

INVITATION

You are kindly invited to attend the launch of the Bulgarian version of Dr Dimitar Bechev's book

RIVAL POWER: RUSSIA'S INFLUENCE IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE

The event will take place at the Sredets Hall of Sofia Hotel Balkan at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, 27 November 2018



The press launch and the ensuing discussion are organised by:
the Civic Council Association,
the Iztok-Zapad Publishing House, and
Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.

5:00 – 5:30 p.m.

Registration of participants.

5:30 – 5:45 p.m.

Opening and introductory remarks:

Mr Grozdan Karadjov, Chair of the Board of the Civic Council Association;

Mr Thorsten Geissler, Director of KAS-Sofia;

Mr Lyuben Kozarev, General Manager of the Iztok-Zapad Publishing House.

5:45 – 6:15 p.m.

Presentation:

Mr Rumen Leonidov, current affairs author: 'What are the strategic objectives that the Russian Federation pursues in Southeast Europe?'

Mr Traicho Traikov, Minister of Economy and Energy (2009-2012): 'How should the EU and NATO respond to the interference of the Russian Federation in the countries of Southeast Europe?'

Dr Dimitar Bechev, Research Fellow at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and author of the book: 'Why Russia is back in the Balkans?'

6:15 – 7:30 p.m.

Discussion.

7:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

Informal discussions over a glass of wine and light buffet.



Russia is back on stage. This sentence appears time and again on the pages of newspapers, in think tanks' reports and in politicians' speeches about the situation in post-Communist Europe. The Ukraine crisis and the annexation of Crimea in March 2014 sparked yet another confrontation between Russia and the West, and a new 'big geopolitical game' is underway in the Balkans.

In this book, Dimitar Bechev goes beyond the stereotypes and offers a sober analysis not only of the Russian influence in Southeast Europe but also of the serious limitations to that influence. At the same time, he debunks the myth that the countries of the region and their leaders are merely 'victims' of Moscow's treachery. Southeast Europe is a field of rivalry between an ambitious Kremlin, which has clearly defined goals but lacks the means to achieve them, and a divided West, which is in two minds on how to respond to the challenge. Meanwhile, the countries of Southeast Europe and Bulgaria in particular keep looking for a way of their own in the turbulent waters of this rivalry: advancing Westward while looking Eastward.

The basic tenets in the book will be presented by respected experts and current affairs authors who take an active stance and have amassed professional experience in Middle East matters. Diplomats, politicians, analysts and civil society representatives will also join the discussion.