

# Lost Trust in Political Parties in Europe

## Event summary

17 May 2022

The *Lost Trust in Political Parties in Europe* conference took place in Sofia, Bulgaria with a keynote speech by **Iliyana Yotova**, Vice President of the Republic of Bulgaria. The event brought together Bulgarian experts and academics, as well as ENoP members to discuss the future of political parties and the future of representative democracy and democratic societies more broadly.

The insightful discussions in the different panels covered the following questions:

- Are political parties in decay and how will political representation be expressed?
- Is it possible to replace political parties with civic movements and civil society organisations - where is democracy headed?
- How do parties defend the public interests of the groups of voters who support them?
- How successfully do parties develop and advocate for progressive social projects and policies or do they concentrate only on the political process?
- How effectively do parties communicate their activities to citizens?
- How does the State take care of democracy?
- Who and how finances the activities of political parties and foundations and the media close to them?

The conference welcomed over 50 participants from different profiles- MEPs, former ministers of economy and health, media, experts, NGOs and representatives of the Russian and Spanish embassies. Online, the discussion was followed by 4500 viewers via the live stream. In addition to this, the event was widely covered by a large amount of Bulgarian media and news outlets which strengthened ENoP's profile and contributed to the Network's visibility.

The event was an excellent example of successful ENoP Network collaboration, featuring a wide range of ENoP members representing different ENoP bodies and political families. In the opening session this included **Doris Pack**- President EPP Women, former MEP (EPP), ENoP Political Board Member; and **Katya Koleva**- President of ISI, ENoP Steering Committee Member. In addition, ENoP members featured as panel speakers were: **Denis Schrey**- Programme Director Multinational Development Policy Dialogue, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Brussels, ENoP Network Coordinator; **Panayiotis Kakolyris**- Head of International Relations, Konstantinos Karamanlis Institute for Democracy, Chair of ENoP WG Future of Europe; and **Jan Marinus Wiersma**- Vice-president European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity, former MEP (S&D), ENoP Political Board Member, Chair of WG Democracy.

