procedural rules for nominating and appointing members of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination. They provided for the possibility for institutions, non-governmental organizations and citizens to offer nominations for members of the Commission. The procedure was limited in scope - although it provided for some form of selection (motivated proposals based on a review of decision-making documents), it did not allow questions to be submitted to the candidates or the presentation of their concept. These are elements of public participation and monitoring in the construction of independent controlling and regulatory bodies and are generally a prerequisite for increasing confidence in institutions, which is critically low in Bulgaria.

With this procedure, Rumen Radev has asked that the presidential institution will take transparent, honest and responsible decisions when fulfilling its powers of construction of institutions. Demand for Democracy, in which Radev failed.

In November, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Bulgaria will welcome 4 new judges. Their election was made by the National Assembly, the judiciary and the president. The National Assembly, although experiencing systemic deficits, when choosing single or collective bodies, this time conducted a sufficiently public procedure. Obviously, MEPs took a lesson from the case of “Markovska”, who failed to become a constitutional judge after the intervention of President Plevneliev. Krasimir Vlahov's choice was accompanied by questions from the Bulgarian Institute for Legal Initiatives, surprisingly the candidate answered the question of how his nomination was reached. Vlahov did not take part in a competitive race because there were no other candidates. A favorite practice of the ruling majority, carried out with the help of the opposition.

The General Assembly of the Supreme Court of Cassation and the Supreme Administrative Court for the first time adopted procedural rules for the election of constitutional judges. They are conservative in nature - they do not allow civil society monitoring and public involvement by asking questions. But they show the attitude of supreme judges to meet the expectations for more transparency in the work of the judiciary - a long way to go with the involvement of the public.

After waiting for the parliament and the court to make their choice, Radev last casted his nomination - that of Atanas Semov. "For me, not only the high professional, but also the high moral qualities and the ability to stand up for his position, are important," Radev said one month ago answering to the question as to how he would elect a constitutional judge. And that was it. Despite the public and political signals to Radev that there is an expectation and demand for high standards of publicity and transparency of the selection, the presidency has made the most ambiguous choice possible. Without any arguments for the candidacy, without giving the opportunity to include citizens in it, without carrying out the mandatory public discussion.

There are many unknowns around the selection of Semov. How, for example, did the President decide on him? Who was he proposed by and what selection, what criteria has been applied?

It is also unclear why Semov took this position. How is the politician Semov going to distinguish himself from the Constitutional Judge Semov? Especially, after he claimed in his

public statements that the present Constitution is "unnatural" and has called for a Grand National Assembly to adopt a new Constitution. As a member of the Constitutional Court he will have to make sure the spirit and the letter of this Constitution are taken into account, how will this happen? And one more thing - if the presidential administration has drawn up a profile of Semov, did it take into account whether a prosecution investigation was conducted against him and what their conclusions were, and do they contain data and facts that could cast doubt on "the high professional and moral qualities of the candidate "?

The laconic press release on the presidential institution's official website does not answer any of these questions. Radev gave a clear example on how to make unjustified, ambiguous and irresponsible appointments. Moreover, he showed inconsistency in his work - it appears that for the election of members of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination he can imitate democracy, but not for the Constitutional Court. Combined with hints of a presidential regime, the authoritarian and community-led decision-making by the presidency gives out dangerous signals. Radev not only undermined the confidence in the Constitutional Court through the iniquitous way in which he chose Semov but also showed us that the presidency cannot be a leader or an ally in the fight against the capturing of the institutions and giving them back to the society.