

CHALLENGES TO BULGARIA' INTEGRATION INTO THE UNITED EUROPE AT THE END OF THE 1980s AND THE BEGINNING OF THE 1990s

ILIJANA MARCHEVA
(Sofia)

The article examines the initial steps of Bulgaria to the European Community in the period 1989-1992, when all the countries from the Eastern Bloc strived to become members of the European economic and political area, dominated by the new world leading power – the USA. The analysis of specialized literature and accessible published and unpublished documents from Soviet and Bulgarian archives on the establishing of the first contacts between Bulgaria and the EC reveal how hard it was for the country to surmount its image of a state that was the most loyal satellite of the USSR, with ethnic problems regarding the Turkish minority and with financial and economic problems ensuing from the loss of markets and growing foreign debt. A special attention is paid to the fact that during the negotiations for diplomatic recognition, trade-economic agreement, association with the EC, all the political forces – both former communists and anticommunists – showed readiness to make big compromises. Power was the pledge. That was how, similar to the processes in the other East European countries, the foundations of the transition to parliamentary democracy and market economy were laid in Bulgaria. The difference in the pace of the changes was a result of the internal political situation in Bulgaria and the EU's readiness to expand to the East.

Bulgaria's integration to united Europe at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century was complicated by the place the country occupied in the system of international relations in the framework of the Cold War. When the Cold War finished with the victory of the Atlantic Bloc, Bulgaria had to confront a number of political, ideological, economic and psychological challenges in its attempt to join Europe. Lacking a resistance movement against the communist regime, where dissident movement came quite late and the opposition groups united only on 7 December 1989 under the name of Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), Bulgaria was known as Moscow's most loyal satellite within the Eastern Bloc. The relative prosperity and social harmony that characterized the country in the 1980s were explained in the West not with a stable economy but with export of weapons and state support for drug dealing. The Bulgarian economy was to a great extent bound by the Soviet economy and that of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON), the commodity turnover with the industrialized countries in the 1980s constituted merely 12% of the total turnover of the nation, and 1987 was the beginning of a headlong accumulation of foreign debt to private West

European banks which was to reach by 1989 the amount of 10 billion USD. With M. Gorbachev's coming to power, Bulgarian-Soviet economic and political relations started to cool down, while Todor Zhivkov and his closest associates were considered in Kremlin as a symbol of backwardness and conservatism. At the same time Zhivkov's regime was discredited by the violent change of names of the Bulgarian ethnic Turks in the winter of 1984–1985.

All that posed great obstacles to Bulgaria at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, when the change of the communist system came and the political reorientation of the whole of Eastern Europe to the West took place. In such circumstances, in the period 1989–1991 Bulgaria made its decisive steps to a uniting Europe by establishing its first contacts and relations with the major structures of the Atlantic Bloc – the European Community (EC) and NATO. These steps were carried out by three governments of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP)¹ (the government of Georgi Atanasov 19 July 1986 – 8 February 1990 and the two governments of Andrei Lukanov 8 February – 22 November 1990 and 22 November – 20 December 1990), which actually had its effect on the negotiation process. From 20 December 1990 to 8 November 1991 a broad coalition government of BSP, UDF and BANU² managed to accelerate the negotiations with the EC and NATO. The taking of government by the anticommunist UDF from 8 November 1991 until 30 December 1992 coincided with strengthening of the integration process within the EC, following the decision for establishing the European Union in 1993 and the hesitations over its future development – horizontally or vertically. This set new obstacles to Bulgaria on her road to the EU.

The specialized literature, as well as unpublished and published documents from the Bulgarian archives, the archive of the Gorbachev Foundation and the US Congress make it possible to outline the endeavors of the country to cope with the above mentioned difficulties in the beginning of its road to a uniting Europe. A road that traced the full membership of Bulgaria in the EU, which became a fact on 1 January 2007.

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First of all, Bulgarian first steps towards Uniting Europe depended on the Soviet Union attitude to this process. Soviet *perestroika* was instrumental to this reorientation. The Soviet Union wanted to rid itself of the role of a debtor to the COMECON member states with a debt amounting to sixteen billion USD. Moreover, it wanted to rid itself of the role of a raw material supplier in COMECON especially in cheap energy providers. It was this economic interest that stood at the basis of the *perestroika*, which was underway in the Soviet Union and was unacceptable for the communist leaders in Bulgaria as well as in the other

¹ From 3 April 1990 – Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP).

² BANU – Bulgarian Agrarian National Union.

socialist European countries. This provoked the economic and political centrifugal forces in the Eastern Bloc, including Bulgaria. For example, during his official visit to the Federal Republic of Germany in 1987 Todor Zhivkov made an attempt to establish contacts with leading West German companies, which turned to be particularly irritating for Moscow and provoked Gorbachov accusing him of trying to make Bulgaria a FRG in miniature³.

At the same time, the USA intensified the efforts to oust Soviet influence in Eastern Europe by encouraging greater independence from Kremlin in the foreign policy relations of the countries from the region, respect of the human rights, economic and social reforms. Thus, the first deputy of the secretary of state John Whitehead had two meetings with Todor Zhivkov in 1987–1988, as well as with his two future deputies – the minister of foreign affairs Petar Mladenov (who became general secretary of the BCP and chairman of the State Council on 10 November 1989) and the Minister of Foreign Economic Relations Andrei Lukanov, (who headed in 1990 two communist governments). John Whitehead paid a special attention to the need to put an end to the persecution of representatives of the Turkish minority and to cease the state support of drug-traffic. He promised in return Washington's support for Bulgaria's acceptance in GATT, financial and scientific technical assistance and cooperation⁴.

In view of the changed balance of power between the USSR and USA for dominance over Eastern Europe, at the end of 1980s the Soviet leadership took up the finlandization of the Eastern Europe as a chance to preserve its influence over its satellites. That is why Moscow allowed not only negotiations between the COMECON and EEC but also direct contacts between each particular East European country and the European Community. During 1988 and 1989 parallel talks on these two levels were conducted. Moreover, in the early 1989 Gorbachov and his closest collaborators were tempted to consider Eastern Europe as a neutral zone that the Soviet Union could rule over along with the USA even if it became the part of a uniting Europe. That was the suggestion made by Henry Kissinger to M. Gorbachov during their meeting on 18 January 1989 in Moscow in the framework of the Trilateral Commission⁵.

The dynamic year of 1989, winding up with the “velvet revolutions”, laid the beginnings of the change in the concept of the European orientation of Bulgaria. Then, instead to the Gorbachov's “common European home”, where “every family had their own dwelling, and the entrances were separate”, and where the Soviet Union was also present, all the socialist countries directed their steps towards Europe, seen as the European Community and the Western civilization. This coincided

³ Ил. Марчева, *Българската икономика през 80-те години на XX век между Изтока и Запада*.-Ил.: *Проблемът Изток-Запад, Историческа перспектива, Парадигма*, С, 2003, с.689–670/

⁴ *The Department of State Bulletin*, v.88, N 2136, July 1988, p.50.68.Л.Огнянов, *Дипломация на съвременна България*, Университетско изд. “Епископ К. Преславски”, Шумен, 2006, с.169–170.

⁵ В ПБ ЦК КПСС, *По записям А. Черняева, В. Медведева, Г.Шахназарова (1985–1991)*, М:Альпина Бизнес Букс, 2006, с.435–436.

with the change of leadership of the Bulgarian communist party and state and with the appearance of new anticommunist parties on the Bulgarian political scene.

With the unification of Germany on 3 October 1990, this idea was conclusively transformed into the compliance of one part of the continent – the eastern one – with the conditions and the model of the other part – the western one. The European approach – through economic cooperation towards political changes – was in fact a modification of the American “linkage” strategy, namely binding economic relations with the socialist states to political pressure with the purpose of gaining concessions.

This approach was manifested during the negotiations for establishing diplomatic relations with the EC in 1988–1989, as well as during the negotiations for trade and economic cooperation in 1990–1991 and for association in 1991–1992. It confronted Bulgarian government with further challenges in view of the new geopolitical order that was taking shape and was dominated by the USA and its West European allies.

During the negotiations about diplomatic recognition and conclusion of a commercial and economic agreement Zhivkov's communist Bulgaria was both delaying things and was being detained. Up to the middle of 1989 it followed a rather loyal policy in regard to the Eastern Bloc, not establishing official relations with the Community before the signing of the Declaration between COMECON and the European Economic Community. In this way, by relying on the Soviet Bloc, it was trying to fight so that the elimination of the economic discrimination, mainly of the quantitative restraints for the Bulgarian export, would not come about in exchange for political concessions. At the same time Bulgaria feared falling behind in the integration process in comparison with the rest of the Eastern Bloc countries, among which there existed a tacit rivalry, incited by the differentiated approach of the EEC. Evidence of this rivalry gave for instance the refusal of the Hungarian side in the beginning of March 1988 to acquaint the Bulgarian representative of the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations with the draft agreement discussed by Hungary and the European Commission, despite the Bulgarian representative's repeated representations and the friendly form of the consultations in Budapest⁶.

After the signature of the Declaration for Mutual Recognition between the COMECON and the EEC on 25 June 1988, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party reached the decision (1 June 1989) that Bulgaria should sign the Declaration between the COMECON and the EEC and official relations with the Community should be established. This became a fact on 10 June 1989, when Atanas Ginev was sent to Brussels as Bulgaria's diplomatic representative. On 13 July 1989 the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party was contemplating the possibilities of the country's applying for membership in the International Monetary Fund because that was another condition for negotiating with the Community for the establishment of commercial and economic relations on equal terms and the

⁶ Централен държавен архив, ЦДА, ф.259, оп. 45, а.е. 1332, л. 30.

integration of the Bulgarian economy into the European one. With Decree N 56 of the State Council of the People's Republic of Bulgaria of 9 January 1989 on the introduction of firm organization of the entrepreneurial activity and with its amendments from the winter of 1989–1990, the state monopoly over the foreign trade, which was considered to be a major obstacle to expanding the economic ties with the developed countries, was in fact brought to an end⁷.

Because of the forced emigration of the Bulgarian Turks in the summer of 1989, the Commission of the EEC put an end, at the request of Turkey, to the negotiations about a commercial and economic agreement with Bulgaria, as in the negotiations with the East European countries the Commission represented also the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a member of which was Turkey. To breaking the deadlock in the autumn of 1989 contributed Andrei Lukanov's efforts in his capacity of Minister of Foreign Economic Relations in Georgi Atanasov's government as well as the Ecological Forum organized in Sofia (16 October – 3 November of the same year), and the beginning of the dialogue with Turkey⁸.

After Todor Zhivkov's stigmatizing by new communist party leaders at their Plenary Session on 11–13 December 1989, the OECD was favourably disposed to Bulgaria and this allowed Georgi Atanasov's government for the first time to accept the decision of the organization of 13 December 1989 that the negotiations with the EEC and the allocation of funds to the country be bound with structural changes in the Bulgarian economy and society. In this respect both the abolition of article 1 of the Constitution, announced on 14 December, and the restoration of the former names of the Turkish population with a decision taken by the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party on 29 December 1989, influenced favourably the Commission and the OECD⁹.

In Bulgaria two one-party ex-communist governments of A. Lukanov were in power in 1990. They were eager to please the European Commission in order to strengthen their position both within the country and abroad. As the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Lyuben Gotzev beared record in 1990 "for all leaders of Bulgaria at that time (1989–1990) it was clear that things would not be governed by them ... For Petar Mladenov, for Andrei Lukanov, and for all the others, who were at the time in the first ranks of power. But they still hoped that with their intellectual and practical experience they would be able to manage the situation." They offered the USA their loyalty for being accepted as equal partners in return. In 1989–1990 the USA and its allies were fluctuating between giving support to the agricultural parties: the formal BANU and the opposition one BANU – N. Petkov and the newly formed anticommunist democratic bloc UDF, and for this reason

⁷ ЦДА, ф.1Б, оп. 68, а.е.3435, л.110; ф.259 оп.45, а.е. 307, л.1–7; Е. Никова, *Балканите и Европейската общност*, С: Изд. БАН,1992, с 9–17.

⁸ ЦДА, ф. 259, оп.45 а.е.1331, л.84; а.е.1332, л.106; Е. Никова, *Idem.*, 271–272/

⁹ ЦДА, ф.259, оп.45, а.е.1331, л.81.

they declined this offer, meeting it with condescension. But at the same time, in July 1990 Bulgaria was granted the status of a “specially invited country” in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, as a step of encouragement to the political changes.

Gorbachev's advisors from the Aleksander Yakovlev commission on their part also considered granting support in Bulgaria as well as in the other East European countries not only and not so much to the former communist but to all the opposition forces that expressed loyalty¹⁰. That is why ruling ex-communists did not get much credit by the European Commission. The UDF seemed to be a more suitable partner for the main West European parties that had vast influence over the Community institutions.

Paradoxically as it may sound, the moratorium on the external debt to Western creditors, declared by Andrei Lukanov's first government on 12 April 1990, furthered the acceleration of Bulgaria's reorientation to the EEC. The moratorium created the possibility of changing the political regime in Bulgaria. A similar approach of compulsory indebtedness and with similar political ends was applied also to other East European countries.¹¹ And that was one of the most important conditions for the country's integration into Europe on the model of the western part of the continent. The termination of all deals with Bulgarian companies, the return of freight ships already loaded with goods for Bulgaria, the ban for granting all kinds of fresh money for Bulgarian enterprises confronted them with bankruptcy and prepared them for being taken hold of by a part of the former communist nomenclature. Thus, it was given the chance to transform its political power into economic one. In support of that thesis comes the evidence that the decision to proclaim a moratorium on the payment of interest on the loans was taken by Lukanov himself, without the issue being discussed in the Council of Ministers, while until that moment Bulgaria was strictly paying its foreign debt, which constituted 227% of the annual revenue of the country's export in convertible currency. For a comparison, this ratio for the countries that would later rank first in the transition process, such as Hungary and Poland was 319% – for Hungary and 484% – for Poland¹². The moratorium made the country very amenable in the successive negotiations with the European Commission.

¹⁰ *Външна политика на България след 10.IX.1989 г.*, С.:ИНТЕЛА 1997, с.101; *Задочни интервюта с Любен Гоцев*, С.Изд.“Международни отношения”, 2005, с.43–44. В. Тошкова, *Дирижираният крах на европейския социалистически Изток*- In: *Проблемът Изток-Запад, Историческа перспектива*, Парадигма, С, 2003, с.539–557; J. Levesque. *Soviet Approaches to Eastern Europe at the Beginning of 1989*- In: „Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars”, Washington, D.C. Bulletin, Issue 12/13, Fall / Winter 2001, p.49–72.

¹¹ For the case of Hungary this issue was studied by Gyodr Matolchy: Д. Матолчи, *Принудителното задлъжняване на Унгария*. – В: *Двуликят Янус. Предизвикателства на прехода към демокрация в Унгария*, С., 2000, 54–87.

¹² Ив. Пехливанов, *Свидетел на историята*, С.: ИФО Дизайн ООД, 2005, с.222.

In 1990 several rounds of official talks were held between Bulgaria and the E Commission about the signing of an agreement on trade and commercial and economic cooperation between Bulgaria and the EEC, similarly to the rest of the East European countries like Hungary, Poland and the Soviet Union.

The Western politicians excused the protraction of the talks with Bulgaria with the fact that the expectations of the country were too ambitious, and that there existed technical problems, which took time. In fact, they were trying to put off the signing of the agreement until the first free elections in the country were held in 10–17 of June 1990. For that reason they offered more disadvantageous conditions regarding the quantitative restrictions on imports from Bulgaria compared to what had been agreed upon and to the agreements signed with Poland and the Soviet Union. The Bulgarian side stuck to its position on this problem rather as a matter of principle (for the elimination of the restrictions would mean equal treatment) than because of purely economic gains, as at that time the Bulgarian economy did not have a large export potential¹³. In 1990 the Bulgarian export was still destined to its traditional markets such as of Soviet Union, of COMECON and of the Arabian countries. And what was more – the Bulgarian industry suffered from the moratorium as well. After Bulgaria demonstrated its willingness to make concessions, the negotiations started to develop more easily, and finally the Agreement on Commercial and Economic Cooperation between Bulgaria and the EEC was signed in Brussels on 8 May 1990, to become effective on 1 November 1990.

This agreement was of both economic and political significance for the development of the process of Bulgaria's integration into Europe. A large part of the opportunities which had been passed by in the bilateral commercial and economic relations, as compared to most East European countries was made up for, and the EEC became directly bound to the course of radical changes in Bulgaria by getting the leverage and mechanisms for influencing these changes according to its assessment of their depth. On these grounds the European Commission judged that reforms were insufficient and for this reason the country was not included in the group of the three countries, known as the Visegrad group. Of no little importance was also the fact that the communists won the absolute majority of the votes in the first free elections in June 1990¹⁴. Their victory, too, contributed to the image of Bulgaria as a country lagging behind reforms.

With the reduction of the customs duties in the trade with Bulgaria and the enforcement of the conventional duties according to the Community's tariffs, the agreement was a step towards the opening of the European market to Bulgarian goods. New, larger quotas for the export of textiles, clothes, meat, and ferrous metals for the following year (1991) were agreed upon. It was expected that the

¹³ Ив Белчев, *България и ЕО – "Международни отношения"*, 1990, №4, с. 60; ЦДА, ф.259, оп.45, а. е. 1334 л. 16.

¹⁴ BSP won then 210 parliamentary seats, UDF – 144, BANU – 16, and MRF – 23. The Great National Assembly was active from June 1990 to October 1991.

more favourable trade conditions would stimulate further contacts with the EEC, but as a whole they did not succeed in making up for the crisis in production. Besides, the agreement showed that the country had given up its attempts for industrial cooperation (as the initial ambitions had been at the start of the unofficial talks as early as 1986) and reduced its contacts with the EEC only to the level of trade¹⁵.

Meanwhile, from 20th of December 1990 ex-communists' party did not govern the country any more. Until the 8th of November 1991 it was the vast coalition government of the main political parties that was considered by the European Commission to be trustworthier than the Lukanov socialist governments. This coalition between the BCP, the Agrarian Union and the UDF was made following the recommendation of the World Bank, to which Bulgaria became a member on 25 September 1990. On 29 August 1990 the socialist government gave a positive reply to NATO's invitation for establishing diplomatic relations to the East European countries and attached the Bulgarian ambassador to the EC in Brussels Atanas Ginev also to the Main Headquarters of NATO. In the autumn of 1990 Bulgarian Foreign Minister Lyuben Gotzev met twice with the General Secretary of NATO for the first time. In the same year he also visited Washington with the hope the country would be accepted as equal by the new world master. But it was made clear to him he that the USA wanted new political figures whom it could trust. Thus we come to the "self-ousting" of the one-party socialist government of Lukanov¹⁶.

Besides the talks about the realization of the Agreement, in the autumn of 1990 negotiations were started with the EEC Commission on the PHARE programme, as the Commission had been authorized by the most developed countries to control the aid allotted by the G-7 for the economic reforms in Eastern Europe. According to the Regulation of 17 September 1990, Bulgaria, too, joined the PHARE programme.

In December 1990 a Framework Agreement was signed between the government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the EEC Commission on the legal basis of the latter's obligations for rendering gratuitous financial aid to the Republic of Bulgaria for the financing of projects in the priority spheres of the transition to market economy (medicine, environment, telecommunications, and administration) and the establishment of a private sector in the agriculture and industry. Encouraged by these agreements, on 22 December 1990 the Bulgarian Great National Assembly dominated by BSP came out with a declaration of Bulgaria's wish to become a full member of the EC.

In 1991 programmes were adopted for the restructuring of the energy sector with a view to the shutdown of the Kozloduy Nuclear Power Plant (whose Soviet-type reactors were judged by Western experts to be unreliable), as well as for the demonopolization and privatization of the industrial enterprises, the modernization of the agriculture, including the restructuring of the collective farms and the

¹⁵ ЦДА, ф. 259, оп. 45, а.е.1332, л.41, 50,51, 107.

¹⁶ TV interview with L. Gotzev, 26 October 2005.

implementation of the agrarian reform, for increasing the effectiveness of the state administration, the protection of the environment, and the development of telecommunications and human resources.

The realization of the PHARE programme projects was one of the trial conditions for the further incorporation of the country into the EEC through the European Association Agreement. This agreement, together with the mentioned foreign policy activity and internal change were important elements in strengthening the EC trust and interest in the country. But they did not manage to suffice for the next step towards Europe – the undersigning of the so-called second-generation agreements in 1991. It was M. Thatcher who suggested the European Association Agreements as an instrument to feed up the East European determination to keep doing the reforms. The negotiations were regarded as a means to encourage the political and economic liberalization, to contribute to the financial support of the reforms, especially in the domain of culture and communications so as to create a pan-European consciousness among the young people and to offer the integration as a reward in the far future¹⁷. For the cautiousness of the EC in the signing of treaties of association with the countries of the Eastern Bloc speaks the name of the approved for the European Commission by the Council of Ministers of the EC in September 1990 “General directives for conducting preliminary investigation negotiations with the countries of Eastern Europe for the preparation of a mandate for conducting official negotiations for signing an association treaty”¹⁸. The Commission’s position was that the agreements with those countries would be unified, while paying attention to their specificities. Bulgaria and Romania were to be observed and preliminary talks with them were to start when the following conditions were at hand: evidence of a constitutional state, respect of human rights, free and honest elections conducted, functioning market economy¹⁹.

At that time the Community was rather reserved towards an enlargement to the East, and besides, it was faced with the forthcoming reinforcement of the integration within itself. For that reason, it was specially emphasized that the Association Agreement did not have as its object an eventual EEC membership though it did not exclude this possibility. For a long time in the historiography of transition this West experts’ attitude has been considered as an ideological one that resulted in the fast and deep collapse of the region²⁰.

The headlong collapse of the Eastern Bloc in summer of 1991 made the integration of Bulgaria into Europe of the EEC and NATO still more imperative. The governing coalition in Bulgaria was seeking a very active rapprochement with

¹⁷ ЦДА, ф.259, оп.45, а.е. 351, л.14–29; а.е.309, л. 60–70.

¹⁸ ЦДА, ф.259, оп. 45, а.е. 307, л. 35–36.

¹⁹ ЦДА, ф.259, оп. 45, а. е. 307, л. 51–52.

²⁰ ЦДА, ф.269, оп.45, а.е. 309, л.60; I. Berend. *Central and Eastern Europe 1944–1993. Detour from the Periphery to the Periphery*, Cambridge University Press 1996, reprinted 1998, p. 355–356.

the USA²¹ and its West European allies and was quick to disassociate itself from its old foreign policy patron. Thus, with a decision of the pro-communist Great National Assembly of 1 August 1991 Bulgaria became the first member of the Eastern Bloc, which did not renew the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with USSR of 1967. Nevertheless, Bulgaria's negotiations with the Commission for Association were actually hampered by some foreign policy circumstances. Only after the ratifications of the same agreements with Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary in autumn 1991 the preliminary negotiations with Bulgaria start and were discussed during the autumn and winter of 1991. Bulgaria, like the other East European countries, regarded association as a stage towards a full EU membership and because of that it was extremely dissatisfied with the inclusion of the "Bulgaria" safeguard clause in the Association Agreement and with the less favorable terms as compared to those of the Visegrad members. The treatment of Bulgaria was complicated by the appraisal of the reforms, as well as by some circumstances connected with the war in Yugoslavia and the difficulties to suspend the Agreement with this country after the war started²².

The negotiations were brought to a conclusion on 22 December 1992, and the agreement became effective on 1 February 1995. In the meantime, the Maastricht Treaty on European Union was signed on 7 February 1992. After the adoption of the General Agreement on the association of the East European states on 8 March 1993, on 9 March Bulgaria was granted the status of an associated member. Later on, as we know, the road to full membership acquired purely geopolitical dimensions, connected with the collapse of Yugoslavia, which led to Bulgaria's accession to the European Union in 2007.

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The first steps of Bulgaria on its road to a uniting Europe at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s show the efforts of the former communist nomenclature, as well as of the new anticommunist elite to carry out the European re-orientation of the country. They were directed towards fulfillment of the EC's requirements in the process of negotiations for diplomatic recognition, the signing of trade and economic agreement and association, which were to bring about radical changes in the economy, politics, ideology and culture of the Bulgarian society. The integration of Bulgaria to a uniting Europe was bound up with the establishment of new world order, an important element of which was the formation of European Union as a unique supranational union of the European states.

²¹ On 1 April 1991 the Parliamentary Commission of the Great National Assembly voted a declaration for the future membership of Bulgaria in NATO. A bit later, on 30 April 1991 the Prime Minister Dimitar Popov visited again the NATO Main Headquarters, and in November 1991 the President Zhelyu Zhelev did this also.

²² ЦДА, ф. 259, оп. 45, а.е. 1334, л.19.