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Bulgaria's Inclusion into the Eastern Enlargement of the EU

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The actual Bulgarian crises of EU post-accession conditionality have a long history. This history started with the delay in the first steps of Bulgaria to EU and slow progress in pre-accession conditionality became the permanent characteristic of Bulgarian participation in the Eastern enlargement process. The EU neglected Bulgarian slow progress in a few occasions and stated its position as equal as the other candidate states of Central and Eastern Europe. In this context, the political rhetoric about double standards in the EU Eastern enlargement is incorrect. The purpose of the presentation will be to survey Bulgarian inclusion in EU Eastern enlargement regardless of the delay in Bulgarian first step to Community. The text will be constructed around three main components. First, the summarize of the realistic explanation for the delay institutionalization of relationship with the European Community in the beginning of the 90s and the supplement of the constructivist explanation; Second, the observation of the chronology of the Bulgarian first steps toward EC; Third, the equal treatment of Bulgaria as a part of the potential candidates of Central and Eastern Europe based upon the Copenhagen's conditions, illustrated in the official documents of the European Parliament.

Key words: Eastern Enlargement, Bulgaria, post-communist governments, conditionality

The collapse of the Iron Curtain ended the Cold War and presented us with a unique opportunity to unite Europe ... We have a historical and moral duty to seize this opportunity ...

Jacques Santer

Introduction

The collapse of the Berlin Wall or the raise of the Iron Curtain are two poetic metaphors that are typically associated with the elimination of demarcation lines that divided Europe during the Cold War. That same war managed to not only divide but also juxtapose countries and their citizens in all aspects of socio-political life within a timeframe of almost half a century. The patterns and practices of the Cold War had gone deep into the texture of European societies and had had lasting and far reaching consequences. A major step towards the resurrection of the organic wholeness of the continent has been made with the implementation of the Eastern Enlargement of the EU. The inclusion of ten post-communist states into the European project offered an opportunity for establishing what Jean Monnet proposes as the "de fact solidarity" between the countries from "the two Europes", one that would lead to a qualitative shift in their relations so that any chance of resurrecting separation could be impossible. In this context, EU's Eastern Enlargement represents a corner stone in the newest history of Europe.

Therefore, the key significance of Eastern Enlargement is a topic that stimulates wide research interest. It offers a significantly abundant empirical base which presents a broad field for testing integration theories. Both rationalists and constructivists find a wide ranging set of arguments in favour of their hypothesis in the very history of that unprecedented EU enlargement. On the other hand, the historical analysis demonstrates the limited opportunities of theoretical schools for thorough explanation of the integration process based on the far more complex empirical material. Although integration theories are useful from the point of view of conceptualization and problematisation, their explanatory potential and capabilities for prognosis are rather limited. Contemporary history of Europe, part of which is EU's history, attempts at offering a far more general and comprehensive explanation of social processes in unison with the traditions of historical methodology by combining the material (economic profit, political dividends, geostrategic positions) and the ideological (moral norms, identity, traditional views and ideas) factors.¹ From this point of view, national historians could significantly assist in clarifying the process of the Eastern Enlargement of the EU by analyzing separate national cases.

Bulgaria's inclusion into the Eastern Enlargement of the EU also presupposes its inclusion into the historical account of the development of the European integration project and, therefore, makes critical researching the Bulgarian case from a historical perspective. Irrespective of these preconditions, the analysis of the Bulgarian participation into the Eastern Enlargement of the EU still does not occupy an important place into the research of the Bulgarian historical community. The reasons for that limited interest could be traced in several possible directions. First, the impact of the Cold War Era provokes a historical interest mainly towards the communist history of Bulgaria. Second, the lack of the traditional for historical research temporal distance, together with the significance of the theoretical schools about the European integration, position the topic of eastern EU Enlargement into a rather unfavourable research field, requiring borrowing methodological tools from instrumental sets of other social sciences. Third, in post-communist states the research interests towards EU's history as part of the history of contemporary Europe are limited just the same way as "socialist integration" is not so research-worthy for the west European historical research.² The limited number of historical research that concern the participation of Bulgaria into the Eastern Enlargement of the EU is predominantly focused on tracing facts from Bulgaria-EU relations and have been left out of the theoretical and chronological framework of the enlargement.³

The cognitive deficit with respect to the topic of the Eastern Enlargement of the EU in Bulgarian historical research makes difficult not only the construction of an objective historical account of the Bulgarian participation into the process, but also the uncovering of adequate solutions to existing issues in the relations between Bulgaria and the EU, mainly rooted in the past. Simultaneously, this deficit eases the indecorous political talk. Quite often members of Bulgarian political elite promote into the public sphere the understanding that the major cause for the later full-fledged membership of Bulgaria, the infliction of the Control and Verification Mechanism (CVM), and the permanent critique towards Bulgarian government due to lack of progress in judicial system reforms (as is the case with the country's entrance to the Schengen Agreement), is a direct outcome of a specific "accidental" attitude towards Sofia and of double standards applied by European institutions and/ or EU member states.⁴

Conceptual framework

The aim of this paper is to add up to the existing analyses covering the first phase of Bulgaria's participation into EU's Eastern Enlargement (1989-1993), or the so-called "pre-accession", by combining both the material factors applied by the rationalist school and the nonmaterial factors on which constructivist theory is built upon. The selected period is of utmost significance for the history of the Bulgarian participation into the process of the Eastern Enlargement since it represents the timeframe in which the country became a part of it. Bulgaria had been equally treated as a member of the group of potential candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe, despite its lagging behind in the institutionalization of the relations with the European Economic Community (EEC).⁵ In order to achieve this aim the paper focuses on three major components. First, the generalizing of rationalist conclusions regarding the reasons for Bulgaria's lagging behind in the institutionalization of its relations with EEC and further extending them by the constructivist approach – by analyzing EEC's public discourse from the end of the 80s. Second, tracing back the chronology of the first steps of the Bulgarian state towards EEC and the factors that slowed them down; third, analyzing the causes for Bulgaria's inclusion into the process of Eastern Enlargement as part of the group of post-communist countries referred to as Central and Eastern Europe countries (CEE) and treating it as their equal, despite the so far unreliable partnership with Bulgarian government officials.

The obstacles for institutionalization Bulgaria - EEC

The opportunity for inclusion into the Western European integration project presented itself to the countries in Central and Eastern Europe at the end of the 80s. Michael Gorbachov's initiative for the normalization of relations between the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (herein referred to as "Comecon") and the European Economic Community (EEC) opened up the path for the first contacts between the socialist countries and the European Commission (EC). In a joint Comecon-EEC declaration issued on June 25, 1988 the two economic communities made the necessary steps for mutual recognition. Until this very moment Bulgaria had not recognized the Community as an international organization and had had no diplomatic relations with Brussels. The country kept strictly to the soviet directive for non-recognition of the EEC in accordance with the repetitively stated position of the Bulgarian communist government for absolute unison between the Bulgarian and the Soviet international political strands - ... "with regard to the issues of interior and foreign policy, Bulgarian communist party (BCP) shares the same position as the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union."⁶

The Comecon-EEC mutual recognition paved the way for conclusion the Trade and Cooperation Agreements (TCA) with the Comecon member states – Hungary (Dec. 1988), Poland (Dec. 1989), Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria (1990). The negotiations regarding the TCA and the follow-up negotiations dealing with the Europe Agreements (EA) mark Bulgaria's first steps to deepening its relations with the EEC. Three governments of the transition had changed from the end of 1989 till the end of 1991, when the negotiations of the TCA were concluded and the negotiations for the EA between Bulgaria and EEC were initiated. Two of them were one-party communist cabinets – those of Andrei Lukanov (February 5, 1990 – September 21, 1990 and September 21, 1990 – December 22, 1990) – and one wide coalition government, Dimitar Popov's caretaker government (December 20, 1990 – November 8, 1991). Those steps were slow and insecure compared to the ones already made by the members of the Visegrad Group.

According to the logic of rationalist school, the main cause for that delay was the negative balance between cost and benefits calculated of Bulgarian political elite. This logic is based on the understanding that the integration process is propelled by the positive outcome in weighing the costs and benefits for EU member states and for the candidate countries respectively. According to Andrew Moravcsik and Milada Vachudova... The Eastern European states have taken part in laborious accession process because EU membership bring tremendous economic and geopolitical benefits – particularly as compared to uncertain and potentially catastrophic costs of being left behind as others moved forward.⁷ For the Bulgarian government officials taking up the initiative for institutionalization of the connection to the EEC, the losses of eventually implementing the required reforms were bigger than the possible benefits from concluding trade agreements with the Community, because of their short term political agenda. In the framework of this logic Bulgarian governments' resistance against initiating actual reforms has been thoroughly researched by Milada Vachudova. According to her research,

"Despite their democratic rhetoric, the non-opposition governments (in Rumania, Bulgaria and Slovakia – author's note)...warped democratic institution, sabotage economic reforms and fostered intolerance in their efforts to concentrate and prolong their power... The concentration of power in the hands of rent-seeking elites, unchecked by other political forces, allows them to mislead electorates about long-term costs of halting economic reform...In power, they

harness domestic institutions to suppress political competition and corrupt marketizing reforms...From 1989 to 1994 a series of virtual electoral stalemates between the unreconstructed communists and the inexperienced opposition produced weak, often incompetent Bulgarian governments: these brought neither systematic economic reforms nor the entrenchment of a liberal democratic state. In Bulgaria...the old communist leaders had resisted calls for perestroika-style reforms from Moscow; after communism collapsed, the new communist leaders look to this limited reforms as a model instead looking to the West”⁸

The measures taken in this respect led to significant distinction between Bulgaria and the Visegrad Group with respect to democratization politics and economic liberalization. Whereas in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia the first post-communist governments laid the foundations of liberal democratic institutions and initiated effective market reforms, the governments in Bulgaria tried to slow down and pervert the much needed reforms.

Together with the factors that govern the resistance against the implementation of actual reforms, researched by Vachudova, a significant cause for the delay of the institutionalization of the relations between Bulgaria and EEC was the marginalization of the Community in the external political strategy of the first post-communist governments due to their close connections to the communist ideology. This assertion can be well reasoned through EEC’s public discourse analysis for the period when the Bulgarian state made her first steps to the Community. The approach applied corresponds to the constructivist school hypothesis with regard to European integration. Constructivists deny the rationalist idea of exogenic interests; in their opinion, interests are being constructed in historically specific conditions creating the context of social and cultural norms that shape the identity and behaviour of political actors. Some constructivist have sought the creation of political identities in Europe, others like Craig Parsons focus on the role of ideas in the integration process. According to Parsons “An ideational approach suggests that structural circumstances rarely dictate a specific course of action, and even institutional constraints may admit of multiply interpretations. The cognitive lenses through which actors interpret their surrounding shape how they respond to structural or institutional pressures. Any choice is predicated on assumptions about causal relationship, the prioritization of costs and benefits, and the normative legitimacy of various actions.”⁹ He stress, however, that ideas are one among many causal factors and that ideational accounts must be seen as a supplement, not an alternative to rationalists models.¹⁰

Major data about the EEC’s public discourse has been taken from reviewing full annual prints of newspaper *Rabotnichesko delo* (Worker act) between 1985 and 1990 and two journals *Megdunarodni otnoshenia* (International Relations) and *Ikonomicheska misal* (Economic Thought) in the same period. This period overlap the first activities of Bulgarian governments to EEC. The newspaper *Rabotnichesko delo* renamed after 1989 in *Duma* were the official organ of the ruling party before and immediately after 1989. The two journals were leading of expert publications in the field on international relations and economic analyses. According to the data, the normalization of EEC-Comecon and Bulgaria-EEC relations was not reflected in the analysis about the dynamics of the integration project from the second half of the 80s. On the contrary, the research of those analyses demonstrates that the political elite remained enclosed within the framework of the communist ideological tradition. The Community was subjected to criticism from Marxist and Leninist conceptions based on exaggerating the problems and ignoring the success in its development.

There are two elements identifying the ideological framework in which EEC analyses were placed in *Rabotnichesko delo*. First, the Western European integration project lacks perspective for development due to the deep and insoluble contradictions between the member countries.¹¹ „Eurosclerosis” is described as a permanent feature of the Community – a direct outcome of the lack of unilateral policy to stimulate technological research, and of the aggravation of contradictions “between the three centres of world imperialism” (USA, EEC, Japan, author’s note).¹² The collapse of the integration project is also predetermined by the institutional architecture of the EEC since the institutions are ineffective and instead of easing the functioning of the Community, they are making it difficult. The enlargement with new member countries – Spain and Portugal – will only lead to problems for both newly accepted and old EEC member states – “after the enlargement, overcoming difficulties will be slower and compromises will not be long-lasting”.¹³ With such problems and contradictions, the planned development of the EEC through the establishment of a political alliance – “continues to remain a lifeless mirage”.

The second element is the assertion about the anti-labour nature of the Western European integration. Therefore, even if that integration manages to achieve sporadic success, it serves the interests of capitalists and not those of workers. It builds a “Europe of Trust Funds” or a “Europe of Monopoly”.¹⁴ The arguments about this specific EEC characteristic are based on the motives behind creating the Community. ...

“The basic social and political idea behind Western European political integration is bringing together and mobilising the power of ruling elite in the fight against progressive and democratic powers in countries of the European Community ...”

“...social, international and political interests of monopoly capital in the region in the fight against socialism and inter-imperialism rivalry with the USA and Japan.”

“...the social dominance of monopoly bourgeoisie is further supported on the integration level. This turns regional capitalist integration into a specific tool to counterattack the objective development of the social progress, playing a vital part in class struggles.”¹⁵

Therefore, the intended political union is characterized by “anti-labour and anti-democratic nature”

The ideologically framed analysis on the nature, processes and perspectives of the EEC is also characteristic for the expert covering of European integration during the second half of the 80s. Examples of this assertion are publications in two of the leading Bulgarian scientific journals on economy and international relations. The first journal is *Ikonomicheska misal (Economic Thought)*, published by the Economic Institute at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS) – identifying itself as: “the only generally accepted journal on economy in Bulgaria” that practices “critical analysis of the newest phenomena and processes in contemporary capitalism”, a resource of “credible information” for “researchers and professors, doctoral students and students, for party, state and economic leaders, for propagandists and social actors”. The second journal is – *Megdunarodni otnoshenia (International Relations)* – a theoretical journal published by the International Relations and Socialist Integration Institute at BAS.

In their research, leading Bulgarian economists and specialists in international relations substantiate the components of the EEC discourse generalized hereinabove. The scientific conference entitled „New phenomena and tendencies in international economic relations of capitalism” held in May 1987 in Sofia reached the conclusion that the capitalist form of integration, illustrated by the EEC example, had “a limited nature in the present day conditions of a new stage in scientific and technical revolution.” In this sense, Western European integration has no optimistic perspective about future development.¹⁶ In an article analyzing the changes in the EEC after the endorsement of the SEA (Single European Act), the author defines EEC as the outcome of the “continuous decline of Western European capitalism.” The Community has anti-labour nature since some of the major motives behind its establishment are: “advancing labour movements”, limiting the influence of communist and socialist parties, providing the West with a dominant position in the rivalry with the socialist system and creating a “major military-industrial complex for NATO”.¹⁷

The problem with ideological bias of experts is clearly formulated by Minasian and Daskalov in their review of the book by Davidova and Petranov – *Comparative Analysis of Economic Structures of EEC Member States* published in 1987. According to both reviewers – “a certain polarization has been observed among economists – some only research the problems of socialist economics whereas others work on the criticism of capitalist economics” and ... “very often fall prey to bias, mixing economic and political problematic.”¹⁸

The analysis of the publications covering the EEC tendencies and perspectives between 1985 up till the end of 1989 demonstrates systematic ideological deformation of interpretations on this topic. Western Europe and its integration project had been rejected in favour of the traditions of communist ideology. That rejection was not a Bulgarian characteristic but rather a general feature in the politics of communist governments in the countries of the Soviet socialist block. Unlike the countries from the Visegrad Group, that negative image of the West has no functioning alternative in the Bulgarian case due to lack of significant, authentic dissident movements with their own ideological platforms.¹⁹ The hold on to power by the non-reformed communist party even after 1989 did not allow for an explicit breakthrough with the communist past and its respective ideological models – based on the rejected West European “other”. The lack of trust towards Western Europe and EEC respectively was reproduced in the public statements of leading Bulgarian politicians of the first post-communist governments.

In the mid 90s Bulgarian Prime Minister Andrey Lukanov continued to argument position that –

“... with our participation in these organizations (Comecon and the other socialist organizations – author’s note), with the alliance and our partner relations with USSR, we rightfully connect both the economic perspective and the guarantee for the national security and the territorial wholeness of the Bulgarian state.”²⁰

“We need to take into account that in the present conditions for us Europe is not only Western Europe, no matter how important it is for the future development of Bulgaria on a democratic course, for its integration to the community of civilised democratic peoples. Anyway, it’s one whole. Our partners from Eastern Europe and the USSR will also have an important place in this Europe.”²¹

The topic of EEC finds no place in BSP’s pre-election platform, published in April 1990. What is more, BSP expresses its unequivocal support for the “perseverance and development of political, economic and mental connections to the USSR” and for the creation of an integrated Europe in the form of “the common European home – from the Atlantic to Ural”.²²

The sustainable support of the communist ideological tradition in the interpretations regarding the EEC in parallel to the negotiations for concluding TCA, which is practically the first step to moving forward to the Community, demonstrates that cohesion was an externally imposed directive by the USSR and/ or a formal inclusion in the process of negotiations between the countries from Comecon and EEC, and not a well-thought long term government policy. Bulgarian governments continued to be related to the communist ideology which had two major goals – rejecting Western Europe and its integration project and supporting the brotherly Bulgarian-Soviet relations. The lack of explicit breakthrough with the communist ideas, even as a formal act, was reconfirmed by BSP not condemning the attempted communist coup in the USSR in August 1991. Accepting the European idea, which until recently had been seen as a destructive factor for the socialist system and for the identity of the Bulgarian socialist state, would undermine the legitimacy and the authority of the ruling ex communists. In this context the balance of benefits and losses is not in favour of the explicit pro-European orientation. On the contrary, the influence of the communist ideas determines the rejection, mistrust and distance from EEC.

The facts of Bulgarian delay

The attachment of the ruling elite to the communist ideology and their resistance to internal political reforms stipulated the slow progress of negotiations with the EEC for the conclusion of TCA. Again in the traditions of communist rhetoric, the responsibility for the delay was fully transferred to the Community. In an interview given in April 1989 the head of the Bulgarian delegation Atanas Paparizov says that the economic reform implemented in Bulgaria requires rejection of the characteristic “a state driven economy”, which the European Commission obviously continues to improperly support despite the endorsement of Decree 56 in January 1989.²³ In the summer of 1989 the negotiations concerning the conclusion of a Trade and Economic and Commercial Cooperation Agreement were terminated because of the violation of human rights, approved by OSCE because of how the Bulgarian government treated the Turkish minority. In March 1990 the negotiations were renewed and the Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement between Bulgaria and the EEC was concluded on May 8, 1990 in Brussels – much later than Hungary (December 1988) and Poland (December 1989).

The trade agreements were transformed into the so-called Europe Agreement, concluded between December 1991 (Hungary, Poland, The Czech Republic, Slovenia) and June 1996 (Slovakia). The aim of these agreements was to suggest a comfortable framework for a sustainable cooperation between EEC and post-communist countries from Central and Eastern Europe. Initially the EU countries saw the agreements as a means to divert the willingness for participation of CEE countries and postpone it to an unspecified point in time. After accepting the perspective for Eastern Enlargement through formulating the membership criteria in Copenhagen in June 1993, those agreements acquired the significance of a necessary step on the road to EU accession, transforming the act into an entrance to the enlargement process.

Bulgarian government posed to the EEC the question of concluding Europe Agreement on November 30, 1990. Andrei Lukanov’s government tried to achieve equal treatment with the outstanding performers in the reforms – Poland, The Czech Republic and Hungary after the EC had asked authorization from the Council of Ministers on November 7, 1990 to open negotiations for the conclusion of EA with those countries. The reformation progress in Bulgaria had been evaluated as insufficient so the country was separated from the Visegrad Group. The position of the Commission on Bulgaria was that continuous monitoring was needed with regard to meeting the necessary criteria for initiating negotiations for EA – commitment to lawful state, fundamental human rights protection, multi party system, free and fair elections, market oriented economy.²⁴

Bulgaria began negotiations for concluding EA on May 14, 1992 after in September 1991 the Council of Ministers of EEC authorized EC to begin “exploratory talks”. This happened despite EC’s recommendation from the previous year not to let Bulgaria open accession negotiations since it didn’t meet the requirements for reform in the economic and political sphere. The major reason for the shift in the position towards Bulgaria was not a visible progress in reforms but the possible destabilization of the region due to the events in Yugoslavia and the attempted coup in Moscow in August 1991. The compromise between the twelve member states on the Bulgarian case was reached thanks to the inclusion of a specific clause by the power of which the EA could be unilaterally terminated in case the other party failed to meet any of its obligations pursuant to it. The clause was a signal that Bulgaria failed to meet the criteria for concluding EA –human rights protection, democratic principles and market economy principles, as well as minority rights protection, therefore the agreement was conditional.²⁵ The strenuous efforts of the Bulgarian negotiators to reach consensus on eliminating the clause from the text were unsuccessful and what they actually managed to accomplish was additional delay of attaching Bulgaria to the group of outstanding performers. The end of the negotiations was on December 22, 1992 – a month later than that for the other poor performing country Romania and year later than Hungary, Poland and The Czech Republic. The Association Agreement between Bulgaria and the EU was concluded and became effective on March 8, 1993.²⁶

The inclusion of the Eastern Enlargement

The decisions of the European Union in Copenhagen from June 1993 transformed the theoretical perspective about the Eastern Enlargement into a practical goal. On the eve of the meeting, the EC drew out a report for the new development strategy. The institution recommended measures for deepening the relations with the associated countries that included speeding up the market access, increasing the economic and technical support for intensifying the political dialogue. The Commission also recommended that the associate countries be defined as membership-ready after meeting certain economic and political requirements. In Copenhagen, under pressure from Germany, the Commission and the Danish Presidency, the European Council accepted the position of the EC claiming that it fully supported the idea of CEE accession to the EU.²⁷

By the power of the decisions reached in Copenhagen, for the first time third countries were given promises for membership even before they officially submitted their candidacy. The criteria opened up the path to EU accession for all countries from the CEE region which signed EA. The European Council declared that

“The associated countries from Central and Eastern Europe which expressed their willingness are going to become EU members. The accession will become a fact once a certain country is capable of accepting the obligations the membership would bring by meeting the political and economic criteria.”²⁸

These same criteria - or conditionality - become the grounds for measuring the advancement of post-communist countries to full-fledged membership, giving them equal status irrespective of the preferences of the

member states or the lagging behind/progress of prospective member candidates in democratization before the meeting in Copenhagen.²⁹

Bulgaria, in its capacity of an associated country, was included in the group of potential EU member candidates referred to as Central and Eastern European countries (CEE) and was treated equally despite the previous delay. Examples of this attitude are the official stands of the European Parliament (EP) on the implementation of the membership requirements by the countries from CEE. Ever since the beginning of the enlargement process, EP had expressed positions on human rights protection, protection of fundamental rights and freedoms and minority rights protection within the framework of relations formulated by association and pre-accession. These positions were an objective source of information on the reformation progress of the CEE countries before the Commission began publishing monitoring reports. Their analysis on the period January 1994 – December 1996 – after the endorsement of the Copenhagen criteria and before the start of the regular monitoring reports on the progress of the member states – clearly shows that Bulgaria was not an object of specific criticism since all post-communist countries had similar transition problems.

In a resolution from November 1994 concerning EU strategy for preparing the CEE countries' accession, the European Parliament declared that all countries in the region sharing the fundamental EU values and norms – were on track to keeping their obligations with respect to accession – in particular those regarding the establishment of a lawful state, democratic structures and civil society, to guaranteeing human rights and minority rights protection together with a working solution to the internal issues in this area.³⁰

In a resolution from April 17, 1996 – on the recommendations from the White Paper by the Commission for the accession of CEE countries to the EU, the European Parliament stressed the need for member candidates (up to this moment Bulgaria had already submitted its candidacy for membership in the EU) to reform and restructure their economies so that they could adapt them to the rules of the internal market in the perspective of sustainable development and social market economy. It had acknowledged the marked progress but pinpointed the need of effective implementation of that legislature and the establishment of satisfactory administrative and organizational infrastructure. It also stressed the lack of transparency, ineffectiveness and squandering of resources in utilizing the aid for the CEE countries, as well as the tough environmental protection issues. It required faster harmonization of legislation for associated countries in the area of transportation and agriculture policy. It also stressed the need for solutions to be uncovered to the problems related to minority rights protection, the effective fight against racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and intolerance. It urged CEE countries to outline specific and raw measures regarding the fight against organized crime, human trafficking, drugs, and illegal immigration.³¹

In a resolution from December 12, 1996 regarding the financing of the enlargement of the European Union, the European Parliament noted that the development of the ten candidate countries from CEE undoubtedly marked its first success despite these countries had a poor level of economic development compared to the member states and were in need of macroeconomic stabilization. The European Parliament noted that as far as transition to market economy was concerned, the candidate countries had managed to achieve progress due to the progressive adoption of rules in favour of competitiveness and liberalization of exchange. At the same time the CEE countries were asked to double their efforts and guarantee the necessary conditions to stimulate private initiatives.³²

In yet another resolution from December 12, 1996 – on the relations in the field of agriculture between the EU and the associated countries, the European Parliament ascertained that there still existed significant deviations with respect to economic power and standard of living in the CEE countries, since their GDP did not represent more than 3% of EU economic potential. The number of enterprises meeting the Community norms was rather scarce at that moment and the transformation process of CEE countries in the field of agriculture was far from completed, its profitability had been insecure and had given rise to discontent in private investors to an extent that the aid and public financing programmes needed to be reestablished. The European Parliament noted that for some CEE countries, without specifying which exactly, agriculture represented a buffer for employment in the process of industrial reconstruction which favoured the emergence of small enterprises and prevented the necessary modernization of the agricultural sector.³³

Summary

The possibility for inclusion into the Western European integration project becomes part of the agenda for Central and Eastern European countries at the end of the 80s. After the mutual recognition between the EEC and Comecon in June 1988, the path to institutionalization of connections to the Community was opened. Bulgaria lagged behind in its cohesion to the EEC at the end of the 80s and the beginning of the 90s due to the systematic resistance of government officials to actual internal political reforms. That delay was also stipulated by the marginalization of the EEC in the external political strategy as result of attachment of leading political figures to the communist ideology. These two obstacles delayed the conclusion of both CTC and EA for quite some time compared to the Visegrad Group countries. The Europe Agreement was concluded not because of any noticeable changes in the behaviour of the Bulgarian state, but due to important geopolitical factors. In its capacity of an associated country Bulgaria managed to accomplish equal treatment and inclusion into the group of prospective EU candidate countries commonly referred as CEE countries. That position is obvious from the enlargement documentation published by the European Parliament.

Conclusion

The nature of Bulgaria's participation into the following stages of the Eastern Enlargement clearly demonstrates the fact that the country did not take advantage of the chance for equal treatment with the countries identified as more advanced with respect to reforms. At the same time, the shadow of the initial delay in meeting the EEC's criteria "stains" the already "shady" image of Bulgaria in the EU, drawing specific attention to the Bulgarian case. The annual EU monitoring reports on the progress of the country concerning the implementation of the conditions for membership contain permanent and repetitive criticism. Bulgaria's lagging behind in implementing the reforms required became constant and hasn't been overcome yet. It has practically led to delaying Bulgaria's EU accession and to the implementation of an unprecedented monitoring mechanism after the country acquired a member state status. It also provides a sufficient and valid argument against Bulgaria's participation into the Schengen Agreement despite meeting the technical criteria. These very facts refute the expectations of advocates for the "inclusion" policy towards the poor performing in reforms Bulgaria and Romania. In their opinion, the strict adherence to meeting the criteria for conclusion of EA would lead to isolation of these countries and to a subsequent undermining of democracy whereas inclusion would stimulate the process of systematic reforms.³⁴ The Bulgarian turmoil caused by EU's post-accession conditionality also demonstrates preserving (and possibly safeguarding) the sources for the lack of political will for reforms.

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¹ See Wolfram Kaiser and Jurgen Elvert, *European Union Enlargement. A Comparative History*, ed Wolfram Kaiser and Jurgen Elvert (London: Routledge, 2005)

² Antonio Varsory, "From Normative Impetus to Professionalization: Origins and Operation of Research Networks". in: *European Union History. Themes and Debates*, ed. Wolfram Kaiser at all. (New York: Palgrave, 2010), 6-25

³ Илиана Марчева, „Първи стъпки на България към обединяваща се Европа в края на 80те и началото на 90-те години на XX в“, *Bulgarian Historical Review*, 1-2(2006)348-364; Боян Минов, „Отношенията между България и Европейския съюз в периода 1989-1999“ в: *Защо рухна реалния социализъм. Ч.1*(София: ИК Хр. Ботев, 2000) 423-432 Елена Никова „Балканите и Европейската общност“ (София: УИ Климент Охридски, 1992)

⁴ Dnes.bg, 12 ноември, 2012, България отдавна е в Шенген

⁵ The process of institutionalization overlap the establishing of special relationship between Bulgaria and EEC by TCA and EA

⁶ *Работническо дело*, 21 февруари, 1986, Тезиси на XIII конгрес на БКП

⁷ Andrew Moravcsik, *The choice for Europe: social purpose and state power from Messina to Maasricht*. (New York: Cornell University Press, 1998),78-89; Andrew Moravcsik and Milada Vachudova, Preferences, power and equilibrium. The causes and consequences of EU enlargement, in: *The Politics of European Union Enlargement*, ed. Frank Schimmelfennig at al, (New York: Routledge, 2005),198-209

⁸ Milada Vachudova, *Europe Undivided. Democracy, leverage, and integration after Communism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 37-61

⁹ Craig Parsons, A certain idea of Europe(London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 5

¹⁰ Moravcsik and Vachudova, *Preferences*, 199

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¹³ Ibid., 5 юли, 1985, ЕИО:разширяване на кръга, разширяване на противоречията.

¹⁴ Ibid., 17 октомври, 1988, Вместо Европа на народите – Европа на монополите

¹⁵ Ibid., 9 октомври,1986, Политическата интеграция в Западна Европа

¹⁶ Резюме от научна сесия на тема „нови явления и тенденции в международните икономически отношения на капитализма“, май 1987, София, *Икономическа мисъл*, 9(1987) 87-89

¹⁷ Стефан Методиев, „Великобритания и европейската икономическа общност – 1992“, *Международни отношения*, 3(1989),38-45

¹⁸Рецензия на Г. Минасян и Р. Даскалов на „Сравнителен анализ на икономическите структури на страните-членки на ЕИО“, *Международни отношения*,7(1988) 78-79

¹⁹ Peter Drulak, "Probably a problem solving regime, perhaps a right-based union: European integration in the Czech and Slovak political discourse", in *Questioning EU Enlargement. Europe in search of identity*, ed Helene Sjirsen (London: Routledge, 2006) 167-186

²⁰ Нора Ананиева. *Андрей Луканов в парламента*, (София: ИК „Хр. Ботев“, 1997)35

²¹ Андрей Луканов. *Луканов за кризата*, (София: ИК Хр. Ботев, 1992) 56, Из заключителното изказване на А. Луканов по дебата за отчета на първото правителство пред ВНС – 22 авг. 1990

²² Дума, 5 апрел, 1990

²³ Работническо дело, 14 апрел, 1989

²⁴ Dimitriou Papadimitriou, *Romania and European Union. From marginalization to membership* (London: Routledge, 2008) 27

²⁵ Vahudova, *Europe Undivided*, 101

²⁶ Papadimitriou, *Romania and European Union*, 28

²⁷ John O'Brennan, *The Eastern Enlargement of the European Union*, (London:Routledge, 2006) 22-24

²⁸ European Council, Presidency Conclusions, *Relations with the countries of central and Eastern Europe*, Copenhagen, 22 June 1993, http://ec.europa.eu/bulgaria/documents/abc/72921_en.pdf,

²⁹ Candidate countries must have achieved: stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities a functioning market economy with the capacity to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within EU and the ability to take the obligations of EU membership including the adherence to the aims of economic and political union.

³⁰ European Parliament, *Resolution on the strategy of the European Union to prepare for the accession of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe with a view to the European Council in Essen*. (1), Brussels, 30 November 1994, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/enlargement/positionep/resolutions/301194_en.htm

³¹ European Parliament, *Resolution on the White Paper "Preparing the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe for integration into the internal market of the Union"*. (1), Brussels, 17 April, 1996, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/enlargement/positionep/resolutions/170496b_en.htm

³² European Parliament, *Resolution on the financing of the enlargement of the European Union* (1), Brussels, 12 December 1996, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/enlargement/positionep/resolutions/121296b_en.htm

³³ European Parliament, *Resolution on the Commission study on alternative strategies for the development of relations in the field of agriculture between the EU and the associated countries with a view to future accession of these countries (Agricultural Strategy Paper)*, Brussels, 12 December 1996, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/enlargement/positionep/resolutions/121296a_en.htm

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