

# **BULGARIA FOR NATO**

## **2002**



**Institute** for Regional and International Studies





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# **BULGARIA FOR NATO 2002**

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**SOFIA  
2002**



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# CONTENTS

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- xvii **AN ALLY APPLIES FOR NATO MEMBERSHIP** *Ognyan Minchev*
- xxxv **APPENDIX 1: HISTORICAL NOTES ON BULGARIA**  
*Zdravko Batzarov*
- lvi **APPENDIX 2: BASIC DATA ABOUT BULGARIA**

## CHAPTER I: TOWARD DEMOCRACY AND STABILITY

- 3 **THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS OF BULGARIA** *Evgenii Dainov*  
*Vladimir Shopov*
- 47 **FACING THE CHALLENGES OF SECURITY IN THE  
NEW DEMOCRACY** *Vladimir Shopov*
- 61 **AN EMERGING ECONOMIC FACTOR** *Roumen Vesselinov*
- 71 **ON THE ROAD TO EU MEMBERSHIP** *Vladimir Kissiov*
- 81 **APPENDIX 3: PESHEV'S LIST: THE FATE OF  
THE BULGARIAN JEWS DURING WORLD WAR II** *Emi Barouh*

## CHAPTER II: BULGARIA AND THE BALKANS

- 95 **BULGARIA'S BILATERAL RELATIONS IN A REGIONAL  
CONTEXT** *Vladimir Shopov, Lyubcho Troharov*
- 100 **FOSTERING REGIONAL COOPERATION: POLITICAL,  
ECONOMIC, SECURITY AND DEFENSE COOPERATION  
IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE** *Vladimir Shopov*

- 
- 109 **BULGARIA IN THE BALKAN'S POST-CONFLICT  
REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT** *Ognyan Minchev*
- 119 **BULGARIA AND RUSSIA** *Ognyan Minchev*
- 129 **REMAINING CHALLENGES AND CONCLUSION**
- 131 ***APPENDIX 4: BULGARIA AND THE BALKANS: GEOPOLITICAL  
AND GEO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS*** *Zdravko Batzarov*
- 138 ***APPENDIX 5: THE ROLE OF BULGARIAN NGOs IN  
THE REGION OF SEE***

### **CHAPTER III: BULGARIA: AN INTERNATIONAL SECURITY CONTRIBUTOR**

- 147 **BULGARIA IN THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY  
ORGANIZATIONS** *Lubomir Ivanov, Maria Atanassova*
- 163 **A PARTNER IN TACKLING THE EMERGING THREATS**  
*Vladimir Shopov*
- 174 **ANTI-TERRORIST POLICY** *Georgi Krastev  
Yuri Tarkalanov*
- 188 **SECURITY RISK REDUCTION: BULGARIA'S CONTRIBUTIONS  
TO ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT** *Lubomir Ivanov  
Maria Atanassova*
- 197 ***APPENDIX 6: DECLARATION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA CONCERNING THE  
SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACKS***
- 199 ***APPENDIX 7: DECLARATION ON BULGARIA'S ELECTION AS  
NON-PERMANENT UN SECURITY COUNCIL MEMBER  
DURING 2002-2003***

### **CHAPTER IV: DEFENSE SECTOR REFORM AND THE CHALLENGE OF MEMBERSHIP**

- 204 **RESHAPING BULGARIAN ARMED FORCES FOR THE 21<sup>st</sup>  
CENTURY** *Valeri Ratchev  
Velizar Shalamanov  
Todor Tagarev*

279 **TOWARDS A NEW DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASE** *Valeri Ratchev  
Ivan Kolev*

295 **APPENDIX 8: NATIONAL SECURITY CONCEPT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**

304 **APPENDIX 9: MILITARY DOCTRINE OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF BULGARIA**

## **CHAPTER V: BULGARIA: A LOYAL PARTNER AND PROSPECTIVE MEMBER OF NATO**

321 **BULGARIA: A VALUABLE NATO ASSET** *Vladimir Shopov*

325 **BULGARIA'S WAY TO NATO** *Plamen Bonchev*

343 **BUILDING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH  
NATO MEMBER STATES** *Lubomir Ivanov  
Maria Atanassova, Nickola Mihaylov*

356 **PUBLIC ATTITUDES TO NATO MEMBERSHIP** *Lydia Yordanova  
Ivo Zhelev*

373 **APPENDIX 10: BULGARIAN VOLUNTEER COMPANY IN  
NATO (1951 – 1964)** *Bilyana Loboshka*

379 **APPENDIX 11: DECLARATION OF NATIONAL CONSENSUS  
ON NATO MEMBERSHIP**

381 **APPENDIX 12: DECISION CONCERNING THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE  
REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA AND THE NORTH ATLANTIC  
TREATY ORGANIZATION ON THE TRANSIT OF NATO FORCES  
AND STAFF**

382 **APPENDIX 13: DECLARATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA CONCERNING NATO'S  
OCTOBER 4 DECISION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
ARTICLE 5 OF THE WASHINGTON TREATY, RELATED TO THE  
SEPTEMBER 11 TERRORIST ATTACKS AGAINST THE USA**

# **BULGARIA FOR NATO**

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***Georgi Parvanov***

*President of the Republic  
of Bulgaria and Supreme  
Commander-in-Chief of  
the Armed Forces*



Democratic Bulgaria has made important progress on its way to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The credit for that goes to all Bulgarian institutions since the beginning of democratic changes. The NATO Council Meeting in Prague is forthcoming. It will be an event of crucial importance for our country, for it will make a decision about the Alliance's further enlargement. NATO's southeastward enlargement will be an investment in stability and security. It will strengthen the climate of trust and cooperation in the region and the entire North Atlantic area.

I openly confess my hope and the hope of the Bulgarian public that the Republic of Bulgaria will be among those invited for membership. Our country has proved its commitment to the ideals and values of this union by its stabilizing policies in the region and its participation in the world anti-terrorist coalition. A great deal has been done in Bulgaria for meeting the standards of the Alliance and reforming our armed forces.

Bulgaria is clearly aware of its responsibilities and is preparing to meet the challenges of accession. This gives me the confidence that our country will very soon join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Sofia

April 2, 2002



***Petar Stoyanov***

*President of the Republic of Bulgaria  
(1997–2001)*



I firmly believe that NATO enlargement must be understood above all as a cause — something higher than ordinary politics. With this next round of enlargement, the West has a historic opportunity to complete the process begun after World War II of making the whole Euro-Atlantic landmass stable and democratic.

The benefits of NATO enlargement are not merely one way. NATO is not a charity club. Each new member must contribute to the common security of all NATO allies. In the wake of September 11, East Europeans were among the first to sign up to President Bush's coalition against terrorism. Bulgaria and Romania sent contingents to Afghanistan. Similarly, during the Kosovo crisis, Bulgaria and Romania — both neighbors of Yugoslavia — were among the first to support the Alliance-led operation against the regime of Slobodan Milosevic.

We created a security belt friendly to NATO around Yugoslavia and, acting in solidarity with the Alliance, prevented any conflict from spilling over into the rest of the region. Bulgaria now has units in Kosovo and Bosnia as part of NATO operations there. Why? Because after 45 years of communism and 12 years of post-communist transition, we know the costs of extremism and fanaticism. Our present and future labors must not be jeopardized by fanatical supporters of extreme causes.

As the debate over NATO enlargement unfolds, let us stay focused on what is essential. I believe that the cause of advancing democracy and security across the whole Euro-Atlantic territory, if presented as such rather than as a dull technocratic or bureaucratic policy issue, is one that American and European taxpayers alike would willingly support.



***Zhelyu Zhelev***

*President of the Republic of Bulgaria  
(1990 – 1996)*



I dare claim that Bulgaria has become a veritable island of stability in the conflict-ridden Balkans. What is more, Bulgaria's admittance to NATO membership will have a stabilizing effect on all neighboring states.

The way in which our young democracy has solved its ethnic and religious problems is another valid argument for Bulgaria's membership in NATO.

It is my firm conviction that Bulgaria in NATO will expand the zone of security without risking the security of member states.



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# AN ALLY APPLIES FOR NATO MEMBERSHIP

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“**W**hy do you want to join the Club?” That is the first question for an applicant of any membership. The right answer usually contains three parts. *First*, explaining the applicant’s value to the cause, the purpose and the rules of the Club. *Second*, explaining the benefits they could deliver to the Club in exchange for the privilege of membership. The test of the applicant’s practical abilities to serve as a decent Club member comes *third*. Those are the questions Bulgaria has to answer in promoting its application to join NATO in November 2002.

For the twelve years of post-communist development Bulgaria has proved to be a mature democratic society and a system of government serving its duty as a bridgehead of the Euro-Atlantic community in the troubled Balkans of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The ethnic wars and the mass scale assault on human life and dignity of post-Yugoslavia have represented the worst violation upon the values of freedom and democracy on European soil after the end of the Cold War.

Throughout the 1990s Bulgaria has suffered from the negative impacts of its war stricken region. Commercial isolation from world markets following the United Nations embargo on the Belgrade regime has complicated the economic reforms of post-communist Bulgaria. The chances to attract foreign investment to the country have been substantively reduced with the growing hazard for the international investors to operate in the Balkan zone of war and destruction. Corruption, drugs and weapons trafficking, among other mafia networks related activities, have spread throughout the Balkans as consequences of ethnic hostilities and the international embargo violation. The young and fragile democratic institutions of Bulgaria have faced those major challenges with considerable success.

Throughout the decade of post-Yugoslavia conflicts Bulgaria has remained a land of stability and democratic progress in the Balkans, representing the valuable alternative to radical nationalism, neo-communist dictatorship and the expansion of organized crime. Bulgarian democracy started in late 1989 with healing wounds of a brutal repression that the late

communist regime committed to the country's Turkish minority after 1984. The mandatory legislation that required Bulgarian Turks to change their names as well as the mass-scale deprivation to practice their religion and culture amplified the collapse of the communist regime in Sofia. Restoring the rights of the ethnic Turks was the first act of Bulgaria's democratization process after 1989. The newly created political group, Movement for Rights and Freedoms, is based on Turkish minority support. It was established as one of the major political parties within the young Bulgarian democracy, occupying the center-liberal ground of the spectrum.

The successful integration of the ethnic Turks into the newly established Bulgarian democracy has laid the foundations of what would be called "the successful Bulgarian ethnic model" in the Balkans. But it was not solely an issue of institutional integration. Interethnic tolerance and respect to cultural diversity are an essential part of the historical tradition Bulgarians have developed and harbored throughout the centuries of uneasy challenges on the Balkan crossroads of nations and cultures. On the edge of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Bulgarians have sheltered Jewish refugees, trying to escape the "pogroms" in Ukraine and Russia. Also thousands of Armenians that fled the Ottoman Empire in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century found refuge in Bulgaria. Additionally, a mass scale public movement saved the Bulgarian Jews from the Holocaust in the Second World War, preventing their deportation by the Nazis. This movement was headed by prominent Members of Parliament and bishops of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. The Bulgarian Government, a German ally at the time, had to comply with public opinion and refuse deportation. The late communist regime could not rely on public support in its late 1980s campaign against the rights of the Bulgarian Turks. With a few sad exceptions, the Bulgarian public refused to support those shameful acts of the regime.

The traditional tolerance of Bulgarian national character has substantively contributed to the establishment of a Bulgarian ethnic model in the 1990s. But the successful implementation of this model relies very much upon an adequate institutional system of citizens' rights guarantees. These rights rest upon the notion of civil equality, rather than on a corporate-ethnic political arrangement, involving the concept of "group rights." Employing the classical liberal-democratic system of democracy, Bulgaria provides equal rights to all its citizens to express their identity, irrespective of ethnic origin, religious denomination or cultural preferences. Today the country faces the next major challenge of helping the Roma community to overcome its poverty and isolation through successful integration within Bulgarian society.

Even though surrounded in a troubled geographic region, the Bulgarian

democratic process has been peaceful and successful. The transition period started with a “peaceful coup” within the ranks of the communist party, replacing Todor Zhivkov’s regime with a reformist team of “perestroika” supporters. But the Bulgarian society, very much like its Central European counterparts, did not find the change in the communist elite sufficient. The mass scale peaceful demonstrations that started months before the collapse of the regime grew up to be a powerful popular movement, supporting the newly found Union of the Democratic Forces (UDF) as a democratic opposition to the status quo.

After a detailed Round Table discussion between the reformist communist team and the democratic opposition, the foundations of the new democratic system were laid down with profound changes to the Constitution. These changes included the first free elections successfully carried out in June 1990. The new democratic Constitution of the country was ratified by the Constituent Assembly a year later, confirming the democratic process irreversible. With all its challenges, pains and frustrations, the democratic process in Bulgaria has signified the peaceful, legitimate and successful transformation of Bulgarian society from the humiliating status of a silent Soviet satellite to the position of a free country and society, respected for its performance by the democratic international community. In 1993 Bulgaria was accepted as an associate member of the European Union. After years of intense public debate, in February 1997 Bulgaria applied for NATO membership.

With the hardships and curves of democratic development for the last twelve years Bulgarian society has practically proved its maturity and adherence to the values of freedom, human dignity and democracy. Democracy is not something you can sit on. With all its virtues it is a difficult balance of pain and gain, which every individual and every society has to assess as a value for their own lives. Democracy requires a price to be paid for the benefit of freedom. Many people and some societies refuse to pay that price. Bulgarians did pay the price. We continue to pay it in our everyday lives, facing a variety of challenges including the challenge of successful economic market reforms at the expense of high social costs. Other challenges include strengthening and improving the democratic institutions performance against corruption, organized crime and international mafia. And last, but not least, a major challenge is overcoming the hardships of the tense Balkan regional environment, and turning the country into a regional leader in democracy and stability.

So, we have answered the first question of the accession test. Is Bulgaria a real partner, sharing the values of the Club? Is Bulgaria prepared to be a member of NATO and stand the challenges that the allied democratic

countries might face? The answer is yes, and the twelve years of recent democratic development argue proof of this answer.

And what could Bulgaria deliver to NATO? The political-military union of Euro-Atlantic security partnership needs members capable of serving as donors, not recipients of security. We have heard a lot of voices in Central and Eastern Europe of the 1990s applying for NATO because of their vulnerability. But it is a high-quality security system that the North Atlantic Alliance provides and a member needs to pay the price for it.

From the very outset of the democratic process after 1989 Bulgaria has assumed its responsibilities as a responsible member in the community of free nations. Bulgaria offered its unconditional support to the international coalition in 1990-1991, fighting against the regime of Saddam Hussein and its occupation of Kuwait. The institutional and economic vulnerability of the country in this initial period of democratic change notwithstanding, Bulgarian government and public opinion made a mature choice in favor of the freedom and peace in the Middle East. The Middle East is a region of importance for Bulgaria and the other countries of Southeast Europe (SEE).

Bulgaria recognized and supported the democratic governments of the ex-Yugoslav republics who were searching for independence in early 1992 while Bulgaria faced challenges from the brutal Milosevic regime at its border. The Bulgarian government was aware that only peaceful negotiations among the new national representatives could resolve the complex crises of ex-Yugoslavia without further atrocities and loss of human life. The rightfulness of this approach was proven four years later in Dayton sadly after the immense tragedy of Bosnia and other ex-Yugoslav lands.

The Bulgarian government was the first in the world (January 1992) to recognize the independence of the newly established Republic of Macedonia. Macedonia was the most vulnerable and helpless land of the former federation, constantly endangered by aggression from the Belgrade regime. Bulgaria's recognition of Macedonia's independence was a symbolic act of major regional and international importance. Bulgaria fought three wars in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in contest for Macedonia's lands with Serbia and Greece. The immediate recognition in 1992 was a mature democratic act of closing the history file of bitter disputes and opening a new chapter of democratic partnership and cooperation in the Balkan region. In recognizing Macedonia's independence, Bulgaria has provided the practical alternative to radical nationalism in SEE.

It has been an uneasy price to pay for being a democratic country and good neighbor in the surrounding reality of ethnic wars and "great national"

utopias. Being badly affected by the international embargo over the regime in Belgrade, the Bulgarian economy has had to face the additional isolation, imposed by the hostile Milosevic regime. Hundreds of Bulgarian citizens have been looted and mistreated for their sole attempt to cross Serbian territory on their way to Central Europe for business.

The most difficult test for Bulgaria's partnership and alignment with the community of free nations has come with the Kosovo crisis in 1999. The NATO military campaign aimed to stop the violence of the Belgrade regime against the Kosovo Albanians has been the first mass-scale military operation in the immediate region of Bulgaria after the end of the World War II. Even if technologically superior, the NATO air raids produced collateral damages with loss of civilian lives in neighboring Serbia. Misdirected bombs and missiles have hit parts of Bulgarian territory, including a neighborhood of the nation's capital, Sofia. The Bulgarian government and the democratic public opinion have had a hard time explaining and convincing the broader Bulgarian public in the just cause of the NATO action against Milosevic.

The most difficult episode for Bulgaria in this NATO campaign for Kosovo has been the decision to provide Bulgarian air space and logistical support for the air raids on Belgrade. Bulgaria and Serbia are neighboring nations, involved in a long historical contest for superiority and influence on the Balkans. Yet, both nations are very close in terms of heritage and culture. In helping NATO and the Kosovar Albanians against the Milosevic regime, the Bulgarian government runs the risk of opening a new file of hostile attitudes between Sofia and Belgrade.<sup>1</sup> Such risks have proved to be the major concern of the Bulgarian public opinion, split into conflicting visions about what the proper Bulgarian reaction to the crisis in the neighborhood should be.

The Bulgarian government and the Parliament have adopted the painful yet correct decision. Bulgaria joined the NATO efforts in Yugoslavia, delivering all the assistance the Allied forces needed from the country. The government administration of the UDF has suffered low popularity at the polls since this action. But Bulgaria has acted as a reliable ally of the democratic international community. Freedom is never for free and Bulgaria has paid its contribution to building peace and freedom for the Balkans at

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<sup>1</sup> Bulgaria and Serbia are fortunate that the democrats in Belgrade have understood the positions of the Bulgarian government within the entire post-Yugoslav crisis, and the new relationships between the two democracies of today are not burdened by the war-time division lines.

the end of a decade-long bitter interethnic bloodshed. The major source of nationalist conflict, mainly the Milosevic regime, has ended. Part of this victory can be claimed by Bulgarian efforts.

Bulgaria sent military units both to Bosnia and Kosovo to serve as peacekeepers within the international NATO forces SFOR and KFOR. An engineering platoon, a transportation platoon and recently, a security company serve in Bosnia. An engineering platoon serves within the Multinational Brigade South in Kosovo. The Bulgarian servicemen have earned the highest performance ratings from the international allied force commandment.

The September 11 tragedy of New York and Washington struck us all unexpectedly. Nobody could imagine the heart of the free world being attacked by forces of the global underground, aiming at the very foundations of international peace and global security. Situated at a major historical crossroad of nations, Bulgaria has gotten used to opposing the waves of instability and destruction, caused by growing international networks of intolerance, fundamentalism and terror. The illegal arms and drugs trafficking feeding the global underground activities represent a major focus of the regional security threats in SEE. The coordinated efforts of Bulgarian institutions to stop, prevent and reduce the actions of global underground networks operating through the Balkans represent a long-term systemic contribution of our country to the organizations of international security. Throughout the 1990s, Bulgaria has acted as a bridgehead of the democratic world in a territory flooded by powerful networks of the international organized underground.

The international coalition against terrorism, created by the US Government after September 11, reflected the essential interest of the world democratic community and in particular the Bulgarian national interest. Bulgaria lives on the edge of two great civilizations, Christendom and the House of Islam. Bulgarian history reflects the centuries of tragic clashes between those major world cultures, but also hosts the traditions of tolerance, cooperative living and mutual respect of Christians and Muslims in our lands. The heritage of tolerance provides national optimistic visions and perspectives for the future. Bulgarians are aware the danger of fundamentalism and fanatic hatred dooms our nationhood to unavoidable conflict and decline.

Therefore, the alignment of Bulgaria with the international anti-terrorist coalition is a strategic choice of fundamental interest and a long-term vision. Whatever the risks we run by choosing the side of the democratic world against the global underground, the victory of the anti-terrorist coalition is our long-term perspective to survive and progress as an independent and

democratic nation. Bulgaria has offered its military potential and logistical support to the anti-terrorist coalition. The airport of Sarafovo (at the Black Sea) has been used by the US Air Force as a logistical base of support in the Afghan campaign. After the Taliban forces were destroyed in Afghanistan, a Bulgarian military contingent (Nuclear-Biological-Chemical Protection Unit) joined the International Security Assistance Force on Afghan soil. Bulgaria has once again adopted its own share of responsibility as an active ally within NATO and within the democratic anti-terrorist coalition of the free world.

A reliable ally claims membership in the North Atlantic Alliance. Bulgaria does not knock on the Alliance's door with a request for help. This country brings its own contribution, its own share of responsibility and capability to deliver upon the common cause, the security of the Euro-Atlantic world. Bulgaria applies for NATO in 2002 with its potential of being a donor to international security in the Balkan region, in Europe and in the entire Euro-Atlantic space. This potential is not questionable. It's proven in action.

Bulgaria brings into NATO its potential and will of a democratic nation to serve its national interest in cooperation with the North Atlantic partners. This is an essential yet insufficient description of this country's contribution to the common cause of the Alliance. Apart from the qualities of its democratic spirit and political system, Bulgaria represents a strategic value of its historical legacy and geographic location on the dividing line among three basic geopolitical realms: the realm of Europe, the realm of the Middle East and the realm of post-Soviet Russia, meeting and interacting on the shores of the Black Sea.

The Black Sea region has been an intense zone of security challenges throughout the Cold War. The collapse of the Soviet system has led to a decade of a security vacuum in the region that was left unattended by the major powers' interests. Coping with its internal crisis and disorder, Russia has tried to control predominantly its immediate neighborhood. Moscow has assisted the military efforts of Abkhazia to split from Georgia (for Georgia has chosen the road of independence, rather than the road of compliance), and has also supported the Armenian cause in Nagorniy Karabakh. Turkey has refocused its interest to its troubled southeast and to an extent to the former republics of the USSR in Central Asia.

Until 1997, the Black Sea region constituted a part of the large security buffer zone between NATO allies in the West and the troubled post-Soviet East. The challenges of economic and institutional transformation as well as the threats of expanding organized crime and international mafia networks

have shaped the security dilemma of the entire post-communist Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The security vacuum has been less palpable in the Central European post-communist countries leading the process of successful transformation and more and more painful as we've observed the situation to the East and to the South.

The accession of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic into NATO in 1997 has narrowed this buffer corridor between the West and the East of Europe to the "gray zone" of insecurity in Southeast Europe and the Black Sea. Russia lost its potential to exercise control over the Balkans, and to a lesser extent over its former domains in Ukraine and the Caucasus. NATO and the EU have played a selective strategy of peacekeeping in the Balkans while trying to manage the worst effects of the ex-Yugoslav ethnic wars. The countries and the governments in the region have found it more and more difficult to cope with the growing security threats of organized mafia networks, illegal economics and drugs trafficking etc. The weakened national institutions of post-communism in the region have failed to address an expanding security dilemma of law and order insufficiency, civil security guarantees and peaceful interethnic balance.

The "gray zone" of insecurity on the Balkans and the Black Sea region has territorially split the NATO infrastructure between the expanding Central European wing of the Alliance and the "frozen" southern wing. The "gray zone," if identified on the map, stretches eastwards from Vienna and encompasses the war-torn ex-Yugoslav space. There weak and ill-reformed states coexist in helpless and conflict stricken societies existing as international protectorates. The "gray zone" spreads around the coasts of the Black Sea involving Ukraine with its difficult and controversial post-communist reforms and reaching up to the Caucasus, a region of numerous inter-ethnic conflicts, intense nation states' institutional destruction and relative borders among nominal state systems. A region where residual Russian imperial ambitions play an adverse and conflicting role under the principle "*divide et impera*." The dramatic security dilemma of the Caucasus prevents the utilization of the Caspian oil and gas reserves. The infrastructure projects to transport the Caspian resources to the world markets are blocked within the tense security environment of the region. The "gray zone" withers away into the steppes and deserts of Central Asia where a substantive part of instability in Eurasia is being generated and where a new dynamic of economic development is expected in relation to the Chinese experience.

The Western allies have not experienced any direct influence of the "gray zone" of instability upon their security system throughout the 1990s. The ex-Yugoslav refugees flooding Western Europe and the television pictures of

incomprehensible atrocities committed in the Western Balkans have been almost the only effects of the “gray zone” security dilemma upon the everyday life of the Western world. The status of relative autonomy of the West from the instability of the East dramatically changed with the tragedy of September 11.

The reality of war against terrorism has focused the security agenda of the US and its European allies on the realities in the Middle East and Central Asia where networks of fanaticism and terror have generated for decades. Those networks exist and develop within the environment of the global underground, combining organized crime, drugs and weapons trafficking, trade with “white slaves” and other activities of international organized crime. The channels of the global underground operate westward through the no man’s land of weak institutions, disintegrating communities, inter-ethnic strife and inter-religious clashes with growing fanaticism that is represented by the “gray zone” between Vienna and Kazakhstan. This zone channels the instability of the post-Soviet space and the Middle East into the heartland of the Western Alliance. To restrict and terminate the effects of the global underground on the “gray zone” has become an inevitable priority for the international anti-terrorist coalition.

There are only two countries with their state systems and security potential capable of cutting off the effects of the global underground in the “gray zone.” They can strengthen the strategic rear of the long-term campaign against terrorism. Those are the two sister nations of Bulgaria and Romania enduring and successfully overcoming the burden on post-communism in SEE. The accession of Bulgaria and Romania into NATO in 2002 could substantively alter and improve the strategic balance in the “no man’s land” between Europe and Asia in favor of the democratic international community.

The accession of Bulgaria and Romania will close the territorial gap between the central European and the southern direction of NATO and will strengthen the strategic ties of Turkey with the integrated Euro-Atlantic security space. The membership of both countries will allow the Alliance to exercise full strategic control over the Black Sea region and will complete the framework of the Euro-Atlantic security system. The strategic line from the Baltics to the Black Sea will represent the new stable rear of security relationships of NATO with Russia and the post-Soviet space, as well as with the Middle East. In this way, a new pragmatic horizon of strategic partnership between Moscow and the West will be open.

The Black Sea will constitute the new stable frontier of the NATO *vis-a-vis* the new strategic priorities of the Alliance and of the anti-terrorist coalition further to the East. The “gray zone” will not disappear but it will

be fragmented into smaller regional zones of potential instability easier to handle and contain. The Western Balkans will remain a vulnerable European region for quite some time where strategies of post-conflict rehabilitation and of regional Balkan cooperation will be applied. The Caucasus will become a new frontier for security build-up involving the efforts and the experience of the newly admitted NATO members.

The membership of Bulgaria and Romania will substantively improve the security conditions around the Caspian oil and gas infrastructure projects implementation. Most of the competing options for oil and gas pipelines construction stretch across the territories of both countries.

The security contributions of Bulgaria and Romania among other valuable assets involve both societies historical allegiance to the values of freedom and democracy shaping the European legacy of their national traditions. At the same time, both countries represent border societies open to cultural diversity and serving as bridges between Europe and the societies of the East.

What is the practical institutional potential of Bulgaria to meet the criteria for NATO membership and to serve as a reliable partner within the Alliance?

Bulgaria has an effective functioning democratic system of government. According to the Freedom House annual assessment (“Freedom in the World”, 2001) Bulgaria is a “consolidated democracy.” For twelve years since the beginning of the democratization process Bulgaria has conducted five general elections assessed by international observers as free and fare. The political parties in government have transferred power in accordance with the Constitution employing open and legitimate procedures. The nation has also voted twice (1996, 2001) to elect the President of the country with internationally confirmed legitimate proceedings.

Bulgaria is a parliamentary republic with explicit division of powers and institutional checks and balances within the political system. All basic freedoms and civil liberties are substantively guaranteed by the Constitution and through well-functioning institutional norms and procedures. The media are free of political control. The public radio and television stations are regulated by a non-political Council of Media Experts appointed by the Parliament and the President. Citizens’ access to information is guaranteed by special legislation.

Bulgaria has the most vibrant civil society in the region of Southeast Europe coupled with a wealth of information sources (print and electronic media) that remains unrivalled in the territory of the former Warsaw Pact. This factor ensures against oligarchy, unaccountable government and routine

injustice, a phenomenon that are widespread in the larger geographic area of the Balkans and beyond.

In April 2001 the former king of Bulgaria, Simeon Saxe-Coburg Gotha, returned to the country. He decided to run at the general elections in June heading a public movement united by his ideas for economic and social reform. Many observers in Bulgaria and abroad have been cautious about the real plans of the ex-monarch. Was he trying to use the young democratic system in Bulgaria in order to replace the republic with a restored monarchy? The ex-king won the elections and for the last ten months has been the country's Prime Minister. He also recently adopted the chairmanship of his own party, the National Movement. Isn't that true victory of democracy? An ex-king attempting to restore his crown for years has returned to his country and has been transformed to a successful republican statesman and party leader. That is an illustration of how effectively real democracy functions in integrating all positions and ambitions within its system of legitimacy. The ex-king's experience of the last year in Bulgaria is the best proof of our democratic system's stability.

The system of democracy endures extremely heavy economic and social pressures within the market reform process. During the first half of the 1990's the Bulgarian economy plunged into a severe recession caused by several factors: collapse of the planned economy, sudden loss of traditional markets within COMECON, severe capital deficiency, over-employment and absence of a working model for transition to a market economy. The national economy also suffered a series of adverse external shocks including the most important of which were the wars of disintegration in Yugoslavia.

The legitimacy of the privatization process represents the major challenge of the post-communist economic reform. Among all other communist countries in Europe, Bulgaria has been a relatively poor and officially egalitarian society until 1989. Every individual and his/her family could possess a modest standard apartment and a Russian made car. The higher-ranking regime officials could add to their property a villa house in a special district of the city outskirts. The citizens of former communist Bulgaria could not have substantial legal assets to join a legitimate privatization process after 1989.

Bulgaria could not rely upon mass scale foreign investors in privatizing the nation's assets. The war-torn ex-Yugoslavia has created an image for a highly risky zone for business for the entire Balkan region throughout the 1990s. The absence of sufficient legal resources to execute the privatization process combined with the vulnerability of the transitional public institutions in the beginning of the 1990s have created favorable opportunities for expanding corruption. The international embargo on the regime in Belgrade

between 1993-1996 has additionally strengthened the backbone of corrupt businesses and their supporters in public administration, in the judiciary and in the political level of decision-making.

Corruption is a condition that no society can fight to the end. But to reduce corruption to the lowest levels possible is a duty of every democratic system of government. In the case of Bulgaria and all other post-communist societies to fight corruption means also to restore the public trust for the ability of the government to deliver on justice, civil equality and to produce civil solidarity through transparent procedures of decision-making.

The best instrument to fight corruption and keep the transparency of government is the construction of sustainable public institutions. When we define a political system as democratic we mean effective functioning of the representative institutions. The quality of democracy, however, builds upon effective public administrative performance in all branches of government. The major efforts of the government and the public in Bulgaria after the end of all basic structural reforms in the late 1990s are now focused on improving the quality performance of all public institutions up to the level of full sustainability. The public administrative reform and the legal system reform are the most important parts of this process.

With all its hardships, the process of economic and structural reforms has been successfully completed in Bulgaria. More than 74 percent of the economy is in private hands and it functions as a free market system. The country enjoys financial stability and one-digit level of annual inflation since 1997. International investment is encouraged and legislatively supported. Bulgaria runs an open economy and holds membership in the WTO.

The Bulgarian economy registered a 3.5% rate of economic growth in 1998, a remarkable accomplishment in the context of the 1996-7 financial crash. The positive growth continued in 1999 (2.5%) despite the negative impact of some external shocks, including the 1998 financial crisis in Russia and the 1999 Kosovo conflict. The successful restructuring of the economy and increased demand in the EU area were among the main factors that made the Bulgarian economy grow by 5% in 2000, thus marking a solid recovery of economic activity.

The higher economic growth in 2000 was generated mainly by the rapid growth in the services sector and industrial sector, by 8% and 15% respectively, according to data by the Bulgarian Ministry of Finance. The agricultural sector registered poor performance due to summer draughts failing to fulfil earlier governmental estimates for overall economic growth of 5.8% in 2000. For the first quarter of 2001 industrial output

increased by 5.1% compared to the same period in 2000 marking a ten-year high.

The 1996-97 hyperinflation was curbed and inflation rates reduced to 1% in 1998 from 578% in 1997. The government managed to accomplish this due to strict financial discipline and good performance of the economy under a currency board. Following single digit inflation rates in 1999 (6.2%), inflation went up to 11.4% in 2000, mainly in response to rising oil prices and depreciation of the Euro (EUR). According to recent EBRD forecasts inflation in Bulgaria will remain low in the next few years and drop to 4% in 2002.

During the 1996-7 economic and financial crisis domestic investment was at its lowest level since 1989 – 8.4% of GDP. Over the next three years both public and private domestic investment increased and in 2000 reached 15.7% of GDP. A continued macroeconomic stability is expected to further increase the volume of investment in 2001 and 2002.

Consistently following its policies of macroeconomic stabilization, financial and tax reform, the government gradually managed to increase the volume of foreign investment. Starting with a total of 102 million dollars in 1993 when full-scale privatization programs were first started, foreign direct investment reached \$1.3 billion in 2000. According to the Bulgarian Foreign Investment Agency, the 2000 FDI investment flow was equally divided between privatization projects and green-field investment. Compared to other countries in transition from Central and Eastern Europe the accumulated net foreign investment for the past ten years is relatively low – 3.1 billion dollars.

Along with the economic growth after 1997, the current account of the balance of payments has steadily deteriorated. Having a surplus amounting to 4.4% of the GDP in 1997, the current account moved into a deficit of 5.8% of GDP in 2000. The deterioration is largely due to deficit in the trade balance, which the Ministry of Economics reported to be to the tune of 696 million US dollars in 2000.

Several factors have negatively affected the trade balance in the past two years. The process of privatization and restructuring of Bulgarian industries resulted in closing ineffective enterprises that were export-oriented and contributed to the volume of trade significantly. In other cases industrial output due to loss of traditional markets or deteriorating domestic business climate was reduced. The conflict in Yugoslavia and the destruction of infrastructure facilities (roads, bridges) prevented many planned exports or reduced profits due to increased transportation costs.

Bulgaria has relied exclusively on foreign direct investment and foreign

loans for supporting the balance of payments. In 1999, 44% of the balance of payments deficit was financed through FDI proceeds and 33% through new loans. According to governmental estimates, all privatization projects will be completed by 2003, and after that period the country will have to restructure the financing of the current account deficit.

The fiscal position of the country has been stable for the past several years. Higher revenues and improved tax collection helped finance growing government expenditure. The fiscal deficit in 2000 was as low as 1% of GDP with higher privatization proceeds offsetting the growing social expenditure.

The good fiscal performance is also a result of a working currency board in Bulgaria. Effective currency boards are usually good tools for achieving stability because they restrict the ability of the government to finance growing fiscal deficits by preventing fiscal expansion printing money and spending reserves.

The bulk of the Bulgarian foreign debt accumulated in the second half of the 1980s. In 1993-4 the government debt (domestic and foreign) reached \$14 billion. Enhanced economic performance in the second part of the 1990s reduced the debt to \$8.9 billion in 2000 (74.5% of the GDP). Currently the government's goal is to bring the debt below 60% of the GDP in order to fulfill one of the major economic criteria for accession into the European Monetary Union.

The Bulgarian economy is expected to continue to grow in 2002, at a steady rate of 4-5%. The current government, dominated by Simeon Saxe-Coburg Gotha, would pursue macroeconomic objectives in support of economic growth mainly through raising income levels and stimulating consumption. Growth will also be supported by the pre-accession structural funds that the country will continue to receive from the EU.

The government will be able to preserve a good fiscal balance, with a budget deficit within the range of 1-2%, depending on which policy options are taken. The government's economic team declared that they would pursue a zero deficit but the likely level would be around 1%. In the mid-term (2-5 years), the Bulgarian government will experience more difficulties financing the fiscal deficit because the main source of financing, privatization proceeds, will diminish and disappear by the end of the period. In that case budget deficits are likely to be financed through increased governmental revenues and international loans.

Bulgaria's government debt, 76% of which is foreign, is one of considerable size and rigid structure. In 2000, the government used up to 18% of government revenues to finance it. The currency board has considerably

decreased the foreign exchange risk in future financing, although the interest rate risk remains unchanged.

The balance-of-payments current account deficit might be offset in part in the next two years if there is a steady capital inflow from the privatization of key enterprises in the energy and telecommunications sector. After the privatization of Maritza Iztok 2,3 by AES and Entergy for \$1.4 billion in 2001 and the expected sale of Bulgarian Telecom and several other key state-owned industries, there could be a net inflow of over \$2 billion by 2002.

Some of the main issues of concern that will have significant impact on the Bulgarian economy in the near future include completing structural reform and state enterprise restructuring, deregulating the energy and telecommunications sector, revitalizing the domestic capital market and increasing income levels.

The accomplishments of the democratic process and the economic reforms in Bulgaria have laid the background for the successful process of integrating the country into the European Union. Bulgaria has passed a long process of adjustment and adaptation to the legislative and the institutional foundations of the EU after the country's integration as an associate member of the EU in 1993. In December 1999 Bulgaria was invited for full membership and has started the negotiating process for its full accession.

Bulgaria is a reliable partner in NATO actions mostly because of its position as an effective contributor to the crisis management and security build up in SEE in the last twelve years. Bulgaria has developed excellent relationships with Greece and Turkey, both Balkan members of NATO. The successful approach in improving bilateral relations with the both countries has involved a pragmatic assessment of the national security interests and the potential for cooperation facing the future. The democratic government of Bulgaria did not allow historical considerations and obstacles inherited from the past to overshadow the realistic evaluation of the new opportunities for cooperation in a rapidly changing regional and international environment. There's no better proof for the new quality relationships between Bulgaria and its southern neighbors than the energetic lobbying of Athens and Ankara for Bulgarian accession into NATO in 2002. The formula 2+2 (Greece and Turkey, plus Bulgaria and Romania), promoted by the two Balkan NATO members is clear evidence of the new style partnership and alignment developing in the southeastern wing of the North Atlantic Alliance.

In the years after the Kosovo crisis of 1999 Bulgaria has used its improving image of a reliable regional partner to assist and mediate among the parties in the Macedonian crisis resolution in 2001. The Bulgarian government

and the civil society of Bulgaria helped and assisted the development of the democratic process in Serbia in the last phase of struggle against the Milosevic regime and in the first steps of the new democratic government of Serbia. Bulgaria is also a major player in regional security cooperation, currently hosting the Headquarters of the Southeast Multinational Peace Brigade (SEEBRIG). SEEBRIG is a tangible result of the Southeast Europe Defense Ministerials (SEDM) of NATO member states and Partnership for Peace Program SEE participating countries. It was launched as a forum “in the spirit of PfP” for consultations and joint planning within the overarching Euro-Atlantic framework. SEDM participating countries are Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Macedonia, Romania and Turkey (the US, Slovenia and Croatia hold observer status). A mechanized brigade, SEEBRIG is available for NATO or EU-led peace support and crisis management operations with a mandate from the UN or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The regional impact of Bulgaria’s policies in the field of security is particularly visible in assessing the performance of the Bulgarian security institutions to fight and restrict all forms of organized crime, international trafficking and terrorist underground activities in the Balkan region. Since lifting the internal borders among the EU member states the importance of the outer borders of Europe have become crucial for European security and stability. The institutions of Bulgaria are true guardians of European security in restricting and preventing the operation of international organized crime from the East westwards. The enormous amount of drug packages stopped by Bulgarian customs at the border, the systemic prevention of human illegal trafficking, the constantly improving security partnership between the Bulgarian security services and the respective institutions of Bulgaria’s neighbors, represent significant evidences of Bulgaria’s role for the Euro-Atlantic security space. Bulgarian law enforcement and intelligence agencies are operating within a set of legislation focusing on suppression of financing terrorism, exerting strict control over the export or traffic in arms, hazardous, poisonous and radioactive substances. A plan for detecting and preventing terrorist activities is underway. All those systemic efforts have been additionally adapted to the new realities of the international campaign against terrorism and the broader global underground activities.

Last, but not least as we elaborate on Bulgaria’s application to the world’s most effective military-political alliance, the country’s preparedness for membership is directly related to the potential of the Bulgarian Army to serve its duty in NATO partnership. The Army of Bulgaria is an institution with strong traditions and excellent performance throughout the 120 years

of its existence. The Bulgarian Army has been a military factor of European importance since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There is no record of a battle lost or military defeat of the Bulgarian Army ever after its foundation in 1879, even if inadequate political decisions have often jeopardized effective military efforts.

The process of reforming the armed forces was started immediately after 1989 with the complete de-politicization of the officers' and the NCOs' corps. A system of civilian control over the military has been established both through the instruments of the Executive Branch and the Parliament. Independent NGOs have been developed in the field of civil monitoring the army reform process. The legal basis of the armed forces reform has been established by the adoption of the National Security Concept of 1998, the Defense Doctrine of 1999 as well as the Defense and Armed Forces Law. A new Classified Information Draft based on NATO requirements is currently being debated by the Parliament.

Bulgaria is a long-standing and active member of NATO's North Atlantic Cooperation Council (now the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council) and the Partnership for Peace Program. It begins a military reform that takes place in an environment of economic transition and restructuring. This poses significant budgetary constraints upon the armed forces modernization program. The ultimate priority of the reform process is to produce a force that is relatively small in size, highly mobile, modern, capable of accomplishing its essential missions and having a high level of operative compatibility within the NATO system.

The roadmap to accelerated accession into NATO is the Annual National Program (ANP) within the Membership Action Plan framework announced at the Washington Summit in 1999. The Chapter on Defense/Military Issues of ANP identified the following priorities: stability, democratization, professionalism, and development of operational capabilities that will allow the Bulgarian Army to undertake Article 5 collective defense missions and contribute to operations other than war.

A Plan for the Reorganization and Development of the Ministry of Defense 2004 was developed in 1999. Known as "Plan 2004," it was adequately updated following the Force Structure Review of 2001 and the security assessment after September 11. The first stage of defense reform underway focuses on downsizing and restructuring of the Armed Forces and on interoperability with an emphasis on the capability of deploying forces for crisis response followed by a second stage of modernization and rearmament.

Along with Annual National Program, Plan 2004 is the major instrument

of the armed forces reform. The reform involves painful but necessary steps towards reducing the general number of military service men 45,000 (down from 114,000 in the early 1990s). Early retirement for senior commander's staff in order to promote younger Western-trained officers has been introduced. The effectiveness of the military reform is being noticed through the assessments of the Bulgarian armed contingents' performance with international missions and the NATO military exercises of the last decade.

This book has been designed to provide exhaustive information on the process of Bulgaria's preparation for NATO membership. It describes the achievements, the problems and the perspectives of Bulgaria's participation in the common security system of the democratic Euro-Atlantic community. The book defines the real position of Bulgaria as an effective ally within the NATO Alliance. The invitation to join NATO as full member in November 2002 is the next logical step in the successful advancement of democratic Bulgaria as a reliable partner in the Club of the free and democratic nations. This is the irreversible choice the Bulgarian nation has made for the future.

# APPENDIX 1

## HISTORICAL NOTES ON BULGARIA

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### *ANTIQUITY*

#### *ANCIENT THRACE*

The earliest human habitation on the territory of modern Bulgaria dates from the Stone Age. The Thracians, a people of Indo-European origin, were its first inhabitants recorded by history. Their existence in Bulgaria can be dated from about 3500 BC, when semi-nomadic pastoralists from the Eurasian steppes moved southwestward to settle in the Balkan Peninsula. The Ionian Greeks reached the Black sea coast in the seventh century BC and studded it with a set of colonies, still existing today: Odessos (Varna), Messembria (Nesebar), Anchialon (Pomorie), Sozopolis (Sozopol), Agathopolis (Akhtopol) etc.

The first known Thracian state was founded in the mid-fifth century BC. Philip II of Macedon (reigned 359-336 BC) conquered the Thracians and founded the city of Philippopolis (modern Plovdiv) as a stronghold of his domination. In the third century BC the Balkan peninsula was invaded by the Celts and in the southeastern territories of the modern Bulgaria there was established a Celtic kingdom which lasted for some 70 years. Among the settlements founded by the Celts in this period was Bononia (modern Vidin) in the northwestern corner of the present-day Bulgarian territory.

#### *THE ROMAN PERIOD (1ST-7TH CENTURY)*

The Thracian kingdom was finally absorbed by the Roman Empire after a 150-year struggle into the first years of the Christian era. Under Roman rule the territory of modern Bulgaria was divided between the provinces of Moesia and Thrace and lay athwart the main land route from the west to the Middle East. The Romans, in their turn, founded many cities and fortresses. Among them were Serdica (Sofia), Montana, Pautalia (Kyustendil), Nicopolis (Nikopol), Durostorum (Silistra) and many others. The Roman Emperor Constantine the Great (AD 306-337) was fond of Serdica, which he called "My Rome", and even planned to move the imperial capital here.

When in 395 the Roman Empire was divided into eastern (predominantly

Greek speaking) and western (predominantly Latin speaking) part, the Bulgarian territories were incorporated into the eastern part (technically known as Byzantine Empire).

Since the beginning of the third century AD the Balkans suffered permanent desolation brought about by successive invasions of Goths, Huns, Bulgars, Avars and Slavs, an Indo-European people originating from the marshes of the present day Poland. When the Byzantine frontiers' fortifications were suddenly abandoned in 602, the Slavs began to settle south of the Danube. They were, however, gradually subjugated and Christianized by the Byzantine emperors in the second half of the seventh century.

### ***THE MIDDLE AGES***

#### ***THE ORIGIN OF THE BULGARS***

The Bulgars originated as a warlike nomadic tribe in Central Asia. There is some evidence that they formed the right wing of the Hunnish Empire. According to their tradition, the Bulgar rulers derived their ancestry from Attila, the great king of the Huns. By AD 374 the Bulgars have already appeared in Europe. After the decay of the Hunnish power in the mid-fifth century they concentrated in the steppe around the northern Black sea shore and were unified under Kubrat (reigned c. 605-c. 642) in a large state, known to the Byzantines as Great Bulgaria. In 652 it was overran by the Khazars and part of the Bulgars moved eastward to the confluence of Volga and Kama rivers, while another part went westward and settled the region of the Danube delta.

#### ***THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FIRST BULGARIAN EMPIRE (681-1018)***

The frequent inroads of the Danubian Bulgars in the Balkans incited the Byzantine emperor Constantine IV (668-685) to undertake in 680 a great expedition against them, but it ended in a complete defeat. The Bulgars then occupied Dobrudzha and subjugated the Slavic tribes between the Balkan and Carpathian mountain chains. In 681 the Byzantines had to accept their presence on the Balkan peninsula and to pay them a tribute. In spite of the protracted crisis which issued out of the dynastic changes in the eighth century, the Bulgar state could survive. Under Krum (reigned 803-814) and his successors its power was extended over Transylvania, Eastern Panonnia, Northern Thrace, Macedonia and Albania. In this vast area there were living communities of different origin, to mention mainly the numerous Slavic tribes and the remnants of the Romanized or Hellenized populations from the previous period.

#### ***CHRISTIANIZATION AND SLAVICIZATION***

The Bulgars confessed a simple monotheist cult for a sky deity named Tangra. Initially the Slavs practiced a polytheist religion, but after settling the Balkan peninsula they were gradually converted to Christianity by Byzantine

missionaries. The Byzantine government considered christianizing an effective means for pacifying the Slavs and patronized the elaboration of a refined Slavic literary language by St. St. Cyril and Methodius for preaching the gospel among them.

The great expansion of the Bulgar Empire in the first half of the ninth century brought about the incorporation of large Christian populations and there are evidences that some members of the Bulgar royal family also became Christian converts. Under these circumstances the establishment of Christianity in 864 as official religion by Boris I (reigned 852-889) was to consolidate the society on the basis of the dominated majority and against the traditions of the dominating minority. Furthermore, the adoption of the new faith was accompanied by the introduction of Slavic as official language of liturgy and administration. Then the Slavs, especially those in Thrace and Macedonia, identified with the Bulgar state and adopted the Bulgar ethnic name. In this way there appeared a new Slavic-speaking people, technically labeled in the English language literature as Bulgarians to make a distinction from the ancient Bulgars.

Christianization and Slavicization gave the Bulgarian Empire a broader area of influence. The patronization of the Slavic language reserved it the role of leading cultural factor in the medieval Slavic-speaking Orthodox world.

#### ***BULGARIA AND BYZANTIUM: THE GREAT CLASH***

The adoption of Christianity meant that Bulgaria was to adhere to the system of the world order it sanctified. The Church fathers, both Greek and Latin, postulated that the unification of the world under the power of Rome was necessary for the birth of the Savior. Thus, the Roman Empire, being instrumental in the God's plan for the world, was the only legal state on the Earth. The political fragmentation that issued out of the barbarian invasions was reconciled with the principle of unity by the recognition of the baptized barbarian kings as Roman officials charged with the government of the conquered provinces. After the abolition of the imperial institution in Rome in AD 476, Constantinople, as a second capital of the empire, remained the only center of this system and this gave the Byzantines acute feeling of their universalist mission in combination with a perception of the world order emphasizing rather the *de jure* than the *de facto* state of affairs.

Being baptized, Boris I accepted to be a spiritual son of the Byzantine emperor and was recognized a legal ruler of his land. The nominal political supremacy of Byzantium in this world system was compensated on the Bulgarian part by the establishment of an autocephalous church in 870. The Byzantines were however eager to exercise real influence over Bulgaria and to undermine its status, as it was too close to their core territory. They utilized the accession of Boris' heir, Simeon I (reigned 893-927), to change unilaterally the trade conditions for the Bulgarian subjects in Byzantium. Simeon reacted immediately and after victorious war imposed on the empire a heavy annual tribute. It was spent in the next decades on building a splendid new capital of

Bulgaria at Preslav. In 913 the refusal of the new Byzantine government to continue paying the tribute provoked once more a war. Having smashed the Byzantines on the battlefield, Simeon soon reached Constantinople. The population was in panic and the government admitted him to enter the city for peace talks. In a ceremony much resembling the coronation of the Byzantine autocrats, the ecumenical patriarch proclaimed Simeon *Caesar* (in later Bulgarian tradition *Czar*) and whatever were the later interpretations of this act, it remained the only case in history when a non-Roman ruler was crowned by the Head of the Orthodox church in Constantinople. It was stipulated the young emperor, Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, to marry Simeon's daughter and Simeon to become regent of the empire. In this way the Bulgarian sovereign was satisfied and withdrew to his lands.

Byzantine society was scandalized by such humiliation. A military coup d'état rose to power a new government which rejected the peace treaty and formed a large anti-Bulgarian coalition, encompassing Serbia and Russia. Simeon then assumed the title of Roman emperor. In a decade of ceaseless war he crushed the Byzantine armies all over the Balkan peninsula and conquered Serbia. The imperial city of Constantinople remained, however, inexpugnable as the Bulgarians did not dispose of fleet. The death of Simeon in 927 brought about a long-term settlement: the Byzantines recognized to his son Peter I the title of *emperor of the Bulgarians* and continued paying a tribute. The imperial title of Peter I was also confirmed by the Pope.

The long peace was terminated in 968. The Byzantines stopped paying the tribute and attacked Bulgaria, but were driven back. Meanwhile the Russians, in their quality of Byzantine allies, invaded suddenly from the north and conquered the capital city of Preslav. Then, acquiring a firm foothold on the Balkans, the Russian prince Svyatoslav decided to seize Constantinople. The Byzantines, however, defeated him and in 971 occupied in their turn Preslav. In the course of these events the Bulgarian sovereign, Boris II, was captured. In a special ceremony held at Constantinople he was taken off the imperial ensigns, given once to Simeon, and enlisted in the ranks of the Byzantine nobility. According to the Romano-Christian theory of the time this meant that Bulgaria was formally annexed to the Byzantine Empire.

Bulgarian statehood had its long tradition and could not disappear by a single legalistic act, moreover that the Bulgarian administration in the western lands remained intact. In the city of Ochrida Samuel and his brothers, local lords from Macedonia, established a new Bulgarian government and received there the patriarch of Bulgaria and Romanus, the grandson of Simeon. The Byzantines considered this government rebellious and refused whatever talks with it. The outcome was a 40 years merciless war which strained dramatically both sides. Finally, in 1014 Basil II (976-1025) captured the Bulgarian army and ordered 15,000 soldiers to be blinded as outlaws. At the view of this tragedy Samuel died and few years later Bulgaria capitulated.

***THE BYZANTINE RULE (1018-1185)***

Basil II organized the Bulgarian territories in two administrative units: one, called Bulgaria with its capital at Skopje, and another, called *Paristrion* with its capital at Durostorum (Silistra). The autonomy of the Bulgarian church with its see at Ochrida was preserved. Bulgarian law and tax system remained unchanged.

The attempt to incorporate the Bulgarian lands into the imperial tax system caused popular revolt and brief restoration of the Bulgarian state under Peter Delyan (1040-1041), the grandson of Samuel. Nevertheless, the Byzantine institutions gradually took root in Bulgaria and the Church was considerably hellenized.

***THE RISE OF THE SECOND BULGARIAN EMPIRE UNDER THE ASENIDES (1185-1280)***

The invasions of Patzinaks, Cumans and Turks, the prolonged conflicts with the Normans, Hungary and Venice gradually eroded the Byzantine power. In 1180s, after the ambitious reign of Manuel Comnenus (1143-1180), Byzantium experienced great financial and political difficulties. It was under these circumstances that the Asenides, a Christianized Cuman family on Byzantine service in Tŭrnov (modern Veliko Tŭrnovo), led in 1185 a successful revolt against the empire and established their supremacy in the regions between the Balkan and Carpathian Mountains.

The Asenides strived to obtain political legitimization for their state by claiming the restoration of the former Bulgarian Empire. In 1203 the pope Innocent III (1198-1216) recognized the royal title to Calo-John (Kaloyan) (reigned 1197-1207), the brave Bulgarian king who crushed the western crusaders in the famous battle of Adrianople in 1205. John Asen II (reigned 1218-1241) was a clever diplomat and strategist who after the decisive battle of Klokotnitsa in 1230 could impose his rule over almost entire Balkan Peninsula.

***THE LAST CENTURY OF THE MEDIEVAL BULGARIAN STATE***

In 1270s the power of the Second Bulgarian Empire progressively declined. Thrace and Macedonia were lost to the Byzantines, the country was devastated several times by the Tartars who could even establish their king in Tarnov (1298-1300). Michael III Shishman (reigned 1323-1330) tried to restore the former power of Bulgaria, but was crushed by the Serbs (1330) who soon after their victory over him occupied Macedonia. John Alexander (reigned 1331-1371) was the last splendid ruler of medieval Bulgaria, though his reign was shadowed by the rise of Serbia, and especially of the Ottoman Turks. After the decisive victory of the Turks over the allied Christian forces in the battle of Kosovo (June 15, 1389) the fate of the Bulgarian state, divided between the successors of John Alexander, was decided. In 1396 the Bulgarian territories were subjugated to the Ottomans.

## **THE PERIOD OF THE OTTOMAN DOMINATION (1396-1878)**

### **POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ARRANGEMENTS**

The Ottomans punished every resistance by complete destruction, while the voluntary acceptance of their domination was to assure the preservation of the status quo. Generally, the subjugated Christians were allowed to apply their common law (*qanun*) in their own affairs. In Bulgaria the local government was exercised by native notables (*knezove*). Ottoman administration was concentrated in the urban centers. Sofia was thriving capital city of *Rumelia*, as were referred the possessions on the Balkan peninsula.

The Christians normally were not recruited in the army and paid special tax for protection (*jizyah*). Occasionally Christian male children were taken from their household, converted to Islam and trained as members of the administrative and military élite of the Ottoman Empire. Initially a great part of the Bulgarian nobles preserved their estates and served the army as cavalymen (*sipahi*), but they became gradually islamized and by 1550s disappeared completely.

Except for the regions of the Rhodopes Islam was not imposed forcibly by the authorities. Tax privileges and career opportunities could induce Christians to become Muslims. In spite of conversion and the colonization of Turks from Asia Minor, the proportion of the Muslim population in Bulgaria was relatively small till the final decades of the 18th century. The established system was rather conservative and petrified the development of the Bulgarian society for centuries.

### **THE CHURCH**

The non-Muslim peoples in the Ottoman Empire were grouped into ethno-confessional commonwealths (*millet*s). In 1453, immediately after the conquest of Constantinople, the sultan proclaimed the ecumenical patriarch head of all Christian Orthodox (*rum-millet*) in the Ottoman possessions. As a result the Bulgarians practically lost their ecclesiastical autonomy. The Greek clergy occupied initially the highest ranks of the church hierarchy, but gradually penetrated the lower levels also. In 1767 the Archbishopric of Ochrida was formally abolished. All private affairs were regulated by the canon law and the Greek language was replacing the native Bulgarian tongue in the written documents.

### **REVOLTS IN THE 15TH-18TH CENTURY**

The first revolt against the Ottomans was organized by the sons of the last Bulgarian Czars, Constantine and Fruzhin, in 1404. Two other uprisings, related with supposed heirs to the Bulgarian throne, occurred in Tarnovo, the former capital of the Second Bulgarian Empire, in the end of the 16th and the 17th century. The Bulgarians usually revolted when Western European armies

penetrated in their lands during their campaigns against the Ottomans. The leaders of the Catholic movement, which thrived in the 17th century, devised far-flung plans for the restoration of the Bulgarian kingdom under the crown of the Hapsburgs. In 1688 the town of Chiprovtsi, the center of catholicism in Northern Bulgaria, revolted and was destroyed. Thousands of Bulgarian Catholics migrated to the Hapsburg possessions in Banat.

With the decline of the Ottoman power and the growing accesses of the local lords, there appeared many Christian bands of semi-brigands (*hayduks*), who dispensed justice of their own or merely looted caravans and convoys. In 1595 they could even plunder the city of Sofia. In the 18th century there were also many Muslim bands and the towns had to build up fortifications for defense from them.

### ***RUSSIA AND THE BALKANS***

After the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans the Russian principedom of Muscovy remained the only Orthodox state in the world. Its sovereigns identified themselves as heirs to the Byzantine Empire and assumed the mission to protect the Orthodox Christianity. The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople sanctified it and even promoted among its folk the legend of the blond people from the North who would come to expel the Turks from the Balkans. Thus, the reconquest of the imperial city and the restoration, in one form or another, of the Byzantine Empire became the focal point of the Russian foreign policy. A dozen of wars between 1676 and 1878 issued out and it was in its march to the Straits that Russia grew up as a Great Power.

In this context the Bulgarian lands were for the Russians a natural bridgehead towards Constantinople, and since the end of the 18th century there was the usual arena for the battles. Following the annexation of the Northern Black sea shore territories to Russia the local Muslim population was driven out and resettled in Eastern Bulgaria. On the other hand, in the course of their campaigns on the Balkans, the Russian armies prompted the Bulgarians to move to these territories. The result of this exchange of populations between the two empires was that in the 18th-19th centuries the ethnic balance in Eastern Bulgaria was greatly transformed.

### ***THE NATIONAL REVIVAL (18TH-19TH CENTURY)***

#### ***THE IDEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND***

In the mid-eighteen century the Bulgarian identity was on the verge of extinction: the townsfolk was hellenized, and the humble peasantry, which still preserved the Bulgarian name, was despised, when not completely forgotten, even by the Orthodox world. In this moment Paisios, a monk in the Chilandar monastery on Mount Athos, wrote a passionate booklet, "The Slavo-Bulgarian History", in which he glorified the Bulgarian past and in polemicizing style

rejected the attempts of assimilation, and stigmatized the behavior of the Serbs and Russians who, in his words, appropriated the Bulgarian heritage. “The History” had an enormous impact on the Bulgarian society and became a manifesto for the revival of the Bulgarian people. The feelings it induced were to alienate decisively the Bulgarians from Byzantinism and to inevitably approach them to the values of the contemporary Western culture.

#### ***THE BULGARIAN ENLIGHTENMENT***

The Bulgarian idea had to achieve its emancipation primarily in the cultural sphere. In the end of the 18th century there appeared the first written books in the vernacular language, and in the course of the 19th century, through the works of many writers, was elaborated a fine standard literary language. In 1835 there was founded the first secular school and in the next decades the municipalities all over the Bulgarian ethnic area established a set of primary and secondary schools where major part of the Bulgarian youth were educated. The wealthy families sent their sons to make their studies in Europe, or in the European institutions in the Ottoman Empire, such as the famous American Robert College in Constantinople, where the most Bulgarian political leaders received their education. In 1869 in Romania was founded the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

Literature and art developed forms and styles of European inspirations. The Bulgarian public became acquainted with the modern western ideas and adopted European habits, fashions and tastes. The educated people spoke French and also German, as many Bulgarian traders established their offices in Vienna. The adoption of western technologies stimulated largely the industrial output. In the 1860s the Bulgarian lands were the most prosperous part of the Ottoman Empire.

#### ***THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BULGARIAN CHURCH***

In 1820s the Greek élite in the Ottoman Empire, the Phanariotes, launched a plan for joint Christian revolt aiming at the restoration of the Byzantine Empire. The Bulgarian society was however already well aware of its specific national interests and remained aside. The other Balkan peoples were also indifferent and in this way the Phanariote movement ended with the creation of Greek national state in the south-western corner of the Balkan peninsula. The Bulgarian leaders used the disgrace of the Phanariotes before the Ottoman government to undertake a campaign for ecclesiastical autonomy. In 1824 the townsfolk of Skopje expelled the local Greek bishop and subsequently many Bulgarian towns ousted their Greek prelates. The movement for independent church intensified in 1840s, but the opposition of the Russians, who were interested in the unity of the Orthodox church on the Balkans as spiritual embodiment of the Byzantine Empire, prevented its success. Nevertheless, in 1860s the Bulgarian church was established in fact and some Bulgarian leaders considered the union with Rome a way for achieving recognition. Finally, in

1870 France and Britain pushed the Sultan to divulge a decree for the establishment of autonomous Bulgarian Exarchy with its see at Constantinople (Istanbul). The Exarchy initially included the dioceses between the Morava valley and the Black Sea shore, and in 1874, after special plebiscite, was joined by the dioceses of Skopje and Ohrid.

The act of 1870 was a crucial event, as it discarded the fiction of the cultural uniformity of the Balkan Christians in the frames of the rum-millet, and was a factual recognition of the Bulgarian nation by the Ottoman government. The Ecumenical Patriarch replied by proclaiming the Exarchy schismatic and his ban was not revoked until 1945.

#### ***ATTEMPTS AT AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE***

The Ottoman Empire entered the 19th century backward and in complex politico-economic crisis. The financial system was ineffective, and the local administration hopelessly corrupted, if not practically independent from the central government. In 1839, a decade after the Phanariote revolt, the Sublime Porte undertook a far-flung Reform Program (*Tanzimat*) which was intensified after 1856 under the pressure of the European Great Powers with the ultimate goal to offer equal rights for both Muslims and Christians. The Bulgarian lands were a key area for the reforms. The central government introduced a new administrative system there and invested in developing modern infrastructure (ports, bridges and railroads). Bulgarian notables served as state ministers in Constantinople (Istanbul).

In this context Bulgarian society generated political ambitions of its own. Generally, they were inspired by the contemporary developments in Europe. The Bulgarian notables in Constantinople preached the Sultan to be proclaimed emperor of Bulgaria also, and the Ottoman Empire to be reformed on the pattern of Austria-Hungary. The greatest achievement of this group was the proclamation of the Exarchy in 1870. In contrast with their moderate view were the ideas for radical revolutionary solution of the Bulgarian question. Their adherents were influenced by modern liberal and nationalist theories, mainly by the example of France. In the 1860s Georgi Rakovski made the initial steps of setting up a revolutionary organization. This goal was achieved in the early 1870 by Vassil Levski. The Bulgarian revolutionary committee prepared the revolt of April 1876 which led to the intervention of the Great Powers.

#### ***THE MODERN PERIOD (AFTER 1878)***

##### ***THE RESTORATION OF THE BULGARIAN STATE***

At the conference in Istanbul, held by the end of 1876, the Great Powers agreed on the establishment of two autonomous Bulgarian provinces, the first stretching from Ohrid to Vidin with its capital at Sofia, and the other in the lands between the Danube and the Rhodopes with its capital at Tarnovo.

Evidently, this division on the East-West axis was to delineate the sphere of interests of Austria-Hungary and Russia. The Sultan rejected in fact the plan and then Russia declared war to the Ottoman Empire (April 1877) in order to force it to accept the decisions of the Istanbul conference.

Having defeated the Ottoman armies, Russia imposed the treaty of San Stefano (3 March 1878), by which there was created a unified Bulgarian state, practically independent from the Sublime Porte, with an access to the Aegean shore. Great Britain feared it will be a puppet-state of Moscow, as there was not stipulated a strictly defined term for the Russian military presence in Bulgaria. Its opposition, supported by Austria-Hungary, brought about the revision of the treaty. The Congress of Berlin of 1878 established the autonomous principality of Bulgaria encompassing the territories between the Balkans and the Danube and the district of Sofia. The Congress created also the self-governing province of Eastern Rumelia in the territories between the Balkans and the Rhodopes with its capital at Plovdiv. The supposed Russian influence on Bulgaria, in the eastern part of the Balkans, was to be poised by the introduction of Austro-Hungarian troops in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in the western part of the Balkans, for a period of 30 years (to 1908).

#### ***THE POLITICAL SYSTEM***

The constituent Assembly of the restored Bulgarian state was held in early 1879 in Tarnovo, the former capital of the Second Bulgarian Empire. The Bulgarian municipalities from Thrace and Macedonia also sent their deputies to the Assembly. The constitution, which they elaborated, was inspired by the pattern of Belgium. A hereditary prince with the power to appoint the prime minister was a head of State. The Legislature consisted of unicameral Parliament, which controlled also the state finances and could in this way blame the government. The suffrage was universal.

The constituent Assembly elected Alexander of Battenberg prince of Bulgaria, under the name of Alexander I, and chose Sofia to be state capital because of its central position between the three Bulgarian lands of Moesia, Thrace and Macedonia, as the deputies considered their unification would be achieved in the future. During the debates there appeared two main political streams. The rich notables formed the conservative People's party, which was always close to Russia. The representatives of the city middle class, which were engaged in the revolutionary activity before 1878, were grouped in the pro-Western Liberal party. Subsequently on its basis developed the Democratic Party, with its small Radical Democratic faction.

The modern socialist ideas found their supporters among the intellectuals, mainly the teachers in the towns. In 1891 there was established the Bulgarian Social-Democratic Party. In 1899 was founded the Bulgarian People's Agricultural Union, which claimed to defend the interests of the peasantry.

## ***THE MONARCHY (1879-1946)***

### ***THE UNIFICATION OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF BULGARIA AND EASTERN RUMELIA (1885)***

The principal goal of Bulgarian society after 1878 was to achieve the unification of all Bulgarians in a common state. In September 1885, during the apex of the Anglo-Russian tensions on Afghanistan, a secret committee in Plovdiv organized a popular uprising in Eastern Rumelia. The governor was ousted and the committee proclaimed the unification of the province with the principality of Bulgaria. Turkey accepted this act silently, while Serbia decided to attack under the pretext of keeping the balance of powers. The Bulgarian army, though recently created, won brilliant victories. As a result the Great Powers admitted Eastern Rumelia to be unified with the Principality by personal union. In fact, however, both entities formed one political organism.

### ***THE GOVERNMENT OF STEFAN STAMBOLOV (1887-1894)***

The Russian government met with open hostility the act of Unification as it was accomplished without its preliminary consent, and there were apprehensions that an enlarged Bulgarian state could oppose the Russian policy on the Balkans. In 1886 the Russians forced Alexander I to abdicate and leave Bulgaria. They also foiled the election of new prince among the aristocrats of Europe, and without sovereign Bulgaria was diplomatically isolated. The Russian army prepared to invade and occupy the country.

In this situation Stefan Stambolov, a Liberal leader and speaker of the Parliament, assumed the regency and offered the Ottoman sultan to become prince of Bulgaria. By this smart move he thwarted the immediate threat on the side of Russia and was soon able to convince the German prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha to ascend the Bulgarian throne. The Russians systematically blocked the recognition of Ferdinand as prince of Bulgaria by the Great Powers and inspired a series of plots against him in the country. Stefan Stambolov, serving in 1887-1894 as Prime Minister, crushed them with iron hand. He asserted the factual independence of Bulgaria by active policy abroad, especially in Macedonia. At home Stambolov government created new industries and infrastructures, and modernized also the cities.

In the course of the years the authoritarian style of Stambolov became too onerous for the ambitious Ferdinand. In May 1894 he discarded him from the power and inspired his assassination the next year. On this basis Ferdinand could seek reconciliation with the new emperor of Russia, Nicholas II (1894-1918). Russia recognized him as prince of Bulgaria and Nicholas II became godfather to the crown prince, the future Boris III of Bulgaria. The Russian government explicitly required the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78 to be commemorated as liberating for Bulgaria and subsequently numerous monuments to the Russian army were erected all over the country.

### ***THE INDEPENDENCE (1908)***

In the beginning of the 20th century Bulgaria was the most advanced country on the Balkan peninsula, but its nominal dependence on the Sublime Porte impeded it from establishing diplomatic and economic relations with the other countries at equal terms. In October 1908, in a special ceremony held at Tarnovo, Ferdinand was self-confident enough to proclaim the independence of Bulgaria and assume the traditional title of Czar. This act was in flagrant violation to the stipulations of the Berlin congress, but it was backed by Austria-Hungary, which used it as a pretext for the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Russia recognized the Independence silently, by addressing Ferdinand as Czar.

### ***THE BALKAN WARS (1912-1913)***

In 1911 Bulgaria and Serbia signed a treaty for military alliance against the Ottoman Empire. It became possible after the Bulgarian government agreed to consider the northwestern part of Macedonia (with the cities of Skopje and Tetovo) a *disputable zone* between the two countries, on the fate of which they would wait for the arbitration of the Russian emperor after the end of the war. Serbia accepted the rest of Macedonia to be annexed to Bulgaria.

In 1912 the Serbo-Bulgarian coalition was joined by Greece and Montenegro and the military operations began in the fall. The geostrategic position of Bulgaria required it to assume the main burden of the war, namely the advance towards the Ottoman capital. Smashing the Ottoman forces in Thrace, the Bulgarians reached the vicinities of Constantinople and after the capture of Adrianople in the spring of 1913 they forced the empire to capitulate. In the meantime Serbia and Greece defeated Ottoman armies in Macedonia and occupied its largest cities, Skopje, Bitola and Thessaloniki. The small Bulgarian units in the area, including a corps of Macedonian volunteers occupied its northeastern part.

According to the Peace treaty of London, signed in May 1913, the Ottomans ceded to the Balkan coalition all their possessions in Europe, except for the shore of the Sea of Marmara. The distribution of the conquered territories, however, produced severe tensions between the allies. Serbia and Greece made an agreement against Bulgaria and were backed by Russia which feared a strong Bulgarian state near the zone of the Straits. Ferdinand decided to attack preventively the Greek and Serbian positions in Macedonia and opened a Second Balkan War in June 1913. The Ottomans used the situation to re-occupy Adrianople. Romania joined the Greco-Serbian alliance under the pretext that Greater Bulgaria would disturb the balance of powers on the Balkans. Its army invaded unopposed Bulgaria and reached the suburbs of Sofia.

Bulgaria was forced to capitulate. According to the Peace treaty of Bucharest, concluded in August 1913, it lost the Southern Dobrudzha to Romania. Of the former Ottoman territories Bulgaria acquired the Rhodopes with a small outlet to the Aegean Sea (the so-called Western Thrace), and the region of Pirin in Macedonia.

***BULGARIA IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR (1915-1918)***

Bulgaria was vanquished, but still powerful and willing to reach its national ideals. When in the summer of 1914 World War I began, Bulgaria declared strict neutrality, but Ferdinand and the liberal pro-German government encouraged both sides to bid for Bulgarian intervention. In this contest, the Central Powers could offer far more at the expense of Serbia, Greece, and, later, Romania, than could the Triple Entente, which had these countries among its allies. During the summer of 1915, when the military balance swung in Germany's favor, Bulgaria committed to the Central Powers and invaded Serbia in October. In 1916 the Bulgarian army, with the Austro-Hungarians and the Germans, overran Romania and faced the Russians in Bessarabia. In the winter of 1917-1918 Bulgaria took part in the talks which led to the capitulation of Russia to the Central Powers in Brest-Litovsk.

The protracted war in the west and on the Balkans, however, exhausted the Central Powers. In September 1918 the Entente forces broke through the Bulgarian lines in Macedonia. The army revolted and though the attempt at establishing Republic failed, Ferdinand had to abdicate and leave the country. The treaty of Neuilly, signed in November 1919, reduced the Bulgarian army to some 20,000 men. Bulgaria was lost a strip of western territory to Serbia (becoming Yugoslavia), and the Aegean territories to the Allies, who turned them over to Greece in 1920. Large reparations were to be paid to Serbia and Greece.

***THE INTERWAR PERIOD (1918-1939)***

After three successive wars Bulgaria was in ruins and despair. The situation was further aggravated by the arrival of 300,000 refugees from Macedonia and Thrace. The established political élite seemed useless. The traditional Liberal and People's parties disintegrated and, as all over Europe in this period, there appeared pronounced authoritarian and extremist tendencies in politics from both left and right.

The government of the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union came to power in 1919 with the ambition to promote new principles in foreign and domestic policy. The Prime Minister Aleksandar Stamboliyski tried, but in vain, to achieve reconciliation with new Yugoslavia. He also championed the establishment of a Green International of the peasant parties all over the world. At home he was concentrated mainly on restoring the economy, with special attention to the peasantry. His dictatorial conduct, however, created an extremely hostile atmosphere. The remnants of the old parties united in the coalition of the People's agreement and, supported by the army and the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, organized a coup d'état. Stamboliyski was killed and subsequently the Agrarian Union split into several fractions. The new rightist government of Aleksandar Tsankov (1923-26) had to face the tide of the communist revolution, supported in Bulgaria by the recently established Soviet Russia. The period of political moderation in 1926-1934 was overshadowed

owed by the effects of the Great depression. In May 1934 the group “Zveno”, consisting of former army officers, used the situation to seize the power by coup d'état and imposed energetically a politics on Mussolini's example. Finally the Czar, Boris III (reigned in 1918-1943), established a non-party system under his personal control (1935).

In spite of all interwar vicissitudes Bulgarian economy gradually recovered. As the treaty of Neuilly imposed large reduction of the conscripts, Stamboliyski substituted the military for labor service which allowed the state to repair and improve considerably the public infrastructure at relatively low cost. Foreign loans in the late 1920s helped the government to cope with the financial deficit and the refugee's problem. In 1930s the development of the cooperative movement could to great extent offset the Great depression. Light industry flourished and in 1939 Bulgaria ranked among the sixth European nations with highest per capita income.

In foreign relations Bulgaria was fettered by the distrust of the victorious powers, though it strictly observed the clauses of the Neuilly treaty. The ruling circles in Belgrade were even eager to use the internal difficulties of the country with the objective to engulf it into what they called in those days “integral Yugoslavia”, i.e. the unified state of the South-Slavic peoples stretching between the Adriatic and the Black sea, under the scepter of the Serbian royal dynasty.

#### ***THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT***

In 1919, under the influence of the bolshevik revolution in Russia, the leftist pro-Marxist part of the Bulgarian social democracy was re-organized into Communist party. Since its beginnings it was closely involved in the activities of the Communist International (Comintern) which was instrumental in the Russian foreign policy during the Soviet epoch. Many Bulgarian communist leaders made their political and even professional career in Soviet Russia and acquired Soviet citizenship. In 1935-1943 the Comintern was headed by the Bulgarian communist Georgi Dimitrov and in this period the Communist party of Bulgaria was directed by a Foreign Bureau with its seat at Moscow. The communist structures in the country were largely funded by Soviet Russia via the Comintern, and the local leaders were paid individual salaries.

In September 1923 the Comintern emissaries organized a massive insurrection with the objective to overthrow the recently established rightist government and to make Bulgaria a Soviet republic. In 1925 a series of terrorist acts provoked systematic repressions on the part of the authorities. The permanent violation was to discredit and destabilize the political system as a whole. In the course of time the communist agents infiltrated into the fractions of the Agrarian union, the Slavophile military circles, especially the group “Zveno”. The labor unions also went under their control. As a result, the small, but well organized and well-funded communist party could exercise, in spite of the official ban on its activity, a massive influence on the Bulgarian politics.

### ***BULGARIA DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR (1939-1944)***

The Bulgarian interwar society still consisted predominantly of peasants who in spite of the economic difficulties of the period could nevertheless rejoice the fruits of their farms to satisfy the needs of their life. Thus, unlike for instance the interwar Germany, Bulgaria was not tormented by feelings of revenge. Peace and recovery were considered the basic goals by the government. It was doing its best to keep the country aside of the war that was to explode, but the preservation of neutrality proved impossible.

Soon after the Soviet-German pact of 1939, the Soviets tried to impose on Bulgaria a treaty of close union providing for the introduction of their troops in its territory. This was equal to occupation and annexation, as it happened to the Baltic states, and the Bulgarian government rejected categorically the proposal. Great Britain and France were unwilling and incapable to assure an effective protection, while Germany demonstrated its goodwill by forcing Romania to cede Southern Dobrudzha back to Bulgaria in September 1940. Boris III, however, declined the German insistences Bulgaria to join the Axis Pact. But when in March 1941 a 500,000 German army was concentrated in Romania for a campaign in Greece, Bulgaria, without any efficient foreign support, was compelled to join the Pact in order not to be smashed by the Wehrmacht power.

The Germans awarded the Bulgarian consent by ceding it the Yugoslav portion of Macedonia, the Greek portion of Thrace and some parts of Eastern Serbia (April 1941). Bulgaria was also obliged to declare war to Great Britain and USA, but it preserved its diplomatic relationships with the Soviets. The Bulgarian army, however, never joined the German forces in whatever anti-Allied operations in the battlefield. Moreover, in 1943 Bulgaria refused to surrender its Jewish citizens, about 50,000 people, and it is often suspected that as an act of revenge the Nazis could provoke the death of Czar Boris III in August 1943.

### ***THE COMMUNIST RÉGIME (1944-1989)***

#### ***THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMUNIST RÉGIME***

In December 1943, on the Tehran Conference, the Allies agreed that after the victory over the Axis Powers Bulgaria would be left in the zone of predominantly Soviet influence. The communists, supplied with weapons from Soviet Russia, organized a real guerilla against the government. By means of their agents among the different political circles they could even assemble a broad coalition, the Fatherland Front. On the other side, the death of Boris III deprived Bulgaria of able leadership in harsh times. The government made several attempts at opening secret talks for separate peace with the Anglo-Americans, but without any result. The denouement was reached in September 1944 when the Soviet army invaded Bulgaria and the communists seized power. Immediately the new government of the Fatherland Front declared war to

Germany and the Bulgarian army took participation in the battles in Macedonia and Southern Hungary. For this reason the peace treaty of Paris (1947) recognized the Bulgarian frontiers of September 1940, i.e. the unification of Southern Dobruzha with Bulgaria.

Meanwhile the new régime consolidated its positions by systematically organized terror. By November 1944 some 2,800 persons were condemned to death by extraordinary non-constitutional tribunals, more than 30,000 were killed without any judgment, and several hundred thousands were imprisoned in the concentration camps. More than 70,000 fled abroad, mainly in the USA. In September 1946, while the Soviet army was still in Bulgaria, a largely manipulated referendum voted for abolishing the monarchy and the minor Czar Simeon II, son of Boris III, was expelled from the country. In 1947 all non-communist political parties were dissolved and their leaders executed or deported. The constitution adopted the same year defined Bulgaria as people's republic. In 1948 the private industries were expropriated from their owners by the state.

#### ***THE EARLY PERIOD (TILL 1956)***

In November 1945 Georgi Dimitrov, the leader of the Foreign Bureau of the Bulgarian communist party and former leader of the Comintern, arrived from Moscow to Bulgaria to assume the office of prime minister. He was an able apparatchik who imposed the communist rule with iron rigidity. On the other hand, Dimitrov was involved since decades in great politics and had ambitions of his own. Supported by some members of the Soviet Politburo, he and the Yugoslavian communist leader Tito launched the idea for federation between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. Evidently there would appear a large state which could oppose the Soviet domination on the post-war Balkans, moreover that Dimitrov and Tito were among the most authoritative figures in the communist movement of the time. Stalin reacted mercilessly by requiring, though in vain, the deposition of Tito and ordering a purge among the Bulgarian communist leadership. In the summer of 1949 Dimitrov was appealed to Moscow where he died supposedly of non-natural causes.

Valko Chervenkov, who came to power in early 1950, applied assiduously the Stalinist pattern. The peasant farmers were forcibly united into collective farms, and heavy industry was created. Cultural life was chained in the fetters of the socialist realism.

#### ***THE RULE OF TODOR ZHIVKOV (1954-1989)***

Stalin's death in March 1953 brought about radical changes among the ruling communist élites all over Eastern Europe. In Bulgaria Valko Chervenkov had to share his power by ceding the office of party leader to Todor Zhivkov in 1954. Two years later, with the support of the Soviet leadership, Zhivkov ousted Chervenkov from the party. In 1962, after a failed pro-Stalinist putsch, he assumed also the office of prime minister.

Zhivkov was a local communist of mediocre education and his biography before 1944 seems rather dubious, but he had an infallible flair for achieving and preserving the political power. Acquiring the personal trust of both Khrushchev and Brezhnev, he enjoyed long and stable rule for decades. At his height in early 1970s Zhivkov imposed a new constitution which made him Head of the State.

#### ***POLITICAL AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES***

The constitution of 1971 stated expressly the fusion of legislative, executive and judiciary powers. The communist party was instituted as leading political and social force, and the Agrarian union as its minor partner. It was a mass organization, comprising in the late 1980s some 900,000 members, or a tenth of the entire population. The party and state structures coalesced at all levels: the leader was Head of the State, the Politburo members formed the government, and the Central committee members constituted the Parliament.

All organizations of civic society, like labor unions, professional associations etc., were defined, and they were indeed, "a transmission between the party and society". The party organized its primary structures on the workplace and this gave it a firm control over the active part of society. The picture was completed by the ubiquitous State security, the communist secret police.

Society was pronouncedly hierarchized. At the top was the small group of the ruling elite (the so-called *nomenklatura*), some 1,000 families, which disposed of exclusive privileges, and on the bottom were the remnants of the pre-communist upper and middle class, who were expropriated and had limited civic rights.

#### ***THE SOVIET CONTROL***

After 1944 the communist party became a mass organization. The large influx of new members affected also the upper echelons. The old leadership was composed exclusively of professional Soviet agents, many of which, like Dimitrov and Chervenkov, made their career in Soviet Russia and acquired Soviet citizenship. The new leaders, like Zhivkov, had only local experience. Thus, the communist *nomenklatura* consisted of two groups, which vied in obtaining the Soviet benevolence. Moreover, the communist State Security was organized by Russian instructors in a manner to be a subdivision of the famous KGB. As a result all key appointment in Bulgaria were manipulated directly by Moscow.

#### ***ECONOMIC PATTERN***

Under Todor Zhivkov Bulgaria was transformed into industrial country. The firmly alliance with the Soviet Union provided for both cheap raw materials and unpretentious market which assured rapid growth for economy. Since the late 1960s Bulgaria realized a large portion of its foreign income by the re-exportation of Soviet oil. The export of electric energy was also substantial,

especially there was built a nuclear power plant at Kozloduy on the Danube river. In the frames of COMECON Bulgaria specialized in electronics and in 1980s Bulgarian computers were sold all over in Eastern Europe. Thousands of Bulgarian specialists, especially engineers and physicians, worked in those countries of the Third world which were gravitating to the Soviet orbit.

#### ***SOCIETY AND CULTURE***

In the course of these changes Bulgarian society became predominantly urban. In the late 1980s two third of the total population resided in the cities. The working class was proclaimed a leading force in society and the state spent much on its education and qualification. Culture was instrumental in consolidating the communist régime. All western cultural institutions, established in Bulgaria before 1944, were closed. Russian was introduced as compulsory subject in the schools and subsequently most Bulgarians developed at least a passive ability of understanding it.

The détente conduced to some opening to the contemporary western culture. With Elvis Presley and the Beatles English became the most popular foreign language in Bulgaria already in the late 1960s.

#### ***FOREIGN RELATIONS***

The political and economic relations of Bulgaria with the outside world developed strictly in the frames of the Soviet bloc. The attempts at some economic co-operation with France, in the late 1960s, and with Japan, in the mid-1980s, were severely opposed by Moscow. As a member of the Warsaw pact since its foundation in 1955 Bulgaria had to give its unconditional support to all Soviet initiatives. On that account, and in spite that it was a front line country between the Eastern and Western bloc during the cold war period, there were never established Soviet military bases.

Bulgarian military doctrine of the period was totally defensive and Zhivkov kept on supporting the initiative the Balkans to become a zone freed of nuclear weapons.

#### ***COMMUNIST INTERNATIONALISM AND NATIONALIST BIASES***

National particularism was officially denied in the area of the Soviet bloc. Instead of it there was promoted communist internationalism centered on Moscow. Nevertheless, as no effective solution of the various national problems was achieved, the local communist régimes in Eastern Europe adopted more pronounced nationalist features. In Bulgaria this trend was founded ideologically on the special contribution of the nation for the cultural development of Slavdom in the past. Zhivkov's daughter, Lyudmila, patronized historical and cultural studies and in the late 1970s promoted a pompous celebration of the 1300 anniversary since the establishment of the Bulgarian state on the Balkans. It had its echo in the Soviet union also, among humanitarian scholars and the various descendents of the ancient Bulgars in Russia and Ukraine. It was

often suggested that the unexpected death of Lyudmila on the eve of the culminating festivities in the summer of 1981 was caused by the Russians.

### ***THE "REVIVALIST" PROCESS***

A sizable Muslim minority has been living in Bulgaria since the Ottoman period. There were several massive waves of emigration to Turkey, mainly immediately after 1878 and in the 1950s. Nevertheless in the 1980s the Muslim community amounted to some 10 per cent of the total population. It consisted of ethnic Turks, Roma (*Gypsies*) and Bulgarians (*Pomaks*) and lived in a rather isolated way from the rest of society. Bulgarian governments had sporadically undertaken campaigns of forced integration, but without great success. In mid 1980s the Communist party tried to achieve a final solution by complete assimilation of the Bulgarian Turks. It was stated that they were descendents of Bulgarians, islamized during the Ottoman yoke, and against this background their incorporation in the modern Bulgarian nation was proclaimed to be an act of revival. Thus, the forcible change of the personal names of the Bulgarian Turks was, according to the communist slang of the epoch, a "revivalist" process. Its culmination was achieved in 1989, when the resistance of the Turks and the repressions of the regime ended in a massive exodus to Turkey of more than 300,000 persons.

### ***BULGARIA SINCE 1989***

#### ***ON THE EVE OF THE CHANGE***

The accession to power of Mikhail Gorbachev in Moscow in 1985 signaled unequivocally upcoming global changes. The Soviet Empire experienced insurmountable military difficulties in Afghanistan and deep economic recession, which called for speedy reform. The Soviet crisis was soon to engulf Bulgaria because of its excessive dependence on both the Soviet market and the Soviet raw supplies. Under these circumstances the communist *nomenklatura* of Bulgaria prepared its survival as a powerful economic class if there would be admitted some more radical change in the socio-political system of the Soviet bloc. In the course of the 1980s Bulgaria received financial loans from the western banks for more about 10 billions dollars, the main part of which was invested in Bulgarian companies abroad under the control of the State security agents.

#### ***THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM***

In 1989 Bulgarian society was boiling in the fervor of Gorbachev's perestroika, openly opposed by Zhivkov, and the excesses of the "Revivalist" process. There appeared several anticommunist organizations claiming for democratic reforms. In November Zhivkov was deposed by the pro-Soviet

part of the communist leadership, conducted by Andrey Lukanov who became prime minister. The archive of the State security, the communist secret police, was systematically expurgated and the departments, watching the political class, were officially abolished. The repressions against the Muslim were stopped and they were allowed to restore their birth-names. Meanwhile many old parties, like the Democratic Party, the Social Democratic Party, the Agrarian union “Nikola Petkov” etc. were restored, and many new parties, like the Greens, were founded. In December they united in a broad coalition, the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), and in January 1990 there began talks for free multi-party elections. The Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), which represented the Muslim community in Bulgaria, also took part in the talks.

In June 1990 the Communist Party, renamed the Socialist Party, won 48% of the vote in supposedly falsified elections, and because of the mixed system obtained 52% of the seats in the Great National Assembly, which was to elaborate a new constitution. Andrey Lukanov was re-elected Prime Minister, but Zhelyu Zhelev, the leader of the UDF, became president. The social unrest, however, compelled Lukanov to leave the office and in January 1991 was formed a mixed government with representatives of the neo-communists and the UDF. It had to assure the adoption of the new constitution and to organize new parliamentary elections.

#### ***THE FIRST DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT (1991-1992)***

In the Great National Assembly the UDF stood firmly for the pro-western orientation of Bulgaria, while the neo-communists defended the close partnership with Moscow. The prolonged work of the Assembly brought about the split of the UDF. The major partners in the coalition, the Social Democratic Party and the Agrarian union “Nikola Petkov”, voted for the new constitution together with the Socialist party, while the hard core of some 39 deputies left the Assembly and urged for new parliamentary elections.

In the elections of October 1991 this hard core achieved majority and with the support of the Muslim MRF formed Bulgaria's first democratic government since 1944. It prompted the restitution of the nationalized property, abolished the remnants of the State security and tried to investigate the financial affairs of the nomenklatura. Andrey Lukanov, who was supposed to be responsible for dissipating the hard currency reserve of Bulgaria, was deprived of its MP immunity and arrested. In the sphere of the foreign relations the government of the UDF recognized the independence of the Republic of Macedonia immediately after its secession from Yugoslavia in January 1992. It abstained from establishing axes in the Balkan policy and opened talks with the European union. The lack of internal discipline and the plots of the former State Security agents incited, however, personal quarrels, which sapped the government.

As a result some deputies deserted from the UDF. Together with the MRF and the neo-communists they voted for the appointment of new government, led by Lyuben Berov, an adviser of the president Zhelev, who blamed the UDF

for delaying privatization. The government was weak and of unclear political responsibility. During Berov's rule the nomenklatura was able, by the means of the foreign trade companies created in the 1980s, to establish its control on both the imports and exports and to practically strain the enterprises. The UN embargo on Yugoslavia impeded the Bulgarian access to the West European markets and, on the other hand, created a milieu of high corruption potential. The small private business was burdened by racketeering bands, organized by former State security officers. Economy declined and unemployment rose, stimulating the migration abroad. Between 1989 and 1999 Bulgaria lost more than 10% of its population on account of the "revivalist" process and deteriorated economic conditions.

Society became gradually tired and disillusioned with the hardships accompanying the changes. The nostalgia for the stability of the communist era allowed the Socialist party to win majority in the parliamentary elections of December 1994. The nomenklatura was prepared then to acquire official ownership of the enterprises, but the Prime Minister Jean Videnov opposed. He tried to restore the authority of the state, but without the support of his party his efforts were in vain. The cold relations with the West were not poised by rapprochement with Yeltsin's Russia as Videnov refused to admit the Russian control over the pipelines of Bulgaria. The grain shortage, which threatened the country with famine, the series of bank failures and the clashes between the various racketeering bands undermined decisively the government in the course of 1996.

#### ***THE GOVERNMENT OF IVAN KOSTOV (1997-2001)***

The victory of the democratic coalition in the presidential elections of October 1996 delivered the coup de grace to the neo-communist government. In December Videnov resigned and the subsequent social unrest compelled the Socialist party to agree on parliamentary elections before the due term. In May 1997 the UDF with its partners obtained absolute majority in the National Assembly and Ivan Kostov, the leader of the UDF since 1995, was elected Prime Minister.

Ivan Kostov could transform the once loose grouping of small parties into disciplined organization. In the beginning of his office he promoted the idea for Reformation majority, which was initially supported also by the MRF and the Euroleft, in order to be assured a larger social support for the long-time delayed reforms. The UDF government proclaimed the membership in the NATO and European union to be its primary foreign policy goals. It gave its support to the NATO operation in Yugoslavia in March-April 1999 and contributed essentially for its strategic success by not allowing the Russians to intervene in Kosovo through the Bulgarian territory. Even if Bulgaria was not invited to join the Atlantic pact in 1999, it behaved always since then like a loyal partner with the hope that it would soon deserve the full membership.

# APPENDIX 2

## BASIC DATA ABOUT BULGARIA

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### **BACKGROUND**

#### **LOCATION**

- Southeast Europe, bordering the Black Sea, neighboring Romania, Serbia, Macedonia, Greece and Turkey
- Strategic location near Turkish straits; controls key land routes from Europe to the Middle East and Asia

#### **AREA**

Total 110 910 sq km

- Land: 110 550 sq km
- Water: 360 sq km

#### **LAND BOUNDARIES**

1808 km (total)

#### **BORDER COUNTRIES**

Turkey 240 km; Greece 494 km; Macedonia 148 km; Yugoslavia 318 km; Romania 608 km

**COASTLINE:** 354 km

#### **MARITIME CLAIMS**

- Contiguous zone: 24 NM
- Exclusive economic zone: 200 NM
- Territorial sea: 12 NM

#### **CLIMATE**

Temperate: cold, damp winters; hot, dry summers

#### **TERRAIN**

Mostly mountains with lowlands in north and southeast

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

Bauxite, copper, lead, zinc, coal, timber, arable land

**LAND USE**

ARABLE LAND: 43 %

- Permanent crops: 2 %
- Permanent pastures: 14 %
- Forests and woodland: 38 %
- Other: 3 %

IRRIGATED LAND: 12 370 sq km

**PEOPLE**

**POPULATION**

7 973 671 (2001)

*AGE STRUCTURE*

0-19 years: 1 739 773

20-59 years: 4 440 757

60 and over: 1 793 143

*POPULATION GROWTH RATE*

-1.14 % (2001 est.)

*BIRTH RATE:* 8.06 births/ 1000 population (2001 est.)

*DEATH RATE:* 14.53 deaths/ 1000 population (2001 est.)

**ETHNIC GROUPS**

Bulgarian: 83,6 %

Turk: 9,5 %

Roma: 4,6 %

Other: 2,3 % (2001)

**RELIGIONS**

Orthodox Christianity: 83,8 %

Muslim: 12,1 %

Other: 4,1 % (2001)

**GOVERNMENT**

**GOVERNMENT TYPE:** Parliamentary republic

**LEGAL SYSTEM:** Civil law and criminal law based on Roman law; accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

**SUFFRAGE:** 18 years of age; universal

**HEAD OF STATE:** President Georgi Parvanov; Vice-President Angel Marin (since January 22, 2002)

**EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

**HEAD OF GOVERNMENT:** Chairman of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister) Simeon Saxe-Coburg Gotha

**CABINET:** Council of Ministers elected by the National Assembly

**LEGISLATIVE BRANCH**

Unicameral National Assembly of 240 members elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms

**JUDICIAL BRANCH**

Supreme Administrative Court; Supreme Court of Cassation; Constitutional Court (12 judges appointed or elected for nine-year terms); Supreme Judicial Council (consists of the chairmen of the two Supreme Courts, the Chief Prosecutor, and 22 other members; responsible for appointing the judges, prosecutors, and investigating magistrates in the judicial system; members of the Supreme Judicial Council elected for five-year terms, 11 elected by the National Assembly and 11 by bodies of the judiciary)

**INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATION**

ACCT, BIS, BSEC, CCC, CE, CEI, CERN, EAPC, EBRD, ECE, EU (applicant), FAO, G-9, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICFTU, ICRM, IFC, IFRCS, IHO (pending member), ILO, IMF, IMO, Inmarsat, Intelsat, Interpol, IOC, IOM, ISO, ITU, NAM (guest), NSG, OAS (observer), OPCW, OSCE, PCA, PFP, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNMEE, UNMIBH, UNMIK, UNMOP, UPU, WCL, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WToO, WtrO, ZC

**ECONOMY**

**GDP**

US\$ 13500 million (2001)

**GDP – REAL GROWTH RATE**

4.7 % (est. 2001)

**GDP PER CAPITA**

US\$ 1,128 (est. 2001)

**INFLATION RATE**

4,8 % (2001)

**UNEMPLOYMENT RATE:** 17,3 % (2001)

**BUDGET**

Revenues: US\$ 2.86 billion (2001)

Expenditures: US\$ 3.243 billion (2001)

**ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION**

36.217 billion kWh

**ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION BY SOURCE**

Fossil: 51.52 %

Nuclear: 40.12 %

Hydro: 8.35 %

Other: 0.01 %

**ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION**

33.182 billion kWh

**ELECTRICITY EXPORTS** 2.2 billion kWh

**ELECTRICITY IMPORTS** 1.7 billion kWh

**EXPORTS**

US\$ 3508.6 billion (2000)

**EXPORTS – COMMODITIES**

Clothing, footwear, iron and steel, machinery and equipment, fuels

**EXPORTS – PARTNERS**

Italy 14%, Turkey 10%, Germany 9%, Greece 8%, Yugoslavia 8%, Belgium 6%, France 5%, US 4% (2000)

**IMPORTS**

US\$ 4643 billion (2000)

**IMPORTS – COMMODITIES**

Fuels, minerals, and raw materials; machinery and equipment; metals and ores; chemicals and plastics; food, textiles

**IMPORTS – PARTNERS**

Russia (24 %), Germany (14 %), Italy (8 %), Greece (5 %), France (5 %), Romania (4 %), and Turkey (3 %)

**FOREIGN DEBT**

US\$ 10.4 billion (2001)

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Telephone lines: 3.255 million (2000)

Mobile Telephones: 1,5 million (2001 est.)

**TRANSPORTATION**

*RAILWAYS*

Total: 4,294 km

Standard gauge: 4,049 km 1.435-m gauge (2,710 km electrified; 917 km double track)

*ROADS*

Total: 36,724 km

- Paved: 33,786 km (including 314 km of speedways)
- Unpaved: 2,938 km (1999)

*PIPELINES*

Petroleum products 525 km; natural gas 1,500 km

*PORTS AND HARBORS*

Black Sea ports: Varna, Bourgas, Nesebur

Danube river ports: Vidin, Lom, Ruse

*AIRPORTS* (with paved runways)

Total: 128

- Over 3,047 m: 1
- 2,438 to 3,047 m: 19
- 1,524 to 2,437 m: 15
- 914 to 1,523 m: 1
- under 914 m: 92 (est. 2000)