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AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ ENSTİTÜSÜ

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ANABİLİM DALI

**BULGARIA'S EU MEMBERSHIP PROCESS AND ITS EFFECTS
ON TURKISH MINORITY**

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

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Danışman: Yrd. Doç. Dr. YONCA ÖZER

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ONAY SAYFASI

Enstitümüz AB Siyaseti ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Anabilim Dalı Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi İlyas DOKUZOĞLU'nun "**BULGARIA'S EU MEMBERSHIP PROCESS AND ITS EFFECTS ON TURKISH MINORITY**" konulu tez çalışması **05 Nisan 2010** tarihinde yapılan tez savunma sınavında aşağıda isimleri yazılı jüri üyeleri tarafından oybirliği/oyçokluğu ile başarılı bulunmuştur.

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ABSTRACT

The EU's approach to Eastern Europe within the perspective of the enlargement policy creates a positive influence on the position of minorities and minority rights, and eases their integration into the larger society. Even though EU did not have coherent minority policy during the Eastern European enlargement and has only taken a crucial step recently by Lisbon Treaty towards this aim, democratic conditionality put by Copenhagen criterias forced candidate states to improve the conditions of minorities. The thesis contends that the above statement holds true in the case of Bulgaria's accession to the EU and the position of the Turkish minority in that country. Considering the hardships and sufferings of the past, democratization and EU membership process in Bulgaria affected Turkish Minority's life positively and eases their integration to Bulgarian social, economic and political life, although some serious problems are still continuing. In this context, the thesis firstly aims to show the situation of Turkish Minority in pre-democratization era. In this period, even though international conjecture prevented Bulgarian governments to initiate more oppressive policies towards Turkish Minority, especially in the last years of communist era violations against their basic rights and freedoms intensified. Eventually democratization, which was directly linked with the country's EU membership process, guaranteed basic rights of the Turkish Minority permanently. However, this time nationalist Bulgarians disturbed by the improvement of the living conditions of Turks and particularly the participation of Turks into Bulgaria's political life. Today Turks of Bulgaria live in better conditions especially comparing to the past. Their political, religious and linguistic (use of mother tongue) rights are guaranteed by internal and international regulations. However, ultra-nationalist attacks, economic and social difficulties are still disturbing them and affected their future plans negatively.

Keywords: Bulgaria, Turkish Minority, EU Enlargement, MRF, Democratic Conditionality.

ÖZET

Avrupa Birliđi'nin genişleme politikasında Dođu Avrupa ülkelerine yaklaşımı söz konusu ülkelerdeki azınlıklar ve azınlık hakları üzerinde olumlu etkilere yol açmış ve onların toplumla entegrasyonunu kolaylaştırmıştır. Her ne kadar Dođu Avrupa'ya genişleme sürecinde AB'nin tutarlı bir azınlık hakları politikası yoktu ise de ve bu konuda ancak son dönemde Lisbon anlaşması ile önemli bir adım atılabilmiş olsa da, Kopenhag Kriterleri ile getirilen demokratik koşulluluk Orta ve Dođu Avrupa Ülkelerini azınlıkların durumularını iyileştirmeye zorlamıştır. Bu tez Bulgaristan'ın Avrupa Birliđi üyelik sürecini ve ülkedeki Türk azınlığın konumu dikkate alarak, yukarıdaki ifadenin doğruluđunu ileri sürmektedir. Geçmişte yaşanan sıkıntılar ve zorluklar dikkate alındığında, her ne kadar bazı ciddi sorunlar halen devam etse de, Bulgaristan'ın AB üyelik süreci ülkedeki Türk Azınlığın yaşamını olumlu yönde etkilemiş ve onların ülkenin sosyal, ekonomik ve siyasal yaşamına entegrasyonunu kolaylaştırmıştır. Bu bağlamda, bu tez ilk olarak demokratikleşme öncesi dönemde Türk Azınlığın durumunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bu dönemde her ne kadar uluslararası konjektür Bulgar hükümetlerinin Türk Azınlığa karşı daha baskıcı politikalar yürütmesini engellese de, özellikle komünist dönemin son yıllarında temel hak ve özgürlük ihlalleri yoğunlaşmıştır. Sonunda, AB üyelik süreci ile doğrudan bağlantılı olarak gerçekleşen demokratikleşme ile Türk Azınlığın temel hakları daimi olarak garanti altına alınmıştır. Ancak bu defa milliyetçi Bulgarlar Türklerin iyileşen yaşam koşullarından ve özellikle siyasal yaşama katılımlarından rahatsız olmuşlardır. Günümüzde Bulgaristan Türkleri geçmiş ile karşılaştırıldığında daha iyi yaşam koşullarına sahiptirler. Ulusal ve uluslararası düzenlemeler ile siyasal, dini ve anadil hakları garanti altına alınmıştır. Bununla birlikte aşırı milliyetçilerin saldırıları, ekonomik ve sosyal zorluklar hala onları rahatsız etmekte ve gelecek planlarını olumsuz etkilemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bulgaristan, Türk Azınlık, AB Genişlemesi, Hak ve Özgürlükler Hareketi, Demokratik Koşulluluk

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iv
ÖZET	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
ABBREVIATIONS	viii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I: EUROPEAN UNION ENLARGEMENT AND MINORITY RIGHTS	6
1.1. EU Enlargement Towards Eastern Europe	6
1.1.1. Development of Relations between the Parties	6
1.1.2. Copenhagen Criteria and Democratic Conditionality.....	7
1.2. Bulgaria's EU Membership Process.....	11
1.2.1. Negotiation Process	13
1.2.2. After the Accession.....	19
1.3. EU and Minority Rights.....	22
1.3.1. Conceptual Analysis of Minority Rights	22
1.3.2. Minority Rights in the EU	25
CHAPTER II: TURKS IN BULGARIA FROM OTTOMAN RULE TO THE FALL OF COMMUNISM	31
2.1. Ottoman Era.....	31
2.2. Post-Ottoman Period.....	33
2.3. Bulgarian Kingdom and Turkish Minority	38
2.4. Stamboliyski Government	40
2.5. New Era in the life of Turkish Minority.....	41
2.6. Coup D'etat in 1934 and Turkish Minority.....	43
2.7. Communist Regime and Tolerance towards Minorities.....	45
2.7.1. Educational Rights.....	47
2.7.2. Religious Rights.....	49
2.7.3. Political and Civil Rights.....	50
2.8. End of Tolerance Period and Assimilation Policies	51
2.8.1. Pomak Assimilation Policies Promoted before Revival Process.....	55
2.8.2. Revival Process and Turkey	57
2.8.3. Factors Leading the Assimilation Policy	62
2.9. Concluding Remarks.....	64
CHAPTER III: EFFECTS OF DEMOCRATIZATION AND EU MEMBERSHIP PROCESS ON TURKISH MINORITY	68

3.1. Developments before 1991	68
3.2. 1991 Constitution and Democratization	73
3.3. EU Membership Process and Turkish Minority	75
3.4. The Role of Movements for Rights and Freedoms in the EU Membership Process	83
3.5. ATAKA and Re-birth of Nationalism in Bulgaria in the EU Membership Process	90
3.6. Problems which could not be solved in the EU Membership Process.....	92
3.7. Future of the Turkish Minority and the Role of Turkey	96
CONCLUSION	103
BIBLIOGRAPHY	106

ABBREVIATIONS

ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
ATAKA	National Union Attack
BAPU	Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union
BCP	Bulgarian Communist Party
BNR	Bulgarian National Radio
BSP	Bulgarian Socialist Party
CEECs	Central and Eastern European Countries
CFR	Charter of the Fundamental Rights
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
CVM	Co-operation and Verification Mechanism
EC	European Community
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
ELDR	Party of European Liberals, Democrats and Reformers
EPP	European People's Party
EU	European Union
FCPNM	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
GERB	Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria
HCNM	High Commissioner on National Minorities
MFAPW	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Public Worship
MRF	Movements for Rights and Freedoms
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NDSV	National Movement for Stability and Progress
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
NMSS	National Movement of Simeon
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PHARE	Poland and Hungary Assistance for the Reconstruction of the Economy
SU	Soviet Union
TEU	Treaty on the European Union
UDF	Union of Democratic Forces
UN	United Nations
US	United States
VMRO	Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization
WST	Writers Syndicate of Turkey
WW I	World War I
WW II	World War II

INTRODUCTION

Balkan Peninsula has painful and tragic memories about the past. Even though in the Ottoman era it enjoyed a degree of peace and stability, some nations such as Bulgarians look to the period negatively by claiming that Ottoman dominancy postponed the establishment of their nation state. However, some historians conversely claim that Ottoman millet system protected at least religious identity of non-Muslims, so that they could also protect their ethnic identities and established their own nation states in the 19th century.

Turkish minority problem in Bulgaria started in the aftermath of the Russian-Ottoman war in 1877-78. Establishment of Bulgarian Principality means that Turks were no longer majority in Bulgarian lands. Massive immigration to Ottoman lands decreased their proportion significantly even in the beginnings of 20th century. Since then, their fate had linked to the international conjecture, Ottoman/Turkey- Bulgarian relations and policies of governments in Bulgaria.

As international conjecture was so unsteady up to the Cold War, Bulgaria's minority policies were too. On the one hand international treaties forced governments to improve minority rights; on the other hand rise of fascism in Europe took back all improvements. Nationalization of communism and Stalinist effect worsened the situation. Finally, at the end of 1990s re-birth of Bulgarian nationalism and assimilation policy towards Turkish minority, changed the lives of hundred thousand of Turks negatively. Collapse of Soviet Bloc and liberalization of Eastern Europe again reversed everything positively this time. Although European Union did not have concrete minority rights policy during the EU membership process of Central and Eastern European States, Copenhagen criteria was put in front of the candidate states as conditionality for full membership. Therefore, Bulgaria and other Eastern European states took important steps towards improving rights and freedoms of their own minorities. Democratization process started in the beginnings of 1990s, affected Turkish minorities' lives in Bulgaria positively. Their political, social and economic

participation has increased gradually. Today their basic rights and liberties, including linguistic and religious rights, were guaranteed by both national and international obligations. Nevertheless, rise of extreme right and continuing prejudices towards minority members are still creating problems. However, today at least it can be said that a possibility of the emergence of new revival period is totally eliminated, and discussions are made in the field of politics now.

On the basis of these observations, this thesis will try to examine political, religious, economic and social conditions of Turkish Minority within the historical perspective and argues whether Europeanization process in Bulgaria has improved the living conditions and the status of Turks or not. To answer that question, the thesis will firstly concentrate on European Enlargement towards Eastern Europe and democratic conditionality which was totally new stage in European Union's enlargement process and obliged candidate states to fulfill detailed administrative, economic and democratic reforms before becoming full member. Chapter one will also examine minority policy of European Union. European Union did not put minority issues in front of candidate states as conditionality before Eastern European enlargements. However, this eased the process of normalization about minority issues in the candidate states and forced them to apply and integrate EU norms into their legislation. EU was also monitoring the process by yearly reports. Bulgaria's EU membership process was one of the most painful and difficult one not because of minority problems but because of administrative and economic problems mainly. Conditions of Turkish Minority improved rapidly after the collapse of communism and never created a problem in the EU accession process. However, corruption, insufficient legal and administrative reforms, organized crime were the biggest obstacles of Bulgaria's Europeanization process. Even after the EU accession, problems about corruption, gang killings, absorption of EU funds, discrimination against Roma minority are still so serious that disturbing EU bodies. Moreover the rise of extreme right and intolerance against minorities will definitely be one of the most problematic issues that Bulgarian governments cope with in the future.

Chapter two will examine Turks of Bulgaria from the beginning to the end of communist era. As it is mentioned Turkish minority problem in Bulgaria emerged after 1877-78 Ottoman- Russian war when Turks became minority for the first time in the Balkans. Although, international treaties obliged Bulgaria to fulfill its obligation against minorities, autonomous Bulgarian principality and then Bulgarian governments usually violated rights and freedoms of Turks, Pomaks and Roma minority up to the communist era. Hundred thousands of Turks had to immigrate to Turkey especially in the Balkan Wars and World War I. Interestingly, especially in Stamboliyski era Turks of Bulgaria enjoyed a degree of autonomy in their religious, linguistic and social issues and it was not seen a polarization or hostility between ethnic Turks and Bulgarians even in the most tragic part of their history.

Chapter two will also examine Turks of Bulgaria from communist rule to the collapse of the regime. Hence, it will also evaluate the revival process and attempts of *Bulgarization* of ethnic minorities in Bulgaria. Restrictions on religious practices, change of Turkish names into Bulgarian ones and prohibition of the use of Turkish language even in private life were the most typical oppressions over the Turkish Minority. However, these policies strengthened Turkish ethnic identity and brought Turks together rather than revival of their “unseen” Bulgarian identity. Eventually, more than 300.000 Turks immigrated to Turkey in 1989 as a result of those oppressions. It is important to evaluate pre-democratization era by detail to understand democratization and its bringing to the Turkish minority. Bulgaria’s main policies about Turkish Minority in pre-democratization were to homogenize the society by forced or voluntary immigration and more radically by assimilation. Turkish minority on the other hand demanded mainly two basic rights from Bulgarian governments; free use of mother tongue and also education in mother tongue, and freedom in religious practices. Those rights were frequently violated by Bulgarian governments and violations were become so serious in Revival process that Bulgaria was warned by international community at the end.

Final chapter before the conclusion will focus on the post-communist era within the perspective of democratization and EU membership process of Bulgaria. Restoration of Turkish names had already completed and oppressions over mother tongue and religious practices had been eliminated. The crucial point for normalization about minority issues was permission given to the Movements for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) and participation of MRF into Bulgaria's political life. Ahmet Dogan, the leader of MRF, has spoken about the process on the 7th National Conference of MRF;

The idea of the MRF was born together with the so-called Regeneration Process as its anti-thesis and underwent various metamorphoses of a "resistance movement without arms" in the years before the fall of the regime. Initially the "project MRF" was only related to the restoration of fundamental human rights and freedoms related to ethnic and religious identity. And the view of the role of the MRF ended with the resolution of this problem. In relation to this, we debated for a long time whether to remain an independent political subject or to blend with one of the liberal parties in the centre-right spectrum. I have asked myself many times how the transition to Democracy and a market economy would have developed if there was no MRF.¹

In the Europeanization process MRF has become a coalition partner and third biggest political party of Bulgaria. MRF has also played a crucial role in the formation of centrist coalitions and never used an ethnic card for this.

Playing the ethnic card has always been one of the main political trump cards during the entire stage of transition. But before we became part of the EU and NATO the ethnic card was concealed and muffled because of the MRF's great contribution to the peaceful transition and the national capitalization of the Bulgarian ethnic model before NATO and the EU.²

Therefore, the last chapter will point out the crucial role of MRF in democratization of Bulgaria, and how participation of Turks into Bulgarian politics come true which was unthinkable before the democratization. The last chapter will also evaluate effects of EU membership process on Turkish Minority and steps of Bulgarian governments to ensure minority rights both by national and international assurances.

¹ Ahmet Dogan, Speech on the 7th National Congress of MRF, December 2009. 14 December 2009
<http://www.dps.bg/cgi-bin/e-cms/vis+vis.pl?s=001&p=0409&n=000026&g=> 25.12.2009

² *Ibid*

Increasing efficiency of MRF in Bulgaria's politics and improvements in the political, economic and social rights of Turkish Minority disturbed radical nationalists and caused an emergence of ultra nationalist problem which is still continuing. Hence, final chapter will examine on the one hand successful integration of Turkish Minority into Bulgaria's political, economic and social life and also on the other hand continuing problems about employment, education and ultra nationalism mainly.

Finally, the last chapter will also examine future of the Turkish Minority in Bulgaria and the role of Turkey about minority issues in Bulgaria. Turkey, as a mother state of Turks of Bulgaria, has always played an important role about the rights and freedoms of the Turkish Minority. Because economic interdependence between Turkey and Bulgaria is increasing day by day, Bulgaria is becoming more vulnerable about the results of violating the rights of Turkish Minority.

CHAPTER I: EUROPEAN UNION ENLARGEMENT AND MINORITY RIGHTS

1.1. EU Enlargement Towards Eastern Europe

End of the Cold War brought new challenges in front of the European Community (EC). Enlargement towards Eastern Europe was one of the most problematic one. It was essential for guaranteeing European security because of emerging ethnic problems in the region. If those states were left alone, ethnic conflicts would threaten stability and security of the EC. Opening new markets in Eastern Europe was also attractive for EC. However, Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) were economically underdeveloped, politically unstable and unfamiliar with the EC's policies and procedures which create important problem for enlargement process. EC had two options: isolate itself to Western Europe or open its doors to new members and become a global actor and peace promoter. Fortunately, EC leaders chose the latter one. Accession of Austria and Scandinavian countries was less problematic which was completed in 1995. Naturally, accession of CEECs was relatively lengthy and more problematic process.

1.1.1. Development of Relations between the Parties

First concrete contact between EC and CEECs was started in 1989 by special assistance program of Commission towards Poland and Hungary, which was known as *Poland and Hungary Assistance for the Reconstruction of the Economy* (PHARE). The aim was, providing urgent humanitarian assistance, developing social market economies and establishing democratic institutions in those two states.³ That program was later extended to other CEECs. PHARE program gave financial and technical assistance to CEECs for transforming their protectionist and state-planned economies and undemocratic institutions, and also opened a door for further association agreements

³ Desmond Dinan, Europe Recast: A History of European Union. (Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) p. 272.

which helped them to build closer relations with EC.⁴ European Investment Bank provided billions of loans and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development was established to help development of private sector in those states. EU signed special association agreements, which are known as European agreements, with Hungary and Poland in 1991, with Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Romania and Slovakia in 1993 and with three Baltic States in 1995. The agreements were designed to integrate eastern European economies with those of the EU as quickly as possible through the staged removal of barriers to trade in industrial and agricultural goods, and barriers to the movement of workers.⁵ These were the first steps for transforming economic, administrative and political structures of CEECs and preparing them for EU accession.

1.1.2. Copenhagen Criteria and Democratic Conditionality

The Copenhagen summit of the European Council in 1993 set down three conditions for candidate states which they had to meet before being allowed to join:

- political: stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;
- economic: existence of a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union;
- acceptance of the Community *acquis*: ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.⁶

Copenhagen Criteria are not applied to the membership process of Austria and Scandinavian states, and specifically prepared for CEECs and for other candidates like Turkey, Malta and Cyprus. That was totally new stage in the EU's enlargement history, and put an economic and democratic conditionality for candidate states to become a full member. Without fulfilling their obligations and meeting those criteria it would not possible for CEECs to become a full member of EU. Major reason of putting new conditionality in front of candidate states should be enormous administrative, economic and environmental problems and undemocratic conditions in those states. Considering

⁴ *Ibid.* Pp.272–273.

⁵ John McCormick, *Understanding the EU* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2002) p.214.

⁶ Europa Glossary, *Accession criteria (Copenhagen criteria)*
http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/accession_criteria_copenhagen_en.htm 21.02.2009

those conditions, it could be said that full membership process of CEECs would be lengthy and painful. Copenhagen Criteria discouraged candidate states because they were far from satisfying those conditions in that time. Nearly all candidate states had serious problems about human rights, minority rights and general democratic principles. Although EU launched a structured dialogue with candidate states and begun a process of integrating those states into single market after Copenhagen Summit, it was seen that accession of CEECs would be lengthy process.

Copenhagen Criteria discouraged CEECs about full membership. Yet at the same time, they provided a roadmap and a target in order to be accepted as members of the EU. CEECs officially applied for full membership in the period of 1994-96. EU on the other hand published *Agenda 2000* in July 1997 for ensuring stronger and wider union. This document reinforced the importance of Copenhagen criteria and the role of conditionality for membership by stating that all new members must take on the obligations of membership as specified by the *acquis*.⁷ Even though it was seen that *Agenda 2000* reinforced the Copenhagen criteria, situation was not same because especially some candidates like Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovenia improved significantly in the last four years. EU designed a pre-accession strategy to assist these countries in overcoming problems identified in negotiations, and transition periods for troubled areas in the accession process.⁸ More simply conditionality criteria were applied to negotiation stage and EU decided to evaluate every state differently from the others because every state had its own, specific problems. The EU also initiated several programs of economic assistance in order to help applicant countries for membership; PHARE coordinates pre-accession aid generally, SAPARD targets agricultural sector, ISPA focuses aid on environmental and transport infrastructure.⁹

Agenda 2000 is a strategy for strengthening growth, competitiveness and employment, for modernizing key policies and for extending the Union's borders through enlargement negotiations. In 1997 Luxembourg European Council it was

⁷ John K. Glenn, "EU Enlargement" in Michelle Cini (Ed.) *EU Politics*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) p.218.

⁸ *Ibid* p.218.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 221.

decided that accession negotiations with first five states Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovenia and Estonia as well as Cyprus could be opened. Commission start with these countries for enlargement because these are judged closest to fulfilling criteria set by the European Council at its summit in Copenhagen in June 1993. In 1999 Helsinki Summit it was decided to open negotiations with second wave countries, Bulgaria, Romania, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia as well as Malta. As Brown claims, the Bulgarian and Romanian cases the applicants are far from complying with the stringent Copenhagen criteria. Their inclusion on the list may well be more a result of their supportive attitudes toward NATO during the Kosovo crisis rather than the state of their respective economies.¹⁰ These are regional economic or political institutions of EU and NATO, which can very successfully anchor domestic reforms.

Then as Commission decided to evaluate every state separately, concepts of first wave and second wave states became meaningless. In December 1998, Commission presented its “Regular reports” for the first time which were based on an intensive screening of each applicant country in the light of the famous Copenhagen criteria for accession and the conditions related to the integration and application of the *acquis*.¹¹ Reports gave special importance to human rights violations, protection of minorities and democratic deficits which forced candidate states to take step towards their deficiencies. However regular monitoring reports were criticized for ad hocism, absence of coherence and continuity, and also lack of evidences about successes on minority issues in candidate states.¹² Reports concentrate on different issues in every candidate according to the most serious problems of that state. For instance in some states, in Baltic states particularly, priority was given to minority problem, in other ones, Bulgaria and Slovakia, to old- modeled nuclear plants. As a result, in the beginnings of 2000s nearly all CEECs candidates, except Bulgaria and Romania, fulfilled the first two Copenhagen criteria successfully. However, incorporation of 31

¹⁰ Martin D. Brown, “Return to Helsinki”, *Central Europe Review* Vol.1 No.25 December 1999, <http://www.ce-review.org/99/25/brown25.html>, 17.02.2009.

¹¹ Marc Maresceau, “The EU pre-Accession Strategies, A Political and Legal Analysis” in Muzaffer Dartan and Çiğdem Nas (Eds.) *The European Union Enlargement Process and Turkey*. (Istanbul: Marmara University European Community Institute Publication, 2002) pp. 138-139.

¹² James Hughes & Gwendolyn Sasse. “Monitoring the Monitors: EU Enlargement Conditionality and Minority Protection in the CEECs”, *Journal of Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, 1/2003, p.16 http://www.ecmi.de/jemie/download/Focus1-2003_Hughes_Sasse.pdf, 21.02.2009

acquis chapter became a new challenge and took some time. Eventually CEECs, except Romania and Bulgaria who had continuing problems for adapting acquis, became a full member of EU in January 2004.

It can be said that nearly all CEECs including, Romania and Bulgaria, fulfilled first Copenhagen criteria successfully and democratic conditionality did not create a problem for their EU accession process. Of course every candidate had problems about political criteria in the beginning of process. For instance in Baltic States discrimination against Russian minority and in Romania against Roma minority was so serious that could create an obstacle for their full membership. Human right violations were frequent in nearly all candidate state. Therefore, democratic conditionality was logical strategy to force candidate states to heal their democratic deficiencies. In Romania's 2002 Report, it is told that the legislation on the use of minority languages in public administration is being "successfully applied despite the reticence of some prefectures and local authorities."¹³

The advantage of conditionality is understood as one of the primary means of 'democracy promotion' and the creation of 'foreign made democracy' by the EU in the CEECs.¹⁴ On the other hand, democratic conditionality does not guarantee full democracy. Still today those states have problems like continuing discrimination against Roma minority, excessive use of force by police, and even older members of EU have problems about immigrants and racist movements. Hughes and Sasse claims that EU conditionality on respect for and protection of minorities is not clearly temporally correlated with the emergence of new political strategies and laws on minority protection in the CEECs.¹⁵ Nevertheless, they accepted that EU successfully implanted the objective of minority protection as an integral part of the political rhetoric of EU speak in the CEECs.¹⁶ Grabbe on the other hand, stated that by the Copenhagen conditions applicants had to meet higher standards than old Member States which had

¹³European Commission, Regular Report on Romania's Progress towards Accession, 2002. p. 35.
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2002/ro_en.pdf 08.01.2008

¹⁴Karen Smith, "Western Actors and the Promotion of Democracy" in Jan Zielonka and Alex Pravda (Eds.), *Democratic Consolidation in Eastern Europe, Volume 2, International and Transnational Factors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)p. 31

¹⁵ Hughes and Sasse, p.30

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

not been judged on these conditions and that raises a question of double standard.¹⁷ Finally, it can be said that democratic conditionality played an important role for democratization of CEECs and all of them made an effort to become more familiar with western democracies. As Smith states:

Its instruments of engagement are less and less condition-free: agreements, aid, loans, and dialogue are now regularly promised, provided partner countries fulfill certain conditions. This can be extraordinarily effective: the promise of EU membership, held out to European countries if they meet certain political and economic conditions, is without doubt the most successful foreign policy instrument the EU has. For example, Romania and Hungary, and Slovakia and Hungary were all (eventually) prodded into concluding good-neighborly agreements, covering borders and the treatment of minorities, with each other. The electorate of Slovakia, left out of the initial round of membership negotiations because it did not meet the political conditions, punished the Meciar government in elections in 1998 in favor of a government that promised to make EU accession a priority.¹⁸

1.2. Bulgaria's EU Membership Process.

Bulgaria, like other ex-communist states found itself in painful, unclear and chaotic conditions after the collapse of communism. Collapse of planned economy and transformation into liberal one was the most painful process. Excessive rise of inflation and unemployment rates, increase in foreign debt and drop of production because of political instabilities were the main problems. Economic crisis became so serious that people had to abandon their homeland and immigrate to western countries, and also some of them had to move to countryside from escaping starvation. Political transformation was also painful. According to Bozoki, in South Eastern Europe the parliamentary tradition was weak; the agrarian population constituted three- fourths or four-fifths of the population; the working class movement was not organized on social democratic bases but on the basis of communist ideology; and also democratic

¹⁷ Heather Grabbe, "A Partnership for Accession? The Implications of EU Conditionality for the Central and Eastern European Applicants" *Robert Schuman Centre Working Paper 12/99*, San Domenico di Fiesole: European University Institute, 1999. p.7 , http://www.cer.org.uk/pdf/grabbe_conditionality_99.pdf 27.02.2009

¹⁸ Karen E. Smith, "Engagement and Conditionality: Incompatible or Mutually Reinforcing" in Richard Youngs (Ed.), *Global Europe: New Terms of Engagement*. (London: Foreign Policy Center, 2005) pp.25-26.

opposition was absent.¹⁹ This features complicated the transformation period from bureaucratic- authoritarian communism to democratic liberalism in South Eastern European States. As a result former communist parties won the first multi-party elections in most of those states. In Bulgaria, Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), as a strong euro-skeptic in its first years, had continued its popularity up to the middle of the 1990s. In addition to economic and political turmoil, country also faced with social and moral crises. Rise of criminal events and aggressiveness, and also increasing confrontation between ethnic groups frightened ordinary people. Two main political parties Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) and BSP were in useless ideological discussions rather than finding solutions for country's serious problems.²⁰ Overall everything looks unpleasant in the beginnings of 1990s. However, things changed gradually as years passed.

First attempts towards more democratic Bulgaria were taken in 1991 Constitution. New Constitution made a choice in favor of a European type of parliamentary system with pluralist party system and with a directly elected president, proportional representation started to be used as the country's electoral system, and liberal party legislation added to the Bulgarian political system.²¹ Meanwhile, Bulgaria's relations with EU improved gradually. The European Association Agreement, which provides technical and financial assistance and also promotes the expansion of trade and economic relations between the parties, was signed between the parties in March 1993 and entered into force in February 1995. Bulgaria officially applied to EU membership in December 1995. Outbreak of ethnic war in Yugoslavia frightened Bulgarian officials and force them to initiate more moderate and neutral policies in the following years. Bulgarian Balkan policy was subject to certain unwritten rules in those years: According to Nikova;

¹⁹ Andras Bozoki, "Hungary and New Central Europe in the Context of European Integration." in Muzaffer Dartan and Çiğdem Nas (Eds.) The European Union Enlargement Process and Turkey. (Istanbul: Marmara University European Community Institute Publication, 2002) p.185.

²⁰ Zhelyu Vladimirov, *The Value Crises and the Weakness of Democratic Institutions in the Post totalitarian Societies in Eastern Europe (The Bulgarian Case)* NATO Fellowships Programme 1995-1997, p. 14

²¹ Dobrin Kanev, "The Bulgarian Political System in the Process of Europeanization: The Case of Parties and Party Systems" in Haluk Kabaalioglu, Muzaffer Dartan, M. Sait Akman and Çiğdem Nas (Eds.) Europeanization of South-Eastern Europe. (Istanbul: Marmara University European Community Institution Publication, 2005) No: 12, p. 55.

- Joining to European structures was a high priority.
- Bulgaria must exercise moderation and caution vis a vis the events in the Balkans.
- Bulgaria must not interfere in the Yugoslav war.
- Bulgaria must try to keep the same level of relations with both Greece and Turkey.
- Bulgaria must abstain from joining axes or alliances proposed from various directions because of the country's central geopolitical location- New Byzantium, Pan-Slavic or Eastern-Orthodox confrontations.²²

Those moderate and neutral policies in external relations, was also adapted into internal policies. Political parties, crucial for democracy, approached to their western counterparts. For instance, UDF has oriented its policies to the ideology and political values of Christian Democrats and became a member of European Peoples Party (EPP), National Movement of Simeon (NMSS) and Movements of Rights and Freedoms (MRF) on the other hand joined to the Party of European Liberals, Democrats and Reformers (ELDR).²³ More importantly BSP transformed its static, autocratic communist ideology to new social democratic values by the helps of Socialist International and western social democratic parties.²⁴ As a result, all major political parties in Bulgaria adapted their policies to the target of EU accession. Before those positive developments, in 1999 Helsinki Summit, EU decided to open negotiations with second wave countries, including Bulgaria.

1.2.1. Negotiation Process

Although negotiations were opened in Helsinki Summit, it was immediately understood that Romania and Bulgaria were not in the same level with other candidates. Bulgaria had little problem about political Copenhagen criteria. However, Bulgarian

²² Ekaterina Nikova, "Changing Bulgaria in the Changing Balkans" in Günay Göksu Özdoğan and Kemali Saybaşı (Eds.) *Balkans: A Mirror of the New International Order*. (İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1995) p. 192.

²³ Kanev, p.62

²⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 62-65

economy was still suffering under the negative effects of 1997 crisis. Inflation and unemployment rates were still high, wages were relatively low comparing to the other candidates of CEECs and problems about privatization was continuing.²⁵ Moreover corruption was common in all administrative levels; there were problems about the independence of law; and controlling and proper using of EU funds was also insufficient.²⁶ Normally, Bulgaria had difficulties to incorporate EU *acquis*. More radical institutional and administrative reform was needed to accomplish that lengthy and detailed process. As major political parties put EU accession as a main target, democratization and reform process accelerated in the 2000s. A degree of economic stability was achieved. Important institutional and administrative reforms were accomplished by the assistance of the Commission. Fight with corruption and organized crime was intensified. However, all those developments were not enough to finish EU accession in 2004 enlargements. Commission's Regular Report of 2004 counted main problems about Bulgaria's accession:

Improvements need to be made in particular in the reform of public administration, the functioning of judicial system and fight against corruption. They (Bulgaria and Romania) need to continue their efforts to develop sufficient administrative and judicial capacity to implement and enforce the *acquis*. Government need to continue its efforts to combat in particular anti-Roma prejudice. Bulgaria must respect its commitments on nuclear safety, notably as regards closure commitments for certain units of the Kozloduy nuclear power plant.²⁷

Emerson and Noutcheva evaluated the postponement as²⁸ “the Bulgarian case may be summarized as one where EU political conditionality was very real, resulting in a delayed Bulgarian accession timetable, where the formal institutions of democratic

²⁵ European Commission, *Regular Report from the Commission on Bulgaria's progress towards accession, 1998*. pp.11-18. http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/1998/bulgaria_en.pdf 20.04.2008

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the Council and to the European Parliament, *Strategy Paper of the European Commission on progress in the enlargement process*. Brussels. 6.10.2004. COM (2004) 657 Final pp. 2-3 and 9-13. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2004/com2004_0657en01.pdf 20.04.2008

²⁸ Michael Emerson and Gergana Noutcheva, “Europeanization as a Gravity Model of Democratization” *Herald of Europe*, 2 2005. p.14. <http://www.heraldofeurope.co.uk/Issues/2/Politics%20-%20Economics/Europeanisation/Europeanisation.pdf> 20.12.2009

governance were not in question, but where the quality of governance and the rule of law was judged unsatisfactory by the EU until a set of remedial measures were taken.”

Postponement of the EU accession until 2007 disappointed Bulgarian citizens. Despite the fact that support of ordinary Bulgarians to the EU membership was high during the process (varies between 75% and 85% in December 2001)²⁹ they were also doubtful about the results. Main critics towards the EU membership process in Bulgaria are about elite-policy making orientation of the EU which was evaluated by ordinary Bulgarians as; accession priorities and macroeconomic stability for the elites and, the rising insecurity and decline in economic well-being for the majority of citizens.³⁰ Postponement also empowered Euro-skeptics who claim that, EU treat unjust to Bulgaria and EU accession would be postponed in 2007 again. As a result first enthusiasm and optimism of ordinary Bulgarians replaced with the feeling of disappointment especially after 2004 enlargements. (Support for EU membership fall to 65% in spring 2004).³¹ Commission’s monitoring reports in the following years were evaluated by details in Bulgarian public opinion. Every criticism and warning increased the pessimism in Bulgarian society. Speculations and ambiguity about accession date strengthened radical, anti-EU groups. Famous Bulgarian Philosopher Angel Grancharov defines that process as:

We are (Bulgarians) a kind of people that are liable to panicking, complaining and easily giving up. We easily loose our enthusiasm. If we do not think more realistic, we can quickly disappoint. We were isolated from West up to 1990s; we should be patient and then learn to think westernly. We should throw away our fears and mistrustfulness.³²

²⁹Eurobarometer, *Public Opinion in the Countries Applying for European Union Membership, Results Summary*. December 2001. pp. 5–6. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/cceb/2001/aceb20011_summary.pdf 21.04.2008

³⁰Emilian Kavalski, “Being the Model Balkan Student? Exporting the EU to Bulgaria.” in Ozan Erözden (ed.) *Proceedings of the International Conference on the EU Enlargement towards South-East Europe*, December 15th, 2005, Istanbul. Joint Conference Series, No.4, Foundation for Middle East and Balkan Studies & Y.T.U. Department of Political Science and International Relations. p.47.

³¹Eurobarometer, *Public Opinion in the Acceding and Candidate Countries, First Results*, Spring 2004. p.7. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/cceb/2004/cceb_2004.1_first_anx.pdf 21.04.2008

³²Angel Grancharov, “Throw away the fears!” released in Bulgarian National Radio’s (BNR) website on January 04, 2007. http://www.bnr.bg/RadioBulgaria/Emission_English/Theme_BulgariaES/Material/trowaway.htm 24.04.2008

That small paragraph clearly explains the changing and generally pessimistic feelings of Bulgarians during the process. Organized crime groups and endless murders in big cities also affected morale of people negatively. The most wealthy persons of Bulgaria, firstly Īlia Pavlov then Emil Kuiley, were killed in the daylight in Sofia. People were feeling themselves insecure. Corruption in every level of local and central administration also promoted pessimism.

In the meantime, process was continuing rapidly. The negotiations acquired central place in the internal discourse on Bulgaria's transition. Each and every major political party devoted the bulk of its program to the EU integration matters. Alternating governments pledged allegiance to the negotiation requirements and vowed intentions to accelerate and speed up the process of coming to terms with the European partners.³³ For example, in negotiating the *social policy* dimension, Bulgaria attempted to achieve a breakthrough in labor conditions, and, in particular, in conditions applicable to the contract or employment relationship, on the safeguarding of employees' rights in the event of transfer of undertakings and on collective redundancies. The principle of equal treatment of women and men had been transposed by the adoption of the Law on Protection against Discrimination and by the amendments of the Labor Code.³⁴

The commitments Bulgaria made in the negotiations with the European Union were generally being met, notwithstanding the delays in certain specific areas. As a result, EU Accession Treaty was signed on April 25, 2005 and accession date was officially declared as 1 January, 2007. However, this time safeguard clauses, which allow postponement of Bulgaria's accession to 2008, disturbed Bulgarians. Discussions about closure of 3rd and 4th units of Kozloduy nuclear power plant intensified as accession date approached. Bulgaria has resisted closing the units by claiming that all Balkan regions would face with energy crisis if those units were closed.³⁵ However, EU has not given concession about unsafe nuclear energy and Bulgaria has had to close

³³Kamen Velichkov, "Bulgaria's EU Accession Negotiations: Achievements And Challenges" p.3. <http://revistas.ucm.es/cee/15766500/articulos/PAPE0404120004A.PDF> 24.04.2008

³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 11.

³⁵ "Bulgaria in EU- What to expect and what the realities are" an exclusive interview with Foreign Minister Ivaylo Kalfin by BNR in 16.11.2006. http://www.bnr.bg/RadioBulgaria/Emission_English/Theme_Bulgaria_Europa/Material/KalfinEU.htm 27.04.2008

both units after a lengthy negotiation process. Eventually, accession date has come and it has been decided to solve remaining problems inside the EU.

Indeed, at the beginning of the process Romania was seen more problematic;³⁶ Bigger one with 20 million population, very poor, was until recently ruled by a venal and incompetent clique of ex-communists and their hangers on. However, at the end of the process criticism against Bulgaria was sharper because of;³⁷ frequent and unpunished gangland killings; too weak and scared authorities to tackle the perpetrators, need to build new roads and improve public services

The last monitoring report, before accession, about Bulgaria and Romania has been prepared in September 2006. In the report it has been stated that Commission will take remedial measures to ensure the functioning of EU policies. Specific safeguards and measures for Bulgaria and Romania were prepared for that aim which also shows deficiencies of the countries:

a-) *Judiciary and fight against corruption*: further progress is still necessary in the area of judicial reform and the fight against organized crime and corruption. The Commission will establish a mechanism to cooperate and verify progress in these areas after accession. Should either country fail to address benchmarks adequately, the Commission will apply the safeguard measures of the Accession Treaty.

b-) *Agricultural funds*: In Bulgaria and Romania there is a real risk that IACS [Integrated Administrative Control System for Agriculture] will not functioning properly by the time of accession. In both countries the timetable for completing such a properly functioning IACS is a very tight due to the late start of preparations. As a result, the necessary quality of the work might not be attained.

c-) *Food safety*: Bulgaria and Romania are currently prohibited to export live pigs, pig meat and certain pig meat products to the EU due to the existence of classical swine fever in both countries.

d-) *Aviation safety*: In the view of serious deficiencies identified by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and the Joint Aviation Authorities (JAA) in the area of aviation safety, JAA refused Bulgaria's mutual recognition

³⁶ "A Dim Green Light", *The Economist*, May 20th- 26th, 2006. Volume: 379, No.8478, pp. 34

³⁷ *Ibid.*

within the JAA system in relevant safety areas, namely airworthiness, maintenance, operations and flight crew licensing.³⁸

In the report there were also praises about intensified enforcement of anti-money laundering provisions, strengthened financial control over structural and cohesion funds, the establishment of a functioning integrated administration and control system in agriculture, and decisive action in the area of nuclear energy, early closure and subsequent decommissioning of the reactors of the Kozloduy nuclear plant.³⁹ EU has also added that monitoring mechanism of Commission in deficiency areas will be continuing after the accession.

Overall, after the collapse of communism it was clear that Bulgaria put EU membership process as a new target for the country and all governments designed their policies to achieve that goal. Bulgaria's application for Union membership, backed by a virtually unanimous endorsement from the National Assembly, was lodged on 14 December 1995. The Government Memorandum accompanying the application states:

Bulgaria's membership of the European Union constitutes a strategic goal and is a matter of national interest. It will consolidate the results of the democratic reforms which have been carried out since the beginning of the 1990s and will represent a political acknowledgement of their success. Membership of the EU will be an important factor for the further economic development of the country. The stabilisation of the democratic process and the establishment of a market economy in Bulgaria correspond to the interests of the countries in the neighbouring region and of all Europe. They will have a positive impact on the security and stability of the continent. Bulgaria's aspiration for full membership of the EU reflects the will and readiness to take part in the realization of the vision of a united Europe living in peace, prosperity and social justice.⁴⁰

Therefore, democratization of the country was definitely related with EU membership process. Democratic conditionality put by Copenhagen criteria eased the

³⁸ Communication from the Commission, *Monitoring report on the state of preparedness for EU membership of Bulgaria and Romania*. Brussels, 26.9.2006. COM (2006) 549 final. Pp. 9–12.
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2006/sept/report_bg_ro_2006_en.pdf 27.04.2008

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ European Commission, *Commission Opinion on Bulgaria's Application for Membership of the European Union*, DOC/97/11, Brussels, 1997. p. 8 http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/dwn/opinions/bulgaria/bu-op_en.pdf 12.10.2009

process of integration of minorities into Bulgaria's political, social and economic life. It can be said that if there were not an EU membership target after collapse of the communist regime, democratization of the country would be much more difficult.

1.2.2. After the accession

Bulgarians' pessimism has not changed after the EU membership. Sociologist Zhivko Georgiev mentions about higher level of social pessimism among the Bulgarians even today.⁴¹ Georgy Gotev, journalist from Bulgarian National Radio (BNR), reports Bulgarians' unwillingness to share the joy of EU's 50th anniversary celebrations:

Bulgarian people are skeptic, pessimist and sad people who rarely smiles. Bulgarian authorities remain passive and no one organized a single event. Bad effects of membership such as restrictions on the flights of Bulgarian planes, prohibition for exporting of pork meat, excise duty imposed on home made *Rakia* affected ordinary people's view about EU membership negatively.⁴²

Reminding that support to the EU membership was between 75-85% at the beginning of the process, 55% of the Bulgarians answered positively to the Euro barometer question of 'Do you think that Bulgaria's EU membership is/would be good thing?' in Spring 2007.⁴³ Maria Dimitrova, another journalist from BNR, on the other hand is more optimists, and sees EU membership a win and win game. She reports that EU now has new, ancient, Orthodox- Slavic culture; new alphabet (Cyril); a border to Black Sea; a partner who have 5-6% steady economic growth and also a great tourism potential.⁴⁴

Indeed, today Bulgaria has many characteristics that give to Bulgarian citizens both optimism and pessimism about the future: Bulgaria is an EU member now and day by day democracy and liberalism in the country is strengthened. Whereas, short term

⁴¹ "Have the Bulgarians become more European?" published in BNR's website on May 21, 2008.
http://www.bnr.bg/RadioBulgaria/Emission_English/Theme_Bulgaria_Europa/Material/BansE.htm 22.08.2008

⁴² Georgy Gotev, "Europeans under cover" published in BNR's website on March 28, 2007.
http://www.bnr.bg/RadioBulgaria/Emission_English/Theme_BulgariaES/Material/eundercover.htm 27.08.2008

⁴³ Eurobarometer 67, *Public Opinion in the European Union, First Results*. June 2007 p.16.
http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb67/eb_67_first_en.pdf 30.04.2008

⁴⁴ Maria Dimitrova, "Bulgaria and EU Diversity" published in BNR's website on March 26, 2007.
http://www.bnr.bg/RadioBulgaria/Emission_English/Theme_BulgariaES/Material/BaEUdivers.htm 30.08.2008

side effects of EU accession such as price increases, closure of some milk and dairy enterprises, and continuing privatization of state enterprises are increasing the pessimism of ordinary Bulgarians. Moreover, populist and chauvinist expressions of politicians are threatening ethnic and religious peace of the country. Those expressions are encouraging ultra- nationalists, and Turks, Roma, Pomaks, Jews, Macedonians and Negroes are becoming the targets of those groups. For instance fans of CSKA Sofia, one of the most popular football clubs in the country, have protested the transfers of Negro players to the club by racist posters in the opening ceremony of 2007/ 2008 season.⁴⁵ On the other hand, corruption and organized crime are still serious problems that affect prestige of country negatively both outside and inside. In last corruption scandal, Minister of Justice Georgi Petkanov and Minister of Energy Rumen Ovcharov resigned from the former three-party coalition government.⁴⁶ Bulgarian mafia and organized crime groups are still stronger to threat stability of the country and play crucial role in drug, person, and gun trafficking from the borders. First progress report of Commission after the accession criticized Bulgaria strictly:

Bulgaria's fight against corruption and organized crime is not yielding sufficient results. Criminals often go unpunished, and their financial assets are rarely frozen. The financing of political parties is also largely unregulated. Irregularities in financial management have prompted the commission to suspend some EU funding over the last six months.⁴⁷

When Bulgaria joined the European Union in January 2007, a Co-operation and Verification Mechanism (CVM) was set up to help the new Member State tackle the recognized need for far reaching judicial reform and the fight against corruption and organized crime.⁴⁸ Reform of the judiciary and the fight against corruption and organized crime has been closely monitored under the Cooperation and Verification

⁴⁵ "Racistka ataka na Armiaata" (Racist attack in Armia Stadium), *24 Chasa* (Daily Newspaper in Bulgaria), 03.08.2007. p. 35.

⁴⁶ "Bulgaristan hükümetinde yeni istifa" released in 04.06.2007 in <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/news/409827.asp> 05.05.2008.

⁴⁷ European Commission " Bulgaria and Romania- more work need on corruption" 24.07.2008 http://ec.europa.eu/news/external_relations/080724_1_en.htm 20.03.2009.

⁴⁸ European Commission, Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on progress in Bulgaria under the Co-operation and Verification Mechanism {SEC(2009) 1074} <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52009DC0402:EN:NOT> 15.10.2009

Mechanism. The latest progress report of July 2009 praises Bulgaria's actions to improve its track record in the prosecution of serious crime:

A reorganization of the prosecution and a change in methodology has resulted in a growing number of indictments, in particular regarding fraud with EU funds and in some first convictions on organized crime. In addition, Bulgaria analyzed delays in serious criminal cases and issued recommendations to speed up court procedures which have partly been implemented and led to the swift conclusion of some cases. The inspection of the Supreme Judicial Council has established an encouraging track record and contributed, together with the Supreme Cassation Court, to improvements in the equal application of the law.⁴⁹

However, report also criticized Bulgaria for outdated Criminal Code, excessive formalism in judicial practice, slow and inequitable justice in the public perception, continuing killings linked with organized crime and emphasized that the fight against corruption and organized crime needs stronger political support.⁵⁰ On the other hand Jean Marie Seiler, the Director of the Main Directorate "Regional Policy" at the European Commission, declared recently that Bulgaria ranks last from all EU Member States in absorbing the EU program funds and lacks necessary experience about them.⁵¹ On the other hand by the help of Cohesion Policy Funds of the Community it is expected to increase GDP by 15 % by 2020, getting more people into work and increased investment in research and development.⁵² For the 2007-13 period Bulgaria has been allocated almost 6.9 billion € mainly for transport infrastructure; research and innovation; environmental, risk prevention and energy projects.⁵³ However, full membership does not mean that remaining problems can be solved quickly. Instead Bulgaria still has serious problems especially about corruption, organized crime, integration of Roma minority, absorption of EU funds, ultra-nationalism and economic development.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*

⁵⁰ *Ibid*

⁵¹ "EC: Bulgaria Is Last in EU Funds Absorption" January 15, 2010.

http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=111998 18.01.2010

⁵² "European Cohesion Policy in Bulgaria"

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/country2009/bg_en.pdf 18.01.2010

⁵³ *Ibid*,

In 2008 terrorism report of US State Department, it is not mentioned about any terror threat for Bulgaria or terrorist existence in Bulgarian territories.⁵⁴ Europol report about terrorism also does not mention any terror threat for Bulgaria or terrorist existence in Bulgaria.⁵⁵ Bulgaria, as a multicultural society, where minorities consist more than 15% of the population may become a positive example for other Balkan states. Conditions are suitable for such development. Generally, main ethnic and religious minorities Turks, Roma, Pomak, Macedonians, Armenians, Jews, and Catholics are living peacefully in Bulgaria. Learning how to ‘live together by accepting the differences of others’ should be the main aim of civil society, state officials and also minority members. However, nowadays the most problematic issue in minority rights is about integration of Roma minority. Discrimination against them is continuing in all levels of daily life. Prejudices towards Roma minority are still high. Excessive use of force from police towards Roma members is common, and living standards of Roma members are still obviously awful.⁵⁶

1.3. EU and Minority Rights.

1.3.1. Conceptual Analysis of Minority Rights

In international law there is not a compromise about the definition of minority concept. Therefore, it is not possible to answer the question of “who is minority” precisely. Minority Rights Group International defines minorities as; disadvantaged ethnic, national, religious, linguistic or cultural groups who are smaller in number than

⁵⁴ US State Department, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2008, Chapter 2- Country Reports: Europe and Eurasia Overview*. Released by the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, on April 30, 2009. <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122432.htm> 20.09.2009

⁵⁵Europol, *EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2009*, TE-SAT. The Hague, 2009. http://www.europol.europa.eu/publications/EU_Terrorism_Situation_and_Trend_Report_TE-SAT/TE-SAT2009.pdf 20.10.2009

⁵⁶ See Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 2009, World by Region, Europe and Central Asia, Bulgaria* <http://thereport.amnesty.org/en/regions/europe-central-asia/bulgaria> 20.09.2009

the rest of the population and who may wish to maintain and develop their identity.⁵⁷ There is a degree of compromise about some characteristics that are crucial to define groups as minority. In the Recommendation 1201 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe about the rights of national minorities those characteristics were count as:

- residing on the territory of state and are citizens thereof;
- maintaining longstanding, firm and lasting ties with that state;
- displaying distinctive ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic characteristics;
- are sufficiently representative, although smaller in number than the rest of the population of that state or of a region of that state;
- are motivated by a concern to preserve together that which constitutes their common identity, including their culture, their traditions, their religion or their language.⁵⁸

Most common used definition of minority concept comes from Francesco Capotorti:

Numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members – being nationals of the State – possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show if only implicitly a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language.⁵⁹

However, first characteristic above, citizenship, started a new debate about the situation of immigrants and refugees, and asylum seekers. Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCPNM),⁶⁰ on the other hand does not mention a need of citizenship, which means bringing a more broad definition to minority concept. However, FCPNM does not define the concept of minority and set states free to decide

⁵⁷ Minority Rights Group International, *Who are minorities?* <http://www.minorityrights.org/566/who-are-minorities/who-are-minorities.html> 18.11.2009

⁵⁸ Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, *Recommendation 1201 (1993), on an additional protocol on the rights of national minorities to the European Convention of Human Rights*, <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta93/EREC1201.htm> 30.03.2008

⁵⁹ Francesco Capotorti, *Study on the Rights of Persons Belonging to Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*, (Geneva, United Nations Center for Human Rights, 1991), UN DocE/CN.4/Sub.2/384/Add.1-7.

⁶⁰ The Council of Europe, *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/157.htm> 30.03.2008

who is minority in their territories and who is not.⁶¹ Generally, characteristics mentioned above are used to define old, traditional minorities. ‘New minorities’ concept on the other hand, is used to define immigrants, asylum seekers or immigrant workers and mostly does not suit with those five characteristic of old minorities. Therefore, today a concept of minority comprises more people even though it is not mentioned precisely in any convention. However, there is still a problem about recognizing collective rights of minorities. States generally recognize individual rights of minority members, but they are reluctant to recognize their collective rights because of the possibility of threats such as autonomy demands or separatist movements.⁶² International law also does not have binding regulations about the collective rights of minorities which creates an important deficiency about the minority rights.

At the end of World War I, under the leadership of League of Nations first attempts to built international minority regime were based on the principle of equality. League of Nations tried to protect minorities especially in Cenral and Eastern Europe by separate treaties.⁶³ However, those attempts were not permanent. After the end of World War II minority regime of League of Nations was dissolved. Moreover, The Universal Declaration on Human Rights of the United Nations (UN) did not include any provision about the minorities. On the other hand, Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1966 and entered into force in 1976 states that,⁶⁴ “in those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language.” Convention was binding and first important step to built international minority regime.

⁶¹ Naz Çavuşoğlu, Uluslararası İnsan Hakları Hukukunda Azınlık Hakları, Ulusal Azınlıkların Korunmasına İlişkin Çerçeve Sözleşme. (İstanbul: Bilim Yayınları, 1999). p.30.

⁶² *Ibid.* pp. 34–39.

⁶³ Erol Kurubaş, Asimilasyondan Tanınmaya, Uluslararası Alanda Azınlık Sorunları ve Avrupa Yaklaşımı. (Ankara: Asil Yayın Dağıtım, 2006) pp.50-51.

⁶⁴ United Nations, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. 1966.
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm> (19.09.2009)

Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights of The Council of Europe underlines that⁶⁵ “The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.”

Helsinki Final Act of Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE/OSCE) also mentioned about protection of minorities and regional cultures.⁶⁶ In the Cold War era when nation states were too sensitive about their territorial integrity these were important steps for the protection of minority rights.

After the end of the Cold War, international conjecture enabled UN and other governmental organizations to prepare more detailed arrangements about minority issues. UN’s Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, establishment of Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe’s (OSCE) High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), The Council of Europe’s The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and FCPNM brought new and more detailed regulations about minority rights. Eventually, EU was also became an important actor in minority rights as the enlargement towards CEECs appeared in the horizon. According to Kurubaş today, even though we cannot talk about universally accepted minority rights regime, a degree of control mechanism over the issue is starting to operate especially among European countries.⁶⁷

1.3.2. Minority Rights in the EU

EU’s general minority policy before CEECs enlargement was usually related with ‘new minorities’ or immigrant workers and asylum seekers. Integration of immigrants, which means a degree of cultural recognition as well as political and socio-

⁶⁵ The Council of Europe, *European Convention on Human Right*, Rome, 4.XI. 1950.
<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/005.htm> (19.09.2009)

⁶⁶ Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Final Act, Helsinki, 1975. p. 6 and 51.
http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1975/08/4044_en.pdf (22.09.2009)

⁶⁷ Kurubaş, pp. 93-95

economic participation, and preventing further immigrations by promoting human and minority rights abroad, had been the main focuses of the EU.⁶⁸ When enlargement towards Eastern Europe appeared in the horizon in the beginnings of 1990s, protection of minorities became an important part of EU policy.⁶⁹ This time of course it was mostly related with ‘old minorities’ of Eastern Europe. EU members frightened from ethnic conflicts and increasing instability in the region which might affect them by huge immigration movements, and as a result of immigrations, by economic difficulties. Therefore, EU put Copenhagen criteria for CEECs and assists those states to overcome their problems about minorities. Democratic conditionality became an essential factor for EU accession as it is discussed above.

Before the Eastern enlargement process minority issues were usually seen as internal problems of Member States and evaluated within the general democracy and human rights criteria in the EU. Maastricht Treaty emphasized strongly the importance of human rights and democracy for EU for the first time. Then 1993 Copenhagen criteria recognized respecting and protection of minorities and human rights as a conditionality factor for EU accession. FCPNM brought more detailed regulations about minorities, but was not ratified by all members of EU including France. Agenda 2000 emphasized the importance of the integration of minorities with society and recommended adapting positive discrimination strategy in that process.⁷⁰ It should be noted that as mentioned before OSCE and HCNM had realized the importance of issue in the beginnings of 1990s and played a crucial role for improving minority rights in CEECs. Even today HCNM is playing an important role for ensuring tolerance against minorities; increasing their political participation, employment and education level; preventing exclusion and marginalization of minority members.⁷¹ European Parliament was also an active actor about minority policies of EU. Even in 1981 Parliament passed a Resolution on a Community Charter of Regional Culture and Languages and Charter

⁶⁸ Gwendolyn Sasse, “Securitization or Securing Rights? Exploring the Conceptual Foundations of Policies towards Minorities and Migrants in Europe.” in Gwendolyn Sasse and Elko R. Thielemann (Eds.), *Journal of Common Market Studies, Special Issue: Migrants and Minorities*, Volume: 43, Number 4, November 2005, p. 679.

⁶⁹ Kurubaş, p. 138.

⁷⁰ Tolga Bilener, “AB’nin Azınlık Hakları Anlayışı ve AB’ye Bütünleşme Sürecinde Orta ve Doğu Avrupa Ülkeleri” in Beril Dedeoğlu (ed.) *Dünden Bugüne Avrupa Birliği*. (İstanbul: Boyut Kitapları, 2003) p. 170.

⁷¹ Sasse, (2005) Pp. 682-684.

of Rights of Ethnic Minorities.⁷² In the following years Parliament passed similar resolutions about the rights of linguistic and cultural minorities and also about racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and racial discrimination.

As mentioned before, general trend about minority issues in the EU members was; recognizing individual rights of minority members and avoiding from recognizing collective rights as much as possible. Member States are sensitive about their territorial integrity and frightening from possible demands of self determination coming from different groups. Therefore, Member States avoid ratifying treaties which are binding about minority rights. Articles 12 and 13 of the Treaty on establishing EC emphasized the principle of equality of all citizens of the EU, regardless of their individual characteristic, including racial and ethnic origin.⁷³ Article 49 of the Treaty on the EU (TEU) speaks about the obligation of potential members to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms.⁷⁴ However, 1997 Amsterdam Agreement accepted all principles of Copenhagen political criteria, except respect and protection of minorities principle, as EU's common values and it was decided to incorporate those principles into Treaty on the European Union.⁷⁵ This indirectly means that EU only interests with minority rights before enlargement processes and minority rights are only a part of EU's enlargement policies. Hughes and Sasse even claimed that by the time of the TEU in 1997, this norm, protection of minorities, had been abandoned in law for future candidates, though it retained its rhetorical prominence in the enlargement process.⁷⁶

On the other hand, Charter of the Fundamental Rights (CFR), introduced in Nice Summit, was another hope for developing common minority policy. Article 21 of the Charter prohibits discrimination against the members of a national minority and Article 22 states that the Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.⁷⁷ Thus, minority policies would be incorporated into the Treaty of the European Union

⁷² Daniel Smihula, "National Minorities in the Law of the EC/EU" *Romanian Journal of European Affairs* Vol. 8 No:3 September 2008. p.62

⁷³ *Ibid.* p.55

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p.57

⁷⁵ Dilek Kurban, "Avrupa Birliği'nin Anayasal Düzeninde Azınlık Hakları: Açılımlar, Fırsatlar ve Olasılıklar" in Ayhan Kaya ve Turgut Tarhanlı (Eds.) *Türkiye'de Çoğunluk ve Azınlık Politikaları: AB Sürecinde Yurttaşlık Tartışmaları*. (İstanbul: TESEV Yayınları, 2005) p. 218.

⁷⁶ Hughes and Sasse, p.11

⁷⁷ *Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union*, (2007/C 303/01), <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:303:0001:0016:EN:PDF> 04.04.2008.

and become binding for Member States. However, Member States were reluctant about the Charter. Later it was decided to incorporate the Charter into EU Constitution and fate of the Charter was directly tied to fate of the Constitution. Article I-2 of EU Draft Constitution underlines that, respecting to the rights of persons belonging to national minorities is one of the common values of the EU.⁷⁸ However continuing ambiguity about the fate of the Constitution after Dutch and French referenda has prevented further developments once again. If this draft of the Constitutional Treaty had been accepted, the three sources of human rights would have been defined;⁷⁹ The Charter of Fundamentals Rights of the EU, European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the constitutional traditions common to Member States (the general principles which have developed in European legal thinking and which have gradually been enforced in the national law of Member States)

Actually, the Charter was criticized for not bringing positive rights to minorities, and its' limited and obscure guarantees for minority rights.⁸⁰ Besides, old members of EU generally protect minorities by negative rights such as prevention of discrimination against minorities. On the other hand, EU wants from candidate states to develop positive rights or apply positive discrimination strategies for minorities and in some cases to recognize collective rights of minorities.⁸¹ For instance, accession partnership document of Estonia put short term and middle term priorities in front of the Estonian government such as:

- adoption of measures aimed at simplifying the naturalization process and improving the integration of non-Estonian nationals, in particular stateless children;

- improving access to Estonian language teaching for non-Estonian speakers.

- continuing with the integration of non-citizens by improving training in Estonian for Russian speakers in primary and secondary schools and organizing courses for adults.⁸²

⁷⁸ *Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe*, (2004/C 310/11) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2004/c_310/c_31020041216en00110040.pdf 04.04.2008

⁷⁹ Smihula, p.74

⁸⁰ Kurban, Pp. 221-222.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, pp. 223-224

⁸² *Partnership for the Accession of Estonia, Political Criteria*, <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/e40102a.htm> 07.04.2008.

Accession partnership document of Hungary on the other hand mentioned about further efforts to improve the integration of the Roma minority.⁸³ Actually, development of positive rights is the ideal one about minority rights. Only with negative policies it is not possible to protect minority rights. Member States or EU should develop positive rights and also recognize collective rights of minorities to guarantee 'real' equality between minority members and majority. Despite positive discrimination strategies contradict with equality policy of the EU, it is essential to develop such policies in minority issues to achieve 'real' equality. Article 5 of the Racial Equality Directive,⁸⁴ opened a door for adapting positive discrimination policies, and Directive also became a guide for developing common and coherent minority policies in the EU. Lastly, an adapted version of the Charter was proclaimed on December 12, 2007 in Strasbourg, ahead of the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon, which makes the Charter legally binding in all countries except Poland, the United Kingdom and Czech Republic. Then, the fate of Lisbon Treaty has become a crucial for developing common and coherent minority policy in the EU. Eventually the last skeptic members Ireland, Poland and Czech Republic have also ratified the Treaty on October and November 2009 and the Treaty of Lisbon has entered into force on 1 December 2009

Treaty of Lisbon particularly guarantees the freedoms and principles set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and gives its provisions a binding legal force.⁸⁵ Therefore in addition to Articles 21 and 22 of the Charter, which mentioned above, Article 10 which states freedom of thought, conscience and religion, Article 11 states freedom of expression, Article 14 states the right to education and Article 12 states the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of associations at all levels in particular political, trade union and civic matters has also become legally binding.⁸⁶ All these articles are closely related with the rights and freedoms of national minorities. However it should be noted that the full text of the Charter of Fundamental Rights was

⁸³ *Partnership for the Accession of Hungary, Political Criteria*, <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/e40103f.htm> 07.04.2008

⁸⁴ The Council of the European Union, Council Directive, 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000, *implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin.* http://eur-lex.europa.eu/smartapi/cgi/sga_doc?smartapi!celexapi!prod!CELEXnumdoc&lg=en&numdoc=32000L0043&model=guichett 09.04.2008

⁸⁵ "Treaty of Lisbon, The Treaty at a glance" http://europa.eu/lisbon_treaty/glance/index_en.htm 09.04.2008

⁸⁶ *Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union* (2007/C 303/01)

replaced by a short cross-reference with the same legal value in the Lisbon Treaty.⁸⁷

Gaita claims that;

The Lisbon Treaty does not provide the EU with an explicit competence in the area of minority rights, it does not add any new policy area relevant to the protection of minorities and it does not oblige Member States to introduce affirmative actions in order to protect their minorities.⁸⁸

According to Kurubaş, European Union generally leaves issues about protection of minorities to the Council of Europe, because it was emerged as an economic project rather than political one.⁸⁹ Moreover, politization of national minorities may endanger integration of European Union and its' supranational characteristic.⁹⁰

Even though, during the Eastern European enlargement EU was criticized for a double standard about minority protection policies and protection of the national minorities had not become a generally accepted legally binding principle of the EU, it is a fact that conditionality policy for Eastern European states eased the improvements of conditions of minorities in those countries. Commission's regular monitoring reports discussed minority issues in detail and today, except specific conditions of Roma minority, all CEECs accomplished significant improvements in participation of minorities into their social and political life. Moreover because the Lisbon Treaty has been ratified by all Member States it can be said that at least the future of the national minorities will be more comfortable than the past both in old members and new members of the Union.

⁸⁷ "The Treaty of Lisbon" December 2009 <http://www.euractiv.com/en/future-eu/treaty-lisbon/article-163412> 25.12.2009

⁸⁸ Elena Gaita, "Minority Rights Protection in the EU: Contradictions and Problems" November 2009, <http://www.euroalter.com/2009/minority-rights-protection-in-the-eu-contradictions-and-problems/> 17.12.2009

⁸⁹ Kurubaş, pp.139-140.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p.141.

CHAPTER II: TURKS IN BULGARIA FROM OTTOMAN RULE TO THE FALL OF COMMUNISM

2.1. Ottoman Era.

.....The idealization of the pre-Ottoman Bulgarian medieval past was accompanied by the demonization of everything Ottoman. To this day most Bulgarians refer to the Ottoman period as the darkest period in Bulgarian history, 500 years of „slavery or 500 years “under the yoke” in Vazov’s famous phrase, during which Ottomans are said to have deliberately and methodically destroyed Bulgarian culture, forced Bulgarians to convert to Islam and Turkified them.⁹¹

Bulgaria’s policies towards Turkish Minority starting after independence from Ottoman rule could not be understood without understanding Bulgarian’s look to Ottoman period. Generally, Bulgarians believe that Turkish Minority of Bulgaria is a result of large scale forced conversion to Islam of the local population which caused people to forget their Bulgarian language and Bulgarian ethnic identity.⁹² So that Bulgarian government policies towards Turkish minority were built on that understanding. Ottomans penetrated to the region in appropriate conditions and by planned actions. They prepared their settlement plans before the conquest and immediately started to carry out those plans. Yoruks (a livestock-owning people), nomadic and semi-nomadic Oghuz Turks from Eastern Anatolia, were settled into the newly conquered lands of the Balkans.⁹³ Number of Turkish-Muslim population increased steadily in the peninsula. Those were the ancestors of today’s Turkish minority in Bulgaria. This was an excellent plan, both to prevent uprisings in the region (and to cope with potential uprisings more easily) and also to achieve the aim of spreading Islam throughout the region (*Jihad*). Although Ottomans did not force native non-Muslim people to change their religion or identities, Ottoman system had been built

⁹¹ Ali Eminov, “Social Construction of Identities: Pomaks in Bulgaria” *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, 6 (2007) 2, p.3 <http://www.ecmi.de/jemie/download/2-2007-Eminov.pdf> 20.10.2009

⁹² Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, “Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria.” (2002) pp 2-3.. <http://www.balkanethnology.org/files/library/E%20&%20V/Muslims.pdf> 17.01.2007

⁹³ Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, *The Human Rights of Muslims in Bulgaria in Law and Politics since 1878*. (Sofia, November, 2003) http://www.bghelsinki.org/upload/resources/2003_Muslims_fm-eng.doc pp. 6-7. 10.10.2006. Referring to Bilal Şimşir, *The Turks of Bulgaria (1878-1985)*, (London: Rustem & Brothers Pbl., 1988).

on spreading Islam throughout the world. Therefore, Ottomans welcomed voluntary acceptance of Islam by native non-Muslim people and in some cases Ottoman state system forced people to choose Islam.

Voluntary acceptance of Islam can be explained easily. An interaction between new-coming Turkmen, Yoruks and non-Muslim natives creates a natural acceptance of Islam by those people. Ottomans rapid reconstruction process in the region also affected choices of people. Up to Ottoman era the region had been unstable, underdeveloped and poor. Wars were common. In Ottoman rule peace and stability came to the region. Ottomans built new roads, bridges, mosques, inns, bazaars, even villages and towns; gave priority to agriculture, and trade. Trade between European states and Ottomans increased. Prosperity in the region increased gradually. Those processes naturally motivated non-Muslims to choose Islam. It is a fact that, Islamic civilization was superior over the western Christian civilization in the middle ages. Therefore, voluntary acceptance of Islam in those years was logical. Disagreements among the different fractions of Orthodox Church also motivated people to choose Islam. For instance some members of semi-pagan Bogomils in Bulgaria and other pagan fractions in the Balkans converted to Islam gradually.⁹⁴ However, this does not mean that all transformations to Islam happened as a voluntary action.

Devshirme system, which means taking non-Muslim children from their families and rearing them with Turkish-Islamic culture, is a good example of non-voluntary *Islamization*. Those children served in Ottoman army as Janissaries or in Ottoman administrative structures. *Millet* system allows non-Muslims to perform their own traditions or religious rituals. However they had to pay an extra tax called *cizie* for their protection by Ottoman army. Non-Muslim males were exempted to serve in the army, and it was not possible for non-Muslims to serve in critical administrative and military structures. Shortly, Ottoman system did not give equal opportunities to Muslims and non-Muslim subjects.⁹⁵ So that, some non-Muslims choose to convert their religion to live in the same status and opportunities with Muslim subjects. Fear was, of

⁹⁴ Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, (2003) p.7

⁹⁵ Yonca Köksal, "Minority Policies in Bulgaria and Turkey: The Struggle to Define a Nation" *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol.6, No.4, December 2006, p. 504.

course, another factor in the Islamization process of the Balkans. Especially between the 14th- 16th centuries Ottomans were in their strongest period. Conquest of Istanbul by Ottomans and unsuccessful Crusades against them decreased hopes of non-Muslims to regain their lands. At the end, some of them converted to Islam to live peacefully in Ottoman lands. However Bulgarian people generally believe only to forced Islamization and do not accept a possibility of voluntary Islamization. Those claims became the evidences in the hands of communist regime in the 1980s, and they tried to convince people that Turks in Bulgaria had been Bulgarians who *turkified* in the Ottoman era.

Whatever the reason was, the truth is that, in Ottoman era, Balkan Peninsula *islamized* massively and up to 19th century no one challenged to that process. However, this does not mean that Ottoman policy aimed to *islamize* or *turkify* their non-Muslim subjects. Instead, great majority of non-Muslims enjoyed peace, stability and prosperity by protecting their own identity, culture and religion in the Ottoman era. Karpat claims that Ottoman *millet* system enabled Balkan nations to protect their ethnic and religious identity through Orthodox Church and their ethnic nationalism also developed under Ottoman rule.⁹⁶ Köksal believes that post- Tazminat reforms conducted in Bulgaria, prepared necessary conditions for the economic accomplishments of the future Bulgaria.⁹⁷ Therefore it is not true to look Ottoman period from one perspective only. Bulgaria's official history was built on idealization of pre-Ottoman period, which leads to radical homogenization policies after the independence.

2.2 Post-Ottoman Period

Since Bulgarian independence from Ottoman rule in 1878 political action in Bulgaria has been directed toward the creation of a territorially, culturally and linguistically unified nation-state predicated upon the elimination of non-Bulgarian minorities through migration (voluntary or forced), assimilation (voluntary or forced), and at times, through violence (.....) Turks, as speakers of a different language, and Muslims (Turks, Pomaks and Gypsy Muslims), as carriers of a different religious tradition, posed a serious problem

⁹⁶ Kemal H. Karpat, Balkanlar'da Osmanlı Mirası ve Ulusçuluk. Recep Boztemur (çev) (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2004) pp.13-18.

⁹⁷ Osman Köksal, " Certain Reforms conducted in Bulgaria in the post- Tazminat era and the establishment of the Danube Province" *Turkish Review of Balkan Studies*, OBİV, Annual 2005, 10. p. 158

to the integrity of the state because their integration and absorption into the majority population would be difficult if not impossible. The coercive methods used by the Zhivkov regime to absorb these populations into the majority failed and indirectly contributed to the downfall of the communist regime in 1989.⁹⁸

It is not possible to evaluate democratization process and its effects on Turkish Minority, unless understanding policies of Bulgarian governments and conditions of Turkish minority before democratization. As mentioned above Bulgaria's policies after the independence aims to create homogenized nation; one nation, one language (Bulgarian), one religion (Orthodox Christianity) and one set of cultural traditions.⁹⁹ Therefore, Bulgarian governments used various strategies to homogenise the society. Dayıoğlu defines those policies as *de-Ottomanization*, which means getting rid of all memories and remnant of the Ottoman period.¹⁰⁰ Turks on the other hand mainly demanded two basic rights from Bulgarian state throughout pre-democratization era; free use of mother tongue, education in mother tongue also, and freedom of religious practices (indirectly struggle over the status of Chief Muftis). Although, Bulgarian governments had been trying to get rid of Turks by forced or voluntary immigration and assimilation like in communist era, international conjecture and kin state factor obstruct them to initiate stable and consistent minority policy. Therefore, throughout the pre-democratization ups and downs can be seen in the conditions of Turkish Minority. It is important to understand these ups and downs and conditions of Turkish Minority in that era, to evaluate gains of democratization properly.

Turkish minority problem in Bulgaria started after 1877-78 Russian-Ottoman War, which defined by Turks in Bulgaria as a Great Rout. Berlin Treaty obliged Bulgaria to recognize and respect the major civil and political rights of the Turkish minority and other Muslim minorities in Bulgarian territories:

Article 5: guarantee to all its citizens the freedom to profess and practice their religion and to secure the equality of all citizens before the law by keeping their civil and political rights equally.

⁹⁸ Eminov, (2007) pp. 2-3

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* pp.4-5.

¹⁰⁰ Ali Dayıoğlu, Toplama Kampından Meclise, Bulgaristan'da Türk ve Müslüman Azınlığı. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005) pp. 175-176.

Article 20: oblige Bulgaria to respect rights and privileges of foreign population within principality.

Article 4: in mixed regions rights and interests of ethnic groups should be considered when creating new laws.

Article 12: immovable properties of Turks, who had left Bulgaria, must be protected by Bulgarian state and their rights over those properties were continuing.¹⁰¹

In addition to Berlin Treaty, first Bulgarian Constitution accepted in 1879 in Veliko Tırnovo, former capital of Bulgaria, also guaranteed the rights of minorities. Article 41 and 43 provide right to freedom of religion and self-government for religious minorities.¹⁰² In the following years Bulgarian governments made some regulations about religious affairs of Muslim community¹⁰³. By 1880 Provisional Regulations for the Spiritual Administration of Christians, Muslims and Jews; one mufti for each parochial district would freely be elected among Muslim community but muftis had to report their activities to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Public Worship (MFAPW).¹⁰⁴ Although, this was an important step for Muslim community to guarantee their religious freedom, reporting muftis' activities to the ministry means that state would oversee all activities of Muslim community in the following years. This barely means Muslim community and their spiritual representatives would be under the control of government. In 1895, Provisional Regulations for the Spiritual Administration of Muslims increased the powers of MFAPW. According to those new regulations, the Ministry would check activities of muftis and decide whether to appoint or not those muftis and even would dismiss them if not satisfied with their activities.¹⁰⁵ A great state control over Muslim community was achieved by those regulations. After the independence of Bulgaria in 1908, new regulation about the status of muftis was declared. By the Agreement of Constantinople in 1909, Bulgaria accepted that MFAPW

¹⁰¹ Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, (2003). p.13–14.

¹⁰² Galina Lozanova, Bozhidar Alexiev, Georgeta Nazarska, Evgenia Troeva-Grigorova and Iva Kyurkchieva "Regions, Minorities and European Integration. A Case Study on Muslim Minorities in the SCR of Bulgaria." *Romanian Journal of Political Science*. Issue no. 01- 2007, p 27.

¹⁰³ Throughout the text I will use the words Muslim Community and Turkish Minority interchangeably, and other parts of Muslim community will be mentioned as specific words like Pomaks, Romans or Tatars.

¹⁰⁴ Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, (2003). p.15.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid* p. 16.

would communicate with *Sheih-ul Islam* in Istanbul before the election of Chief Muftis in Bulgaria.¹⁰⁶ This was a symbolic gesture of new Bulgarian state to prevent possible intervention about minority rights, particularly Turkish minority rights, from Ottoman side.

After the establishment of autonomous Bulgarian Principality, there was strong nationalistic hostility towards non-Bulgarians, particularly Turks, in Bulgarian territories. Reciprocal violence during the independence process and memories of Ottoman yoke were the main reasons of that hostility. Although there had been no significant tension or clash between Bulgarian and Turks in Ottoman rule, as mentioned above Bulgarians generally shared a hostile recollection of that period and accused the Ottomans of preventing their independence up to the end of 19th century. They also strictly criticized *millet* system, defined it as unequal or unjust, and Turkicization of Bulgarians by *devshirme* system. Another reason for increasing hostility after autonomy was high number of Turks remaining in Bulgarian territory. In 1881 census nearly 27% (more than 2 million) of total population were Turks.¹⁰⁷ Number of Turks in Bulgarian territory decreased in following years. Oppressions and harassments continued, even though the rights of minorities are guaranteed by Berlin Treaty and 1879 Constitution.¹⁰⁸ Eventually, massive migration to Turkey decreased the number of Turkish minority in Bulgarian lands. From 1878 to 1912 more than 350.000 Turks (including Pomaks) migrated to Turkey.¹⁰⁹ It should be noted that some historians claim that the number was at least a million.

Despite the great hostility towards Muslim community in Bulgarian territories, nationalist policies were limited due to international developments in the first years of Principality. Therefore, nationalist Bulgarians could not put into practice properly their hostile theories. First of all, Bulgaria obliged by Berlin Treaty to respect the rights and liberties of minorities, this means international guarantee over the rights of minorities. Bulgaria as new small autonomous principality, would not take a risk by violating the

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p.16.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁸ Barbara Jelavich, History of the Balkans, 18th and 19th Centuries Vol:1. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983) p. 367.

¹⁰⁹ Marushiakova and Popov, p. 5

rights of minorities, which could lead an intervention by big powers. However, as we mentioned before Berlin Treaty was far from deterrent factor in some cases. On the other hand, Ottomans were still a clear deterrent. Any violation might bring Ottoman intervention in a few days. Moreover, underground revolutionary organizations who aim independent Macedonia disturbed both Ottoman state and Bulgarian Principality. Stefan Stanbulov government and Ottomans cooperated against those revolutionary organizations in Macedonia in the 1890s.¹¹⁰ All those developments limited the hands of radical nationalists, who supported more repressive policies against Turkish minorities. Because of that, Bulgarian governments initiated more moderate policies about minority rights up to the Balkan wars. Their main policies were “an official recognition of Muslim community as a minority and government compliance with obligations under international treaties for the treatment of minority populations.”¹¹¹ As a result of those moderate policies, in 1885 a law was passed which gives Turks autonomy in education, allowing them to preserve their schools and instruct in their mother tongue.¹¹² In the beginnings of 20th century there were approximately 1300 Turkish schools (including 16 *rujdiyes*- high schools), and more than 1500 teachers and 70.000 students in those schools throughout Bulgaria.¹¹³ Most of the teachers were appointed by and paid by Ottoman state. Muslims were practicing their religion in mosques; in private schools inside the mosques, children were learning Koran, Turkish press enjoyed the tolerance of government in those years (40 different Turkish newspapers were published up to 1908 in 4 different cities¹¹⁴). Turks and Muslims even fought shoulder to shoulder with Bulgarians in Bulgarian army in 1885 Bulgaria- Serbia war.¹¹⁵

However, this does not mean everything was perfect. As mentioned before more than 350.000 Turks migrated to Turkey up to the Balkan Wars. Bulgarian

¹¹⁰ Misha Glenny, Balkanlar 1804–1999: Milliyetçilik, Savaş ve Büyük Güçler. (İstanbul: Sabah Kitapları, 1999) 171–173.

¹¹¹ Bistra- Beatrix Volgyi, “Ethno-Nationalism During Democratic Transition in Bulgaria: Political Pluralism as an Effective Remedy for Ethnic Conflict,” *YCISS Post-Communist Studies Programme Research Paper Series*, 003, March, 2007. p.16 <http://www.yorku.ca/yciss/activities/documents/PCSPPaper003.pdf> 22.08.2007

¹¹² Marushiakova and Popov, p.4.

¹¹³ Bilal Şimşir, “Bulgaristan’daki Türk Azınlığı(1)” *Balkanlar’da Türk Kültürü Dergisi*, Sayı: 48, Temmuz-Ağustos-Eylül 2003, p. 10.

¹¹⁴ Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, (2003) p.29. Referring to Bilal Şimşir, The Turkish Minority Press in Bulgaria (1865- 1985). Ankara,1986.

¹¹⁵ B.B. Volgyi, p. 17.

governments promoted and supported those migrations. This was seen an easy way of decreasing the number of Turks in Bulgaria. Economic neglect of regions where Turks were dominant was another policy of Bulgarian governments, which also aimed to force Turks for voluntary migration. In 1908, a few months before total independence from Ottomans, a new education law increased Bulgarian governments' control over Turkish schools. According to that law;¹¹⁶ Turkish community became responsible for their own schools; they could take financial support from local governments, Bulgarian literature, history and geography had to be instructed in Bulgarian language, Educational Ministry could check all Turkish schools, and books for Turkish lessons would be provided by Bulgarian state. As a result, Turkish schools were faced with financial crises. Turkish Community could not finance their schools properly; financial assistance of local authorities was not enough. Shortly, situation worsened after state began to exercise control over Turkish schools. Before the establishment of Bulgarian Kingdom in 1908, a great state control over all activities of minorities had been achieved, even though, in some areas, some derogation was allowed.

2.3. Bulgarian Kingdom and Turkish Minority

In the first years of newly established Kingdom, Bulgarian governments initiated careful policies against Turkish minority. International political conjecture forced them to give priority to the external issues. However, as mentioned above, a great state control over Muslim community was achieved before establishment of the Kingdom. Both Turkish schools (private or religious) and Muftis (including Chief Mufti) became responsible to the government and both of them lost their autonomous status. After end of the Balkan Wars, Istanbul Agreement was signed between Ottoman state and Bulgarian Kingdom. Bulgaria again obliged by some arrangements about minority issues:

¹¹⁶ Şimşir, (2003-I). p.10

Article 8: guaranteed to all Muslims living in Bulgaria the right to equality before the law, freedom of conscience, freedom of profess and practice their religion, etc...

Article 16: Ottoman state and Bulgarian Kingdom mutually respect their territories and agreed on the right to free movement of nationals of each country in the territory of others.¹¹⁷

In the same agreement muftis declared as civil servants, so they could be dismissed by government according to the Law of Civil Servants¹¹⁸ Actually, nothing changed about the status of muftis. They had already lost their autonomous status in 1895. Istanbul Treaty only means acceptance of those status by Ottoman state. One positive side of agreement was that Muslim religious units were recognized as legal entities. Before the Neuilly Agreement, as a result of WWI, Bulgaria made further arrangements about the status of Muslim Community. In June 1919, just 4 months before the Neuilly, Statute on Spiritual Organization and Administration of Muslims in the Kingdom of Bulgaria was declared as a new arrangement about the status of Muslims in Bulgaria. By those arrangements, government, particularly MFAPW would be able to supervise all activities of Muslim community. Excessive powers were given to MFAPW that could be able to monitor all activities of Muslim community easily. Some of those powers were¹¹⁹; fixing election dates of muftis, confirming or rejecting appointment of elected muftis, dismissing elected muftis, deputy muftis or even clerics. In addition, Chief Muftis' Office was directly subjected to the MFAPW. Nothing mentioned about, consultation on *Sheih-ul Islam* in Istanbul before the election of Chief Mufti, as it had been arranged in 1909 Istanbul Agreement. That statute was the last steps of achieving total state control over Muslim community. Although, Neuilly Treaty and short period of Stamboliynski government tightened that state control, generally strict supervision of governments over Muslim community continued in different degrees in following years.

¹¹⁷ Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, (2003) p.17

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, p.17

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.18.

Neuilly Treaty signed in November 1919, brought new obligations in front of the Bulgarian governments. As new period started in world politics, supervised by League of Nations, more liberal and democratic arrangements obliged especially loser states of WWI. Generally, League of Nations recommends all states to respect the rights of racial, linguistic and religious minorities. Some obligations about minorities in Bulgaria were;¹²⁰ respecting the rights to profess and practice religion, equality before the law, free use of mother tongue, education in mother tongue etc... In addition to that, minorities could establish their own civil or religious foundations and schools.¹²¹ All those rights and liberties were directly guaranteed by and would be monitored by League of Nations. Combining Neuilly Treaty with following 3 years of Stamboliyski era, Turkish community in Bulgaria regained most of their previous rights and liberties. They enjoyed a degree of autonomy (educational and religious) in their social life after losing it 20 years ago.

2.4. Stamboliyski Government

Stamboliyski, as a leader of Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union (BAPU) strictly opposed Bulgaria's involvement to the WWI, and took support from highly politicized and organized Bulgarian peasants and farmers. After the WWI, Stamboliyski elected as a prime minister. He advocated cooperation among the peasants of south-eastern Europe and aimed Balkan federation in which Serbians and Bulgarians would be reconciled.¹²² In June 1923, coup d'état finished 3 years of agrarian rule. Stamboliyski was killed brutally. Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) made strategic mistake by staying neutral during the coup. They might think that coup would open their way, because they were second biggest party after 1919 elections. However, result was disastrous. Fascism rather than communism ruled Bulgaria up to 1944(except the period within 1928-34 where more liberal and democratic coalitions were in power). New

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 20–21.

¹²¹ Şimşir, (2003-I) p.7.

¹²² Felix Gilbert, The End of the European Era, 1890 to the Present. (New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 1984) p. 178.

fascist type regime, initiated a policy of “white terror” against the communists and other opponents, at least 10.000 opponents were killed as a result of that terror.¹²³

Stamboliyski government targeted to improve living conditions of peasants and farmers. Majority of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria were peasants and farmers. Because of that, new regime was welcomed by Turkish society in Bulgaria.¹²⁴ Moreover, Stamboliyski government tried to fulfil its responsibilities against Turkish minority as it was obliged by Neuilly Treaty. Therefore, Stamboliyski era was a period of peace, stability and freedom for Turkish minority in Bulgaria. Compulsory Bulgarian lessons (Bulgarian literature, history and geography) in Turkish schools were cancelled. A special pedagogical school for training Turkish literature teachers and a Muslim religious collage, called *Nuvvab*, was opened in Shumen and then in Sofia.¹²⁵ In 1923 number of Muslim schools throughout the country reached to 1713.¹²⁶ Agrarian Government of Stamboliyski gave financial support to the Muslim schools which was 3 million leva per year.¹²⁷ Both Turkish involvement in decision making process about their schools and financial assistance of state to those schools increased. New mosques and medreses were opened in Muslim villages. Overall, both Turkish minorities’ participation in Bulgarian social and political life, and living conditions of Turkish peasants and farmers increased. They enjoyed a degree of autonomy in their social, economic and political life during the rule of Agrarians.

2.5. New Era in the life of Turkish Minority.

Overthrown of Agrarian Government in Bulgaria changed many things in the life of Turkish minority. On the other hand, new secular Republic of Turkey was trying to build peaceful relations with neighbours in those years. Ironically, as situation worsened for Turkish minority in Bulgaria, Turkish Republic and Bulgaria were signing

¹²³ Glenny. p. 330.

¹²⁴ İbrahim Tatarlı, “ Bulgaristan’daki Türk Varlığı” in Hasan Basri Öcalan (ed) *Balkanlardaki Türk Kültürü’nün Dünü, Bugünü, Yarını*. Uluslararası Sempozyum (26-28 Ekim 2001) Bildiri Kitabı (Bursa: Uludağ Üniversitesi Yayını, 2002) p. 147.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 147-148.

¹²⁶ Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, (2003) p.28.

¹²⁷ Marushiakova and Popov, p.7.

a friendship treaty. Ankara Agreement signed in 1925 mainly interested with the rights of Turkish minority in Bulgarian territories and Bulgarians in Turkish territories. Both states agreed on respecting the rights of Turks and Bulgarians in each others' territories by referring Neuilly and Lozan Treaties. States also agreed on, not obstructing voluntary migrations of minorities, allowing them to take their movable properties and savings, and also dispose their immovable properties.¹²⁸ This friendship agreement was a good chance for Turkish minority in Bulgaria. After overthrown of the agrarian government, autocratic governments initiated more repressive policies against minorities in Bulgaria. However, this agreement both eased the life of Turkish minority and opened new chance to migrate Turkey without any obstruction. Even though Bulgarian governments generally supported and eased migration of Turkish minority to Turkey, sometimes they put some obstacles. For instance, they did not allow immigrants to take their movable properties and savings, and also dispose their immovable properties. Ankara Friendship Agreement guaranteed those conditions and eased new immigration waves. However, new immigration wave was not massive; rather it was highly controlled by both states. As a result, from 1927 to 1934 every year approximately 15-20 thousands Turks and Pomaks migrated to Turkey.¹²⁹

New secular republic in Turkey had some effects over Turkish minority in Bulgaria. At first, they were suspicious to that new republic. They had seen themselves as descendants of Ottomans and new republic destroyed all remaining of Ottoman regime. Kemalist regime was transforming all characteristics of Ottoman regime, including remove of Caliphate and Ottoman Sultanate. This process was surprising Turkish minority in Bulgaria. Ottoman Empire, had tried to protect their rights and liberties up to 1920s and they did not know if new regime would continue that Ottoman policy or leave them alone to the mercy of Bulgarian government. Suspicions towards new regime in Turkey ended with the 1925 Ankara Friendship Agreement. That agreement convinced them that new regime would also try to protect their rights and liberties in the following years. However, secular character of new Kemalist regime and rapid modernization in Turkey disturbed some Turks in Bulgaria who still live in

¹²⁸ Şimşir, (2003-I) p.9.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, p.9.

Ottoman lifestyles. As a result, two different views developed among Turks. One group accepted secular, modernist character of Kemalism and try to expand it among Turks, and other one rejected kemalist ideas and see it as a threat for their traditional, religious lifestyles.¹³⁰ Former group organized under cultural and sport organization called *Turan*, and took support of Turkish intelligentsia in Bulgaria, latter one supported by anti-Kemalist and anti-secularist movements located in Turkey. Turks in Bulgaria were still continuing their Ottoman lifestyles in that era; they were wearing traditional Ottoman clothes (Fes, *shalvar*), using Arabic alphabet, had their own religious school, *Nuvvab* in Shoumen. That situation attracted some Turks in Turkey who did not approve new reforms or see them as a threat to their traditional, religious lifestyles. So that some of them immigrated to Bulgaria and supported anti-kemalist groups in Bulgaria.¹³¹ Bulgarian governments were highly disturbed by the spread of kemalist ideas among Turkish minority. They were looking Kemalism as a Panturkist ideology which aim to increase ethnic consciousness of Turkish minority and transform them into Ankara's tool.¹³² Members of kemalist organizations were seen as agents of new Turkish regime who have imperialist aims over Bulgarian territories. That belief increased repressions over kemalist organizations and Turkish kemalist intelligentsia in Bulgaria especially after 1934 coup.

2.6. Coup D'etat in 1934 and Turkish Minority.

New fascist regime suspended the Constitution of 1879 and started revisionist policies again, which means previous treaties would be invalid. Actually, before the coup situation of Turkish minority was relatively better. They have their own schools, civil organizations; they practice their religion freely, speak their mother tongue and even can immigrate to Turkey. This was the result of Ankara Friendship Agreement in 1925 and Neuilly Agreement in 1919 and also suitable conditions created by a new democratic, liberal government established in 1928. For instance, kemalist *Turan* cultural and sport organization had more than 5 thousand members and 95 departments

¹³⁰ Köksal, (2006) pp. 511-512.

¹³¹ Marushiakova and Popov, p. 7.

¹³² Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, (2003) p.30.

throughout Bulgaria before it was closed down by fascist government.¹³³ Turkish schools were transformed from Arabic alphabet to the Latin alphabet in 1928/29 education season. More than 600 students graduated from Muslim religious high school *Nuvvab* between the periods of 1926-1933.¹³⁴ As it is seen, even though oppressions over Kemalist organizations started before the fascist regime, general situation was relatively good and 1934 coup worsened everything.

First targets of new regime were, of course, kemalist organizations and their members. Nearly all kemalist organizations, including *Turan* and Turkish Teachers' Association were closed within a month. Oppressions over kemalist intellectuals and their families increased so much that some of them had to immigrate Turkey by illegal ways (passing the border illegally). Members of those organizations were blamed as making Kemalist propaganda and seen as a potential threat towards Bulgaria's unity.¹³⁵ After, a great degree of control was ensured over kemalist movements, other Muslim community members became a new targets of fascist regime. The number of Turkish schools was reduced gradually; subsidies for those schools were cut off, teachers of minority schools were suffering from lots of difficulties, and those schools again lost their small degree of autonomy. By 1941 all Turkish issued newspapers and magazines were closed down.¹³⁶ Fascist type organizations terrorized social life in mixed regions and their main targets were symbols of traditional Muslim lifestyles: mosques, traditional clothes of Muslims, *medreses*, Koran students etc..¹³⁷ Psychological and physical pressures over Muslim community increased day by day. Bulgarian government was aiming to achieve voluntary departure of Muslim community, particularly Turks. However, Turkish government was reluctant to accept such an enormous emigration from Bulgaria. New republic was so young to cope with such a great influx. Effects of Great Depression were still continuing and Republic was still trying to integrate immigrants coming from Greece after Independence War. Another massive emigration movement would increase burdens of state in the eve of WW II. As

¹³³ Mehmet Türker, *Gölgedeki Kahraman*. (İstanbul: Ufuk Ötesi Yayınevi, 2003) pp. 70–71.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 83.

¹³⁵ Dayıoğlu, pp. 254-255.

¹³⁶ Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, (2003) p.30. Referring to Bilal Şimşir, *The Turkish Minority Press in Bulgaria (1865- 1985)*. Ankara,1986.

¹³⁷ Marushiakova and Popov, p. 8.

a result more than 100.000 people immigrated to Turkey up to the collapse of fascist regime in 1944.¹³⁸

2.7. Communist Regime and Tolerance towards Minorities.

In the first years of communist era, regime embraced all minority groups and welcomed them as cultural and social richness of Bulgarian society. There were several reasons of such a warm approach. First of all; end of WW II started a new, more peaceful era, at least up to Cold War, in the world policy. Shames of Nazi genocide and judgments in Nuremberg trials became deterrent factors for new state crimes against minorities. Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted and international law became more powerful against states' criminal actions. Secondly, new communist regime strongly criticized former fascist regime. As it is known, fascist regime had initiated repressive and discriminatory policies against minorities, communist regime begun more moderate and tolerant policies to show its' difference from fascist one. Thirdly, Turkey again was a clear deterrent factor especially against discrimination of Turkish minority. As Turkey approached with USA after WW II, Bulgaria acted more carefully against Turks in Bulgarian territories especially up to the start of Cold War. Fourthly, pure communist ideology was based on fraternity and equality which excludes ethnic and nationalistic discriminations. Therefore, communists looked minority groups as fellows who they need to initiate successful socialist policies.¹³⁹ Every part of society has different responsibilities in socialist regime, so they would need participation of minority groups also. Lastly, communist regime saw Turks as potential revolutionaries who would trigger socialist revolution in Turkey in the following years.¹⁴⁰ If they learned and accepted socialist values voluntarily, they would affect Turkish brothers and assist Turkish revolutionaries in Turkey to start a revolution.

Communist regime prepared a new Constitution in 1946 and it entered into force in 1947 which was known as Dimitrov Constitution. New Constitution was clear

¹³⁸ H. Yıldırım Ağanoğlu, Balkanların Makus Talihi: Göç. (İstanbul: Kum Saati, 2001) p. 310

¹³⁹ Marushiakova and Popov, pp.10- 11

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p.11

sign that new regime would be much more tolerant against minorities. By Article 79, national minorities are entitled to be taught in their mother tongue and develop their national culture which means recognizing the existence of national ethnic minorities in Bulgaria.¹⁴¹ Article 71, guaranteed equality before the law and protection of the religious and ethnic minorities from discrimination, and article 78 guaranteed rights to freedom of conscience and practice of religion.¹⁴² This was a democratic and liberal constitution affected by peaceful conditions of post-war period. However, it was actually a challenge against repressive and autocratic policies of former fascist regime and aimed to show the difference between fascist regimes and communist ones. Another factor in such a mild treatment against minorities was the core of socialism. Andrew Heywood states elements of socialism which could explain moderate policies of BCP in the first years:

Community: The core of socialism is the vision of human beings as social creatures linked by the existence of common humanity.

Fraternity: As human beings share a common humanity, they are bound together by a sense of comradeship or fraternity. Socialists prefer cooperation to competition, and to favor collectivism over individualism.

Social Equality: Equality is the central value of socialism. Socialism is sometimes portrayed as a form of egalitarianism, the belief in the primacy of equality over other values.

Social Class: Socialism traditionally has been associated with the interest of oppressed and exploited working class.¹⁴³

BCP initiated ideal socialist policies in the first years of its rule. Common humanity, fraternity, social equality, oppressed and exploited classes are the main concepts of ideal socialism that related minorities. Moreover, in ideal socialism there is no reference to ethnic differences or nationalistic values.¹⁴⁴ As a result, ideal socialism is in favor of equality of all human beings. Ethnic discrimination, nationalist or racist

¹⁴¹ Lilia Petkova, "The Ethnic Turks in Bulgaria: Social Integration and Impact on Bulgarian- Turkish Relations, 1947- 2000." *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 1, No. 4, June 2002. p. 42.

¹⁴² Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, (2003) p. 36.

¹⁴³ Andrew Heywood, *Politics*. (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan Publishers, 2002) pp. 49–50.

¹⁴⁴ Ömer E. Lütem, *Türk- Bulgar İlişkileri 1983-1989, Cilt I, 1983-1985*. (Ankara: ASAM Yayınları, 2000) p. 242

violations, and repressive policies are not acceptable in ideal socialist states.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, minorities enjoyed a short period of ideal socialist state values in the first years of socialist regime in Bulgaria. This period was very short. Gradually, Bulgaria transformed into orthodox communism of Soviet regime where Communist Party serve as vanguard of working class. Especially in Stalin era, SU turned into a totalitarian dictatorship operating through systematic intimidation, repression and terror.¹⁴⁶ Bulgarian regime took that process as an example and put into practice those polices especially after Jhivkov came to power and became unchallengeable in BCP.

2.7.1. Educational Rights

Tolerant atmosphere of communist era encouraged minorities to organize and demand their rights from new regime. As mentioned before, Muslim community once more concentrated on religious rights and educational rights. About educational rights, Turkish Teachers Conference was realized in Omurtag in 26 January 1946 and declared demands of Turkish community:

Private school status of Turkish schools should be continued. Language in those schools should be Turkish (only Bulgarian literature, geography and history lessons could be taught in Bulgarian language). Equality of Turkish teachers and Bulgarian ones should be guaranteed. Directors of Turkish schools should be Turks. Equality of Turkish schools and Bulgarians should be guaranteed. Religious lessons should continue in Turkish schools. Two pedagogical schools should be opened in northern and southern Bulgaria.¹⁴⁷

However, BCP Central Committee decided to nationalize Turkish schools in the same year. Private school status of those schools was ended. Although, that process was strictly criticized by Turkish community, it was a fact that, general quality of Turkish schools gradually improved in the following years. Financial burdens over Turkish community decreased because state subsidies for minority schools became enough to continue education in those schools. In 1946, 60 million leva subsidy from

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p.242

¹⁴⁶ Heywood, p. 53.

¹⁴⁷ Bilal Şimşir, Bulgaristan'daki Türk Azınlığı (2). Balkanlar'da Türk Kültürü, Sayı:49, Ekim-Kasım-Aralık 2003. p. 5

state budget was transferred to Turkish schools.¹⁴⁸ Before nationalization process conditions of teachers in those schools were awful. Their salaries were not paid regularly; they did not have social security and pensioner rights.¹⁴⁹ After nationalization, all of their rights were guaranteed and their salaries started to be paid by state. Government also became responsible for publication of new textbooks. Difficulties for printing and publishing new textbooks were ended. After the nationalization process, more and more Turkish students started to continue their education in higher schools. In addition to those developments, education became free and compulsory for children aged between 7 and 15, Turkish pedagogical schools opened in Stara Zagora, Kardjali, Razgrad and Shumen, and also departments (Turkish literature, mathematics, physics, history) opened in Sofia University for training Turkish minority teachers.¹⁵⁰ Number of Turkish schools gradually increased and reached to 1199 in 1950.¹⁵¹ As it is seen, nationalization of Turkish schools was generally beneficial for Turkish minority. Literacy and education level of Turkish minority increased. This enabled some Turks to participate Bulgarian political life more easily. However, Turkish community generally did not welcome nationalization process. They saw it as a first step of assimilation process. Therefore, nationalization of Turkish schools, together with collectivization of lands, became one of the most significant reasons of 1950-51 migrations. Of course, it was not easy to accept losing autonomous status of Turkish schools, but it had been seen that education level in those schools were awful. Turkish children in those schools did not have equal opportunities compared with Bulgarian ones in Bulgarian schools.¹⁵² A degree of equality was achieved after nationalization process.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 7.

¹⁴⁹ Lüttem, p. 72

¹⁵⁰ Kristo Manchev, Yurda Yuvaya Dönen Niçin Hain Oluyor?, *Balkanlar'da Türk Kültürü*, Sayı: 46, Ocak-Şubat-Mart 2003. p.9.

¹⁵¹ Şimşir, (2003-II) p. 10.

¹⁵² Lüttem, p. 73

2.7.2. Religious Rights

About religious rights Muslim Community was not lucky as in educational rights even in the tolerance period of Communist regime. Because communism externalizes all religious beliefs and sees them as ‘opium of society’, regime was not tolerant against religious rights of Muslim community. In 1951, Regulations on the Spiritual Administration of Muslims in the People’s Republic of Bulgaria¹⁵³ became a law that regulates all religious affairs of Muslim community. That law guaranteed religious freedoms of Muslim community. Basically, it did not intervene in religious practices of ordinary people and allowed all Muslim religious districts to elect their own clergymen. Those clergymen would elect Chief Mufti who represents all Muslim Community. Problem starts here. Law gave too much power to Chief Mufti. Supreme Religious Court was attached to Chief Mufti’s Office, issues about ‘*vakif*’ properties were totally bound to that office; he could dismiss clergymen in districts and even deciding to build new mosques became responsibility of Chief Mufti.¹⁵⁴

Giving such great powers might be seen as increasing autonomy of Muslim community. In contrast, such great power created a new struggle about Chief Muftis’ Office in the following years. Regime would never let Chief Muftis to use their powers properly. Muslim community and regime fought for electing their own candidates to office and usually regime forced Chief Muftis to act according to socialist rules. Indeed, regime was intolerant not only against Muslims but also all religious beliefs throughout the country. The communist regime abolished religious education, confiscated church property and launched attacks on clergy, thereby overtaking completely the management of the Church.¹⁵⁵ Bulgarian Orthodox Church was totally controlled and turned into an obedient tool of the regime. Catholics, Protestants and Jews in Bulgaria also faced with restrictions about practicing their religions freely.¹⁵⁶ Secularization or

¹⁵³ Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, (2003) pp. 39-44

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, Pp.42-43

¹⁵⁵ Ina Merdjanova, “Uneasy Tolerance: Interreligious Relations In Bulgaria After The Fall Of Communism” *Religion In Eastern Europe* XXVI, 1 (February 2006) p.2

www.georgefox.edu/academics/undergrad/departments/soc-swk/ree/merdjanova_tolerance.pdf 30.04.2008

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p.6

even atheism in all aspects of life was imposed by the regime as a result of communist ideology.

2.7.3. Political and Civil Rights

Beside educational and religious rights, Turkish minority enjoyed tolerant policies of new regime in other areas. Turkish newspapers and magazines which were closed down in fascist era re-opened and number of newspapers and magazines published in Turkish language increased gradually.¹⁵⁷ Number of Turks participated in BCP committees and organizations also increased steadily as higher education level rises. 4000 Turks became member of BCP and 18.000 Turks were employed in various levels of state offices in those years.¹⁵⁸ Turkish theatres and cultural centers were opened in mixed regions, Bulgarian National Radio was broadcasting in Turkish regularly, and a department of *Narodna Prosveta* Publisher's was publishing Turkish novels. As it is seen general situation of Turkish community was not bad. It was clear that regime tries to impose socialist values on Turkish community by different ways.

On the other hand, inconsistent policies towards Turkish minority were continuing in the communist era also. For instance, as integration policies were continuing, regime allowed a large number of Turks to immigrate to Turkey between 1950 and 1951. On the one hand Bulgarian authorities gave important rights and freedoms and tried to integrate Turks into communist regime; on the other hand they allowed immigration of large number of Turks. In 1950-51 periods 154,397 individuals immigrated to Turkey.¹⁵⁹ It was a surprise because there were not large scale oppressions or negative policies towards them in those years. Two main reasons of those emigrations were: nationalization of Turkish schools and collectivization of lands.¹⁶⁰ As mentioned before nationalization of Turkish schools, and ending of the autonomous status of those schools disturbed Turks. More importantly, collectivization of lands and prohibition of private property frightened them greatly. Most of them were

¹⁵⁷ Karpat, p.328.

¹⁵⁸ Marushiakova and Popov, (2002) p.12. Referring Moutavchieva, the Turks: in Relations of Compatibility and Incompatibility between Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria. Sofia, 1995, p. 29.

¹⁵⁹ Petkova, p.44.

¹⁶⁰ Ömer Osman Erendoruk, İçimizdeki İnci Taneciği: Zulüm Altında Kesişen Yollar. (İstanbul: Samanyolu Yayıncılık, 2004) pp. 30–31.

living in rural areas and had their own lands to cultivate. Collectivization of lands and establishment of cooperatives were meaning that they would lose their lands and work for the state not for themselves.

Overall, although new communist regime tried to integrate Turkish minority into Bulgarian social, political and economic life in the first decade of its rule, its' suspicions and paranoia about Turks had never ended. Integration process of Turks was gradually transformed into assimilation in the following years. Lack of trust among two sides was the major reason of unsuccessful integration policy.¹⁶¹ Communist regime had never trusted to Turks and saw them as potential threat to regime; even in the peak of integration process it allowed migration of hundred thousands of Turks to Turkey. On the other hand, Turks had also never trusted to new regime and even saw typical processes (collectivization, nationalization of schools) of all socialist systems as policies targeted specifically at them. Again in the peak of equal treatment policies with Bulgarians (participation in BCP, higher education level, Turkish newspapers, magazines etc...) most of them had never hesitated to migrate from Bulgaria. This distrust continued and deepened in the following years.

2.8. End of Tolerance Period and Assimilation Policies

In 1956 Politburo of BCP took a decision to preserve and strengthen Bulgarian national conscience. Two main reasons were responsible for ending of integration policies. First, as Cold War started Turkey and Bulgaria split into two rival sides. Turks in Bulgaria became potential allies of Western Bloc.¹⁶² Second, integration process (or imposing of socialist values and transforming Turkish community) was unsuccessful. Turks generally objected to policies like collectivization of lands and nationalization of Turkish schools and evaluated those as policies specifically targeting Turks. Although participation of Turks in different parts of state administration increased, these were a small part of Turkish society who lives in cities. Great amount of Turks were living in

¹⁶¹ Lütem, p.77

¹⁶² Karpat, p.301

rural areas and were directly affected from collectivization process. In addition, secular or even atheist characteristic of socialist system contradicted with traditional, conservative and religion based Turkish community. Because of those reasons, government's moderate and tolerant policies were transformed into more oppressive and radical policies against minorities in the following years. Now Bulgaria also had a big brother (Soviet Union) who would support him against motherland state of Turks and other outside actors. Mentioned as the 16th republic of SU, Bulgaria had always remained the loyal, little brother up to the end of communist regime.¹⁶³

In 1958, a special plenum of the Politburo marked the beginning of more restrictive policies concerning the minorities' cultural rights.¹⁶⁴ First target was religious freedoms of Muslim community as suited with communist ideology. Government declared that radical nationalism and religious fundamentalism among Muslim community had been intensified. Several precautions were taken immediately:¹⁶⁵ number of clerics and muftis were reduced sharply (approximately 50%), number of religious districts dropped from 800 to 200, Chief Mufti Akif Osmanov was dismissed and new Chief Mufti was appointed directly by government, wearing *feredjes*, traditional clothes of women, was banned. Especially, government intervention on Chief Mufti's Office and dismissal of elected Chief Mufti, Akif Osmanov, highly disturbed Muslim community. From now on, Office of the Chief Mufti was directly linked to the government.. More importantly, the Office was highly politicized and even used for justification of assimilation policy in the following years.

Educational rights of Turkish community were also affected negatively by new radical policies of the government. In 1958/59 academic year, Turkish high schools and pedagogical schools were unified with Bulgarian ones, and in 1959/60 academic year all Turkish primary schools were unified as in same way.¹⁶⁶ All Turkish departments in universities, except Turkish philology department in Sofia University, were closed down. Turkish language lessons became optional at first. Up to 1970s, only in mixed

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, p.330

¹⁶⁴ Petkova, p. 45.

¹⁶⁵ Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, (2003) pp. 53–55.

¹⁶⁶ Many Turkish instructors, including the author's grandfather, resigned from their job and returned to their villages after the unification process completed.

regions, students could choose optional Turkish language lessons, 4 hour per week.¹⁶⁷ Then those optional lessons were finished. Teachers in those schools were appointed to unified schools and forced to instruct in Bulgarian language. Some of them, who resisted against unification of schools, lost their job. Turkish textbooks were collected by government and publication of Turkish books was prohibited. Oppressions over Turkish press restarted and most of the newspapers and magazines were closed down. Turkish theatres and other cultural units were also shutdown. Those developments obviously disturbed Turkish minority members. In 1961, Turkey gave a note to Bulgaria and warned it for violating 1925 Ankara Agreement obligations. Simultaneously, Turks demanded from Bulgarian government to allow their migration to Turkey which was restricted after 1950/51 migrations. Although Bulgaria restricted migrations after 1950/51 movements and tried to integrate Turks to Bulgarian society, getting rid of Turks by migration was always an attractive and first option to homogenize Bulgarian society. In 1967 parties agreed on signing a treaty. According to treaty signed in 1969, priority were given to families divided in 1950/51 migrations. From 1969 to 1978, more than 100.000 people migrated to Turkey.¹⁶⁸

Interestingly, 1969 agreement created short period of a moderate atmosphere between the relations of Turkey and Bulgaria. Several agreements about transportation, tourism and energy were signed between the parties. In those couple of years, Bulgarian government gave warm messages to Turks and concentrate on economic development of mixed regions. However, a new constitution, entered into force in 1971, showed that nothing had changed in practice. New constitution was prepared as there were no any ethnic minorities in Bulgaria. It did not include any reference to minorities and their rights, and defined minorities as citizens of non-Bulgarian origin.¹⁶⁹ According to Dayıoğlu, by that constitution designing of a socialist state based on one nation, one language and homogenous culture became a decisive state policy.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ Hüseyin Memişoğlu, "Türk Azınlık Okullarının Bulgar Okullarıyla Birleştirilmesi." *Balkanlar'da Türk Kültürü*, Sayı: 60, Ekim-Kasım-Aralık 2006, p. 30.

¹⁶⁸ Ağanoğlu, p.313.

¹⁶⁹ Ali Eminov, *Turkish and other Muslim Minorities of Bulgaria* (New York:Routledge, 1997) p. 7

¹⁷⁰ Dayıoğlu, p.290

In the following years Politburo took decision over decision and prepared plan after plan to adjust Bulgarian society to assimilation policy. In most of those official plans and decisions they strongly emphasized concepts like “unified Bulgarian socialist nation” and “regaining national identity.”¹⁷¹ However, throughout the 1970s complicated policies of Bulgarian government towards Turkish minority continued. On the one hand, government initiated some development policies toward mixed regions. Massive modernization process was started in the southeast and northwest of Bulgaria where Turks were dominant. New factories, schools, theatres, cinemas were opened; Turkish villages were supplied with electricity and water, participation of Turks in state administrative system increased.

On the other hand, more moderate assimilation policies against Turks were continuing. In the beginnings of 1970s, optional Turkish languages lessons in some mixed region schools were canceled totally. The only remaining Turkish department in Bulgarian universities, Turkish philology department in Sofia University, was closed down in 1974. Approximately 70% of department’s students were Turks when it was closed down.¹⁷² Koran lessons in the mosques, wearing traditional Muslim dresses, celebrating Muslim religious *Bayrams* and traditional Islamic funeral ceremonies were restricted and in the beginning of 1980s totally banned.¹⁷³ Oppression over Turkish media accelerated. In the beginnings of 1980s, only one magazine: *Yeni Işık* or *Nova Svetlina*; and one newspaper: *Yeni Hayat* or *Nov Zhivot* was published both in Turkish and Bulgarian languages. Even though, Turkish male citizens obliged to fulfill their military duty, they were employed as workers in army rather than soldiers.¹⁷⁴ They had to work in construction of buildings, bridges, railways etc. Promoting to higher position in army and becoming permanent soldier was impossible. All Turkish males fulfilled their military obligations in the inner parts of Bulgaria or far from the borders and mixed regions. This shows the magnitude of distrust of regime against its own non-

¹⁷¹ Torsten F. Baest, “Kaynaşmış Sosyalist Millet, Halk Cumhuriyeti ve Türk Azınlık.” in *Doğu Avrupa Dosyası*. Ragıp Zarakolu (ed.) (İstanbul: Alan Yayınları, 1990) p. 390.

¹⁷² Memişoğlu, p. 30.

¹⁷³ Ali Eminov, *Bulgaristan’daki Türkler*. *Balkanlar’da Türk Kültürü*, Sayı:46, Ocak- Şubat- Mart 2003, p. 7.

¹⁷⁴ Karpat, p.342.

Bulgarian citizens. That great distrust had never decreased instead it deepened in the 1980s.

2.8.1. Pomak Assimilation Policies Promoted before Revival Process

Bulgaria's treatment towards Pomak minority throughout history, gives us important clues about the process that started in the beginning of 1980s against Turkish minority. It can be said that Bulgaria practiced over Pomaks, how assimilation policies would be successful and adapted those policies to new assimilation process started in the 1980s. There are controversial views about the origins of Pomaks. Turkish historians believe that Pomaks are descendants of various Turkic population who had settled in the Balkans and had converted to Islam long before Ottomans conquest.¹⁷⁵ According to those historians, Pomaks welcomed Ottoman rule in the Balkans and even assisted them in their further conquests. Bulgarian historians generally claim that Pomaks had been Bulgarians who were *turkified*, voluntarily or mostly by force, during the Ottoman era.¹⁷⁶ Some Greek historians on the other hand, claim that Pomaks were descendants of ancient Thracians and Greeks who Islamized later.¹⁷⁷

Although international treaties guaranteed the rights and freedoms of all minorities in Bulgaria without any priority, governments' policies towards Pomaks was always more radical and aggressive throughout the history when compared with policies towards Turkish minority. There were several reasons for such aggressive policies towards Pomaks. First of all, Bulgarian governments considered Pomaks as Bulgarian speaking Muslims who Islamized during the Ottoman era. According to those views Pomaks had Bulgarian origin. Therefore, governments had to assist them to regain their Bulgarian identity. Secondly, the number of Pomaks was low comparing with the number of Turks. Therefore, they were always easy target than Turks and could create fewer problems against aggressive strategies. Moreover, they lived in specific region comparing with Turks who were settling in more broad geography. Lastly, Pomaks did not have a kin state that could protect them against the aggressive policies of Bulgarian

¹⁷⁵ Eminov, (2007) p. 9

¹⁷⁶ Rossen Vassilev, "Post-Communist Bulgaria's Ethnopolitics." *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 1, No:2, December 2001, p. 39.

¹⁷⁷ Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, (2003) p.11.

governments.¹⁷⁸ Perhaps, that might be the most encouraging factor for Bulgarian governments so they initiated more radical policies towards Pomaks.

First Christianization and *Bulgarization* process of Pomaks started just before the start of Balkan wars in the beginnings of 1910s and second Christianization process started just before communist takeover in 1942.¹⁷⁹ Pomak villages were burned; people were forced to leave their villages and resettled in inner parts of Bulgaria, mosques were converted to churches; tortures, imprisonment, death penalties were common.¹⁸⁰ Up to the communist era, it is estimated that thousands of Pomaks were converted to Christian religion some of them voluntarily, most of them by force. As mentioned above, in their first decades in power, the communists denigrated the importance of ethnic differences, both on the Bulgarian and the Turkish side, and expected ethnicity to be submerged with the development of a socialist and then communist society.¹⁸¹ Pomaks enjoyed religious and educational freedoms which were given by new regime. In the beginnings of 1970s, 3rd wave of Christianization process towards Pomaks was started. Especially in the period between 1972- 1974, assimilation of Pomaks was intensified. Arabic names of Pomaks were converted to the Bulgarian ones, identity cards were changed, strong propaganda towards them continued. They lost their jobs and they were humiliated, threatened and imprisoned.¹⁸² In 1975 approximately 500 Pomaks were imprisoned in famous prison of Belene, which situated in the island on Danube River.¹⁸³

Understandably, a group of Pomaks voluntarily accepted Bulgarian identity to reach privileged life of Bulgarians and to live with the same opportunities of Bulgarians. As a result, Christianization of Pomaks was completed before assimilation process over Turkish minority intensified in the beginning of 1980s. By 1980 the names of most Pomaks (some 200.000) had been changed.¹⁸⁴ Only small group of Pomaks who identify themselves as Turks and live in mixed regions, escaped from that process.

¹⁷⁸ Hugh Poulton, *Balkanlar: Catisan Azinliklar, Catisan Devletler*. (İstanbul: Sarmal Yayınevi, 1993). p. 140

¹⁷⁹ Vesselin Dimitrov, "In Search of a Homogeneous Nation: The Assimilation of Bulgaria's Turkish Minority, 1984-1985" *Journal of Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK. December 23, 2000. p. 6.

¹⁸⁰ Aġanoġlu, pp. 85-89

¹⁸¹ Dimitrov, p. 7.

¹⁸² Poulton, p.136

¹⁸³ Ibid. p. 138

¹⁸⁴ Dimitrov, pp. 7-8

Bulgarian government had never accepted Pomaks as a different ethnic group. Therefore, valid statistical information about Pomaks is not available. It can be only said that, up to the democratic era, Pomaks were highly intimidated by governments to change their religion and to re-gain their Bulgarian identity. Today, although numbers varies in different sources, approximately 200.000 Pomaks are living in Bulgaria ¹⁸⁵

2.8.2. Revival Process and Turkey

Bilateral relations between Bulgaria and Turkey were interestingly good in the beginnings of 1980s. General Evren visited Bulgaria in 1981 and President Todor Zhivkov visited Turkey in 1983. Although, Turkey- Bulgaria relations were in peak in the ends of 1970s and in the beginnings of 1980s, this did not prevent Bulgaria to start more radical policies against Turkish minority. Communist regime started to see Turkish minority as a threat to unified socialist Bulgarian nation. Strong propaganda started in schools, media and public administration about ethnic origins of Turkish minority. Departments were established in universities to study on ethnics origins of Turks. New Bulgarian teachers were appointed to the mixed regions to accelerate anti-Turkish propaganda. Chief Mufti's Office and clergies loyal to the regime became leaders of the campaign. Main theory of that systematic propaganda was that: Turks in Bulgaria had been Slavic Bulgarians before Ottoman era, and they were Islamized and Turkified during the 500 years of 'Ottoman Yoke.'¹⁸⁶ Turks needed an awakening, thus they regain their true national consciousness and identity. Some precautions were taken to secure the *Bulgarization* process:

- Speaking Turkish had been forbidden.
- Turks were forced to change their Turkish- Muslim names to Slavic-Christian names
- Turkish minority was restrained from exercising its own traditions and customs. Marriage, circumcision and funeral ceremonies had been restricted.
- Buildings and mosques that represented Turkish- Islamic culture were systematically destroyed.

¹⁸⁵ Wikipedia gives a number between 150.000- 200.000 in <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pomaks> 19.04.2008

¹⁸⁶ Lütem, pp. 459- 468

-Turkish intellectuals were prevented from active duty in politics, economy and administration.

-Turks were neither permitted to migrate to Turkey or visit Turkey as tourists.
¹⁸⁷

Speaking Turkish was not only prohibited in public places, but also in ordinary life, even among family members. Speaking Turkish was fined by 5 levas. If it was continued amount of fine was increased up to 50 levas.¹⁸⁸ Insisting to speak Turkish was usually resulted with imprisonment in Belene. Changing Turkish names to Bulgarian was started in December 1984 in the southern parts of Bulgaria. Turks were forced to abandon their Turkish- Muslim names and to choose Slavic- Christian names from the lists. Turkish villages were besieged by police and army forces, and people were forced to sign documents about their voluntary acceptance of name change. In March 1985, government declared that name change campaign was finished successfully and peacefully, and all citizens converted their names voluntarily.¹⁸⁹

About religious freedoms and practices Bulgaria was much more careful for not disturbing all Islamic worlds. Regional muftis, appointed by government, periodically declared that religious practices were not restricted or prevented by the regime. New Chief Mufti, Nedim Gendjev, was entirely loyal to the regime and promoted assimilation strategies personally. Restrictions over religious practices became strict prohibitions in the following years. Traditional funeral, marriage and *Bayram* ceremonies, circumcision of male infants were totally banned. Special importance was given to kindergartens, schools and army where *Bulgarization* campaign might be much more effective.¹⁹⁰ The most frightening thing in mixed region was special groups and agents who monitored and investigated how the process continues. Although, Turkey demanded from Bulgaria to allow emigration several times during the process, Bulgaria rejected all demands by strongly emphasizing that there

¹⁸⁷ İlker Alp, Bulgarian Atrocities. (Nicosia; Rustem& Brothers Publishers, 1988) pp. 165-166.

¹⁸⁸ Lütem, pp. 439-440.

¹⁸⁹ Poulton, pp. 159-160.

¹⁹⁰ Lütem, p. 343

were no Turks in Bulgarian territories and those accepted Bulgarian identity voluntarily and signed documents about their voluntary actions.

It was interesting that up to the revival process, although assimilation policies were initiated in more moderate way, we could not see any important resistance from Turkish minority. Responses against those policies were not strong enough to take attention of international public opinion. Revival process, especially name change operation, awakened Turks at the end. However, this was not an awakening as communist regime wanted. In contrast, revival process instigated Turkish nationalism and started resistance movements according to the Turkish intellectuals.¹⁹¹

Resistance against assimilation process actually started in the mid of 1980s. Before that, Turks had not thought that their Turkish- Muslim identity was in threat. However name change operation, prohibition of circumcision and funeral ceremonies, destruction of cemeteries and mosques directly threatened their Turkish-Muslim identities. In traditional societies religion is not a choice but an identity of that society and conversion of religion means conversion of their ethnic identity.¹⁹² Although Turkish community was not a devoutly religious society in the 1980s and highly secularized under the communist regime, they were still aware that they are in the brink of losing their ethnic identity totally. Bulgarian officials visited their homes and forced them to sign the documents, speaking Turkish even among family members were restricted. Regime even intervened to their private life. This was a clear motivating factor to resist against those humiliations. Turkey, as a kin state, also supported Turkish resistance movements especially after Bulgaria rejected the demands about allowing migrations. There were rumors among Turkish minority that, members of National Intelligence Service of Turkey infiltrated to Bulgarian territories and organized Turkish resistance movements. However, it is misleading to mention about strong and organized resistance movement in Bulgaria. Instead Turkish resistance in Bulgaria had never become an effective and unified movement, although it strengthened in the revival

¹⁹¹ Türker, p.25

¹⁹² Michael Gerson, "Türkiye her şeye rağmen dini özgürlük örneği" *Radikal*, 11.06.2007, p. 10, firstly published in *the Washington Post*.

period. Norwegian Helsinki Committee stated three main reasons for such an unorganized and weak resistance movements:

1. Communication Problem: Turks could not communicate with each other healthily. In most of the villages they did not have telephones or even televisions. Existing TV channels and radio stations were owned by state and it was not possible to hear anything about assimilation from those ways. Without proper communication ways it was difficult to built any organized and strong resistance movement.

2. Fear from agents: Turks concerned about loosing their jobs, properties and all of their rights, if they engaged in any resistance movements. Agents of the regime were in everywhere and action against regime would be punished severely. This was always a deterrent factor for Turks which prevent them from participation in resistance movements.

3. Lack of civil human right organizations: Bulgaria did not allow any civil human right organization for entering to the country and reporting about the happenings. Government denied all blames by saying 'there is no any ethnic group rather than Bulgarians in our country.'¹⁹³

Of course this does not mean nothing has been done against assimilation policies. Demonstrations started in the end of 1984 in southern parts of Bulgaria. First demonstrations were held in Momchilgrad, Djebel and Ivaylovgrad.¹⁹⁴ In the beginning of 1985, there were approximately 1000 Turkish prisoners only in Belene and most of them were accused as being Ankara's agents who try to destabilize Bulgaria.¹⁹⁵ Turkish National Salvation Movement in Bulgaria was founded under the leadership of Ahmet Doğan to organize resistance movement.¹⁹⁶ In the end of 1988, because the problem has been internationalized, demonstration throughout Bulgaria intensified. Oppressions also increased parallel to the demonstrations. Some families were exiled to the inner parts of Bulgaria. It should be noted that because of great misinformation and censorship during the revival process, it is difficult to know exact numbers of casualties. Ömer Lütem, who was ambassador in Sofia during that period, tells that it is not possible to know

¹⁹³ Norveç Helsinki Komitesi, Bulgaristan'daki Türk ve İslam Azınlığına Baskı, Prof. Dr. Yaşar Yücel (çev). (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1988) pp. 15-17.

¹⁹⁴ Poulton, pp.169-170.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 173-174.

¹⁹⁶ Dayıoğlu, p.300

exactly what happened in the Revival Period because of those misinformation and censorship.¹⁹⁷

Turkey did not remain indifferent to the assimilation campaign and demanded from Bulgarian government to restore the rights and freedoms of Turkish minority in the first stages of the campaign. Bulgarian government did not accept those demands. Turkey's next step was, demanding another immigration agreement between the parties.¹⁹⁸ However, Bulgaria again rejected that demand by denying the existence of Turks in Bulgarian territory. Then, Turkey terminated all economic, cultural and sport relations with Bulgaria. Bulgaria responded by declaring Turkey's attempts as an intervention on its internal issues and recommended to Turkey to solve its own Kurdish problem and to recognize Armenian genocide.¹⁹⁹ Soviet Union, as a big brother, also defined the process as internal issues of Bulgaria and stayed neutral or gave indirect support.²⁰⁰

Incidents in May 1989 became crucial for solving the problem peacefully. Clashes throughout the country, frightened even ordinary Bulgarians, and reports of international human rights organizations such as International Amnesty and Helsinki Human Watch Committee clearly showed that something must be done before more tragic incidents occurred. Big powers like US and UK, and even socialist states like Yugoslavia and German Democratic Republic criticized Bulgaria and demanded to start negotiations with Turkey. Eventually, BCP realized the seriousness of the problem. Country was in the edge of civil war, economy was stagnating as in other eastern bloc states, Soviet Union had already ended its indirect support because of its own problems, and international oppressions increased day by day. Finally, in 29 May 1989, Todor Zhivkov declared that Bulgaria would open its borders and Turks could migrate to Turkey if they want. Turkey immediately opened its borders without any condition. Big Excursion, the biggest emigration movement in Europe since WW II, started. More than 350.000 Turks passed the borders within 3 months.

¹⁹⁷ Lüttem, pp. 184 and 419

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 215.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 294-297

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 489-495.

2.8.3. Factors Leading to Assimilation Policy

It is not easy to explain why Bulgarian governments chose such a risky policy which could start civil war in their territories. As it is mentioned before, first decade of communist regime had been a honeymoon period for Turkish minority and also for Pomaks and Romas. However, more radical policies coming after honeymoon years eliminated all cordiality of communist regime. It is a fact that, communist regime tried to integrate Turkish community into Bulgarian society peacefully at the beginning. In the beginnings of 1970s, official reports were written about dissatisfaction about the integration of Turks to the communist system. Reports included complaints about lack of socialist consciousness and discipline in Turkish community. Loyalty of Turks to the socialist regime had always been suspected.²⁰¹ Shortly, BCP came into conclusion that it was not possible to achieve integration through peaceful ways. As a result, main reason of revival process or beginning of strict assimilation strategies was unsuccessfulness of moderate integration policies. Regime needed more radical policies to guarantee unified Bulgarian socialist nation.

Another reason was population. Although Turks had regularly migrated to Turkey, proportion of Turks in Bulgaria was staying stable because of high birth rates. In 1984 Bulgaria's total population was approximately 9 million and 10% of that population was Turks.²⁰² Bulgarian regime frightened from the possibility of autonomy or even independency demand from Turkish Minority in following years.²⁰³ As a result that statistic was frequently used by regime to legitimize its violent actions in revival process. Ordinary Bulgarians were frightened by emphasizing the high population growth of Turkish minority. Third reason was economic. 1960s and early 1970 were brilliant years for Bulgaria. Rapid industrialization and modernization increased the welfare of the state. Agrarian country became largely urbanized and industrialized with successful economic planning and country begun to export new electric and electronic

²⁰¹ Kemal Kirişçi, "Post Second World War Immigration from Balkan Countries to Turkey." *Turkish Review of Balkan Studies*, Annual 1994/95 2, Foundation for Middle East and Balkan Studies (OBIV) retd. Ambassador İsmail Soysal (ed.) published by ISIS Ltd, İstanbul. p. 178.

²⁰² Baest, pp. 395–397.

²⁰³ Dayıoğlu, p. 308.

industries to Eastern Bloc.²⁰⁴ However situation deteriorated in the late 1970s. Bulgaria faced with economic crises like other communist states. 1977 and 1980 were years of negative growth, which was followed by bad harvests, negative trade balances, power cuts and general decline in standard of living.²⁰⁵ Regime used revival process and promoted nationalism to shift people's attention from economic problems. States generally create imaginary enemies or exaggerate potential threats to overshadow effects of internal crisis. Same tactic was used in Bulgaria. Regime tried to forget the effects of economic crises by exaggerating Turkish minority threat and promoting nationalism.

Fourth reason was regional. Many states in the Balkan region implemented similar policies against the minorities in that period; In Greece similar policies were being initiated against Turkish minority in West Thrace, in Romania against Hungarian minority, in Yugoslavia against Macedonians and in Turkey against Kurds.²⁰⁶ Regional states used similar policies to homogenize their society. Turkey had initiated similar policies against non-Muslim minorities since the establishment of the Republic. Policies defined as nationalization of economy, creation of Turkish entrepreneur class or discriminative *Varlık Vergisi* policies²⁰⁷ aimed to homogenize society and eliminate potential non-Muslim entrepreneurs. Another example about the issue was; 1982 Constitution allowed expression of thoughts in Turkish territories, only with official languages of states that Turkey recognized.²⁰⁸ Target was naturally Kurdish language. Ironically, in the same years, Turkey demanded from Bulgaria restoration of rights and freedoms of Turkish minority, including free use of Turkish language which was unofficial in Bulgarian territories. Greece tried to get rid of Muslims by population exchange firstly and then by oppressive methods in Western Thrace. Therefore, Bulgarian case was not unique but more violent example of those kinds of policies.

²⁰⁴ Walter Laqueur, *Europe in our time, A history of 1945-1992*. (New York: Penguin Books, 1992) p. 545.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.* p. 546.

²⁰⁶ James F. Brown, *Nationalism, Democracy and Security in the Balkans*. (Worcester: Dartmouth Publishers, 1992) p. 119.

²⁰⁷ See Ayşe Buğra, *Devlet ve İşadamları (State and Business in Modern Turkey, A Comparative Study)*. Fikret Adaman (çev) (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1995)

²⁰⁸ Uğur Kara, "Soydaşlık temelli siyasetin açmazları," *Radikal İki*, 11.02.07. p.8.

Fifth reason was about Russia. It looks like a conspiracy theory. However, it is common among Turkish minority in Bulgaria. Many Turks believe that Russia forced Bulgaria to initiate such policies to see the consequences. If it was successful, Russia would implement same policies against different ethnic groups in Russian territories.²⁰⁹ The last reason was about Turkey. Bulgaria was always anxious about Turkish intervention to the southeastern part of its territories. ‘*Cypriotization*’ of southeastern part of Bulgaria by Turkey was a nightmare for Bulgarian governments.²¹⁰ They tried to eliminate Turkey’s intervention reasons by denying the existence of Turks in their territories. Zhivkov regime thought that conditions were proper as Turkey was relatively weak because of conflict with Greece and domestic Kurdish problem.²¹¹ However, that policy conversely triggered nationalist movements in Turkey and might result with ‘*Cypriotization*’ of southern parts of Bulgaria if Turkey acted more radically.

2.9. Concluding Remarks

1877-78 Russian-Ottoman war was seen as the start of Turkish minority problem in Bulgaria. Feelings of revenge and hostility in the first years were discouraged by ruling elites and governments because of international pressures and Ottoman fear. Thus, governments’ policies towards minorities especially up to the 1934 coup were more careful and moderate. Köksal defines four different government policies in nation states towards minorities:²¹² repression, assimilation, pluralist policies or institutionalized tolerance, and indifference or ignorance. She also defines 3 periods up to the communist rule in 1944²¹³: ‘monarchical governments and their indifference to minority issues from 1878 to 1919, BAPU government and institutionalized tolerance towards minorities from 1920 to 1923, and right wing and authoritarian government and assimilation policies from 1934 to 1944.’

²⁰⁹ Lütem, p. 492 and Karpat, p. 333

²¹⁰ Karpat, p. 334.

²¹¹ Dimitrov, p.13.

²¹² Köksal, (2006) p. 503.

²¹³ *Ibid.* p.508

That classification is generally valid and useful. However, such generalizations are misleading sometimes. For instance, first wave of Christianization of Pomaks occurred just before the Balkan wars. It was violent and oppressive process that government policy cannot be defined as indifference. Some interventions over the status of muftis and Turkish schools in the first period were the first signs of repressions and assimilation policies also. Those interventions cannot be defined as indifference policy of government again. However, that classification gives general and useful ideas about governments' policies towards minorities up to 1944. Missing years between 1924-1934 can also be divided into two periods. From 1924 to 1928 right wing autocratic government, but moderate policies compared with 1934-1944 period. From 1929 to 1934 democratic, liberal government but more radical policies compared with 1920-1923 agrarian period. Köksal also claims that, assimilation became policy option only when both ruling elites and minority groups became more unified.²¹⁴ It is totally true about the process started after 1934 coup. Coup eliminated nearly all opponents of nationalist, rightist movements and a great degree of unity had been built among those groups to start new revisionist policies. On the other hand, Turkish minority enjoyed liberal conditions of 1928-34 period and especially kemalist groups and movements unified and organized so well that frightened Bulgarian nationalists.

It should be noted that, international treaties (Berlin and Neuilly) and bilateral treaties with motherland (1909 and 1913 Istanbul and 1925 Ankara) always played a key role over Bulgaria's treatment of minorities. Those treaties and effect of closer motherland state discouraged Bulgarian governments to initiate more radical policies towards Turkish minority. In the 1930s revival of Italian and German revisionism encouraged Bulgaria to neglect multilateral and bilateral treaties signed before, and Bulgarian government looked to Italy and Germany as a potential ally who could protect them against motherland state of Turks. Therefore, assimilation policies against Turks started only after guarantees of bilateral and multilateral treaties weakened in the eve of WW II and Bulgaria found a potential of strong and revisionist ally.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 518.

Overall, Turks in Bulgaria generally demanded two main liberties from Bulgarian governments: education in mother tongue in their own schools, and electing their religious leaders and practicing their religion freely.²¹⁵ Although, some upwards and downwards were seen through the years, generally their right of education in mother tongue had not interrupted seriously up to 1934. They enjoyed education in mother tongue in their semi-autonomous schools. They elected their own religious leaders and other clerics, even though some interventions come from state authorities. They practiced their religion in mosques freely, taught religion in religious schools, even there were high schools for graduation of clerics and Turkish literature teachers. Moreover, they had been represented in Bulgarian parliaments, number varied from 4 to 20 members in different periods.²¹⁶ Comparing with Pomaks and Romans, they rarely disturbed by Bulgarian ultra nationalists and fascists. Their economic, political and social conditions visibly improved under Agrarian government of Stambolyski. They enjoyed freedom of organization and established many civil organizations especially under liberal governments of 1928-34 period. Finally, they published significant numbers of newspapers and magazines in their mother tongue without any restrictions up to 1934 coup again.

However, there were some serious negative sides even before 1934 also. First of all, Turks live in underdeveloped, agrarian regions of Bulgaria. Especially southeast of Bulgaria was poorest part of the country where majority of people were Turks and governments neglected or isolated those regions economically rather than financing them.²¹⁷ Even before 1934, except Agrarian government era, governments initiated irredentist, ethno cultural and nationalist policies²¹⁸, which usually aimed to get rid of Turks by their voluntary migration. They overlooked attacks and annoyances against Turks which aimed to force them to leave the country. Rather than integration policies towards minorities, irredentist policies dominated Bulgarian political life even in those years. “Ethnic cleansing and assimilation were considered to be natural means for the neutralization of the ‘Turkish threat’, and any idea of broadening the rights of the Turks

²¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 511.

²¹⁶ B.B. Volgyi, p. 18

²¹⁷ Lozanova, *et.al.* pp.27-28

²¹⁸ B.B. Volgyi, pp.18–19

and Muslim Bulgarians, institutionalized through international treaties, was considered step towards autonomy and, eventually, secession from the national territory.”²¹⁹

Similar inconsistent policies about minorities continued throughout the communist rule. Communist regime tried to integrate ethnic minorities through different ways, which radicalized in the last decade of regime because of reasons explained above. Those integration policies were common in the Cold War period and were used by the regimes to homogenize the society and eliminate possible threats. In the paranoid atmosphere of Cold War, regimes were intolerant against their minorities. Therefore, Bulgarian case was not a unique. However, it became so violent and oppressive especially in the revival period that it took the attention of all international community. It should be noted that only after “Big Excursion” international community understood the seriousness of the problem. Such a massive influx of people was unexpected in the western public opinion. Bulgaria and Turkey could solve the problem by bilateral negotiations and agreed on more controlled immigrations. In those conditions, cases in Bulgaria might have been seen as routine policies of governments which occurred in many states during the Cold War. Actually, up to the revival process, policies against the minorities (particularly Turkish minority) could be seen as routine, but harsher, integrative policies initiated in all regional countries.²²⁰ However in revival period, everything got out of control and human rights violations in Bulgaria became so serious that they endangered the existence of ethnic minorities in Bulgaria. Ironically, revival period awakened Turkish nationalism rather than Bulgarian one. Zhivkov, defined as ‘social fascist’ by Turks²²¹, was overthrown on 10 November 1989, just 2 months after the Big Excursion. Petar Mladenov, a former foreign minister, replaced Zhivkov and more democratic period started in Bulgaria.

²¹⁹ Lozanova, *et.al.* p.28

²²⁰ Violent and more radical policies against Pomaks and Romas started long before Revival Process. We should not underestimate human rights violations and restrictions on rights and freedoms implemented before Revival Process.

²²¹ Erendoruk, p. 159.

CHAPTER III: EFFECTS OF DEMOCRATIZATION AND EU MEMBERSHIP PROCESS ON TURKISH MINORITY

3.1. Developments before 1991

Communist Bloc faced with economic and political difficulties in the beginnings of 1980s. Brzezinski defines those years as collapse of Marxist internationalism and rise of traditional nationalism in Eastern Europe.²²² This definition especially suits with the situation in Bulgaria. Nationalization of politics and severe minority rights violations, intensified in the 1980s, totally contradicts with the core of socialism. Indeed, Stalinism had destroyed humanist side of socialism and without humanist values like equality and fraternity it is not easy to distinguish socialism from fascism. Therefore, regime of Bulgaria in the 1980s could not be defined as socialist regime. Dimitrov describes the character of Bulgarian regime in the 1980s as a nationalist and ethnic based.²²³ Stalin, Chavushesku, Zhivkov and some other leaders transformed socialist regimes to their personal dictatorships. Communist parties became autocratic, oppressive, fascist-like tools of personal dictatorships. Regimes were distanced from humanist core of socialism and became a source of fear which repressed opponent views strictly. As a result, in the last days of communist regimes in Eastern Europe, even though formation of fascist type organizations were strictly prohibited throughout the communist era, governments or leaders enforced typical fascist policies against minority groups or opponents.

In Bulgarian case, during the revival process, when violence against Turkish minority was intensified, leftist Writers Syndicate of Turkey (WST) sent a letter to its counterparts and strictly criticized the process. In letter, leader of WST Aziz Nesin criticized human rights violations and undemocratic oppressions, emphasized humanist sides of socialism, demanded from its counterparts to protest their government and declared that if process did not stop WST would cut its all relations with Bulgarian

²²² Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Büyük Çöküş*, (Ankara: İş Bankası Yayınları, 2000), p.165.

²²³ Dimitrov, pp. 9-10.

Writers Union.²²⁴ This protest was so meaningful that shows how Bulgarian regime's policies were far from socialist values. Even in revival process, books of leftist Turkish writers such as Yaşar Kemal, Nazım Hikmet, Aziz Nesin, Sabahattin Ali and Orhan Kemal were not prohibited by the regime. Bulgarian Writers Union had close relations with WST and supported its counterpart's struggle against censorship and oppressions over Turkish writers in Turkey. However, situation in Bulgaria in the revival process was so serious and unacceptable that WST examined its relations with Bulgarian counterparts. Another Turkish leftist writer Uğur Mumcu defined Bulgarian regime as bourgeoisie nationalism and claimed that implementation of assimilation policy towards Turkish minority totally contradicts with Marxist- Leninist ideology.²²⁵ Mehmet Barlas wrote in Milliyet that he could not understand how a regime, established for protecting identities of nations and ethnic groups, can initiate such a chauvinist policies.²²⁶ So that, even though it is generally believed that socialist regime in Bulgaria collapsed in 1989, regime was too far from core socialist values like tolerance, equality and humanism even before 1980s. In the early 1970s, awakening of Bulgarian nationalism and nationalization of communism in Eastern Europe²²⁷ eroded the remaining socialist values in Bulgaria. It is better to define the 1989 as collapse of autocratic, personal dictatorship of Jhivkov which was followed by democratic transformations.

Bulgaria's policy towards Turkish minority was always controversial. As mentioned before, in the first decade of communist regime, government decided to integrate Turkish community into socialist Bulgarian community. Transformation of traditional, conservative society into socialist, secular society means an important gift given to socialist bloc which could trigger socialist revolution in motherland state. However, Bulgarian governments had never stayed loyal to their integrative policies. Even in the first years of those integration policies, they allowed migration of thousands of Turks to Turkey. Allowing immigration had always seen as an easiest way from

²²⁴ "Türk Yazarları Levchev'i Köşeye Sıkıştırdılar" *Balkanlarda Türk Kültürü Dergisi*, Sayı: 59, Nisan-Mayıs-Haziran 2006, pp. 14-18.

²²⁵ Uğur Mumcu "Bulgar Şovenliği" in Bilal Şimşir (Ed.), *Türk Basınında Bulgaristan Türkleri, Zorla Ad Değiştirme Sorunu, Ocak-Nisan 1985*. (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1985) pp. 36-37.

²²⁶ Mehmet Barlas "Sofya'da Ne Oluyor" in Bilal Şimşir (Ed.), *Türk Basınında Bulgaristan Türkleri, Zorla Ad Değiştirme Sorunu, Ocak-Nisan 1985*. (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1985) Pp. 53-54.

²²⁷ J.F.Brown, pp.116-117

getting off Turks and homogenization of society. On the other hand, immigrations were always controlled by both states. Migration of huge amount of Turks could upset economy of both states. Although some radical nationalist inside the BCP suggested that migration of all Turks would be better for Bulgaria, generally, economists believed that migration of all Turks would be a disaster for Bulgarian economy. Turkish minority was essential element for Bulgarian economy, particularly in agricultural sector,²²⁸ who cultivated Bulgaria's main imports tobacco and grain. Up to Big Excursion everything was normal. However, in the summer of 1989 more than 350.000 Turks migrated to Turkey within three months. Combining with the end of communist regime, Bulgarian economy collapsed entirely. Bulgaria lost significant number of its peasants, blue coated workers and low level officials.²²⁹ Agricultural revenues and industrial productivity decreased sharply, state administration stopped especially in mixed regions. Some factories were closed down and thousands hectares of lands could not be cultivated due to lack of enough workers. Most importantly, Bulgaria lost hundred thousands of loyal, productive and apolitical (up to 1984 especially) Turks which might share burdens of communist collapse. Not only Turks migrated to Turkey, but also huge amount of Bulgarians migrated to Europe, US, Canada and Australia which deepened the effects of economic crisis in Bulgaria.

On the other hand, Turks who migrated to Turkey faced with enormous difficulties. They lost their homes, lands and relatives. Although they preserved their traditional Turkish identity during the communist years, they faced with more conservative culture in Turkey.²³⁰ Unemployment and cultural difficulties²³¹ were the main reasons of returning of more than 100.000 Turks to Bulgaria within 2 years.²³² Turks migrated from Bulgaria to Turkey to protect their honor and beliefs. However, some of them quickly understood that better life is not possible in Turkey and returned to Bulgaria especially after 1991. On the other hand, it should be noted that migration

²²⁸ Karpat, p. 348.

²²⁹ Darina Vasileva, "Bulgarian Turkish Emigration and Return", in *International Migration Review, Special Issue: The New Europe and International Migration*. Vol. 26, No. 2, Summer, 1992 p.249.

²³⁰ Belkis Kümbetoğlu, "Göçmen ve Sığınmacı Gruplardan Bir Kesit; Bulgaristan Göçmenleri ve Bosnalı Sığınmacılar" in Kemalî Saybaşılı and Gencer Özcan (Eds.) *Yeni Balkanlar, Eski Sorunlar*. (İstanbul: Bağlam Yayıncılık, 1997) pp.235.-237.

²³¹ *Ibid.* pp.239-243

²³² Lüttem, p. 215

from Bulgaria to Turkey continued up to the ends of 1990s. Most of the separated families were unified in Turkey by those new migrations.²³³

Turks in Bulgaria demanded three main rights after overthrow of Zhivkov in November 1989: restoring their names which were converted in revival process, guaranteeing their religious rights and freedom of speech in their own Turkish language. Mladenov government did not resist against those demands. International image of country was very bad because of human rights violations in revival process, and democratic movements inside the country were increasing. Therefore, in December 1989, Mladenov government declared that Turks could re-use their Arabic- Turkish names, practice their Islamic religious rituals and speak Turkish language freely.²³⁴ Turks who were in the prisons were released. Because political figures of Turkish Minority were released, from now on Turks also started to demand freedom of political organization. Participation in Bulgaria's politics became the third important demand of Turkish minority in the following years together with education in mother tongue and freedom of religious practices. Fortunately democratization process allows them to participate in Bulgaria's politics properly.

Interestingly, even in the most suitable time, Turks of Bulgaria had never demanded autonomous status from Bulgarian governments, even though Bulgarian communist regime always frightened from Cypriotization of southern parts of Bulgaria. Why had Turks never demanded autonomous status? There were several reasons: Firstly, Turkey as a mother state was reluctant about autonomous Turkish administration in Bulgarian territories and had never encouraged Turkish minority for such a demand. Even though Bulgarian governments looked to Cyprus case as an example and frightened from new Cypriotization in their territories,²³⁵ Turkish governments saw Cyprus case as a lesson which created many difficulties for both mother state and "junior state" in international politics. Turkish governments were aware of that any unilateral intervention to Bulgarian territories or formation of new "junior state" would create a lot of economic, political and social problems as it was

²³³ Kümbetoğlu, p. 234

²³⁴ Poulton, p. 198.

²³⁵ Vassilev, p.40

seen in Cyprus case. Therefore, Turkish governments preferred to see a kind of Turkish Diaspora in Bulgaria and even in the worst situation they used diplomacy and international ways to solve the problems. The last way of solving the problem had always been: unconditional acceptance of immigrants but not a military intervention or encouragement of autonomy. Even before Big Excursion, some parts of state administration tried to convince Özal government for not allowing such a big immigration. Nuri Gündeş, former Istanbul Chief of Turkish National Intelligence Service (MIT), said that they prefer strong Turkish community in the Balkans and Özal government made a big mistake by allowing emigrations from Bulgaria.²³⁶ As a result, Turkish governments supported Turks of Bulgaria every time, but that support had never gone beyond guaranteeing the basic rights and freedoms of them and the last solution was accepting immigrants unconditionally but not creating new Cyprus problem.

Secondly, mixed regions where Turks are in majority, were underdeveloped regions of the country. Especially south eastern part of Bulgaria was the least developed part. Autonomous administration in the region would be worsened economic conditions and without central financial assistance everything would be much more difficult. Thirdly, Turks were distributed heterogeneously throughout the Bulgaria. However, one part live in south eastern regions and other part live in north eastern regions. It was difficult to unify two groups in one region and demand autonomy. Fourthly, Turks of Bulgaria were too apolitical especially up to the revival process. They live under communist “equality”, and autonomy was unknown word for them. In revival process, their first priority was migration to Turkey as soon as possible. After collapse of communism, economic survival became first priority and autonomous Turkish administration in such conditions was unthinkable. Fifthly, Yugoslavia’s tragic separation in the beginnings of 1990s showed the possible results of such demands clearly. Yugoslavian civil war frightened all ethnic minorities in the region and prevented possible autonomy demands. Lastly, democratization and EU membership process in the middle of 1990 satisfied Turkish minority in Bulgaria. Especially, EU

²³⁶ Can Dündar Soruyor: Neden, Konu: Derin Devlet, broadcasted in NTV, in 06.02.2007.
<http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/ntv/metinler/neden/20070206.asp> 30.05.2008

membership process gradually improved living condition of Turks and eliminated an option of autonomy as a solution. Moreover, Movement for Rights and Freedoms had never brought autonomy as an option or as a bargaining issue. MRF always emphasized that it represents all Bulgarian citizens and strongly respects territorial integrity of Bulgaria.²³⁷ That policy did not stay in theory only, in practice members of MRF acted carefully and had never mentioned any word about autonomy. All those factors eliminated autonomy option for Turks.

3.2. 1991 Constitution and Democratization

Democratization of Bulgaria was painful process. Collapse of communism divided country into two different sides. On the first side there were ex-communists and nationalists who hated from ethnic minorities and led by BCP and then by BSP, on the other hand there were anti-communists, democrats, intellectuals, university students and minority groups led by UDF and MRF. Restoration of the basic rights of Turks increased the tension between the parties. UDF acted with MRF up to the first democratic elections which were held in June 1990. BCP blamed MRF for making ethnic and religious policies and demanded from Central Electoral Commission first and from Bulgarian Constitutional Court then for not allowing MRF to participate in elections.²³⁸ As UDF lost elections surprisingly, it changed its liberal, democratic policies and tried to take sympathy of nationalist groups. Before 1991 elections some members of UDF supported BCP's attempts to prove MRF as unconstitutional.

1991 constitution really banned formation of political parties based on religion, ethnicity or race. (Article 11 (4): There shall be no political parties on ethnic, racial or religious lines, nor parties which seek the violent seizure of state power).²³⁹ As a result, MRF faced with registration problem before 1991 election. Even UDF members, who entered to Bulgarian political life by promising unconditional support for all democratic

²³⁷ Petkova, pp.53

²³⁸ Birol Akgün, "Democratization and Minority Rights in the Post-Communist Balkan States," *Journal Of International Affairs*, June - July 2001 Volume VI - Number 2, p.4

²³⁹ Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria," <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=const&lng=en> 09.03.2008

attempts, hesitated and stayed neutral or supported BCP in discussions about MRF. These discussions showed clearly that the settlement of democratic culture in Bulgaria would take some time. At the end MRF participated in 1991 elections but discussions were not ended. Eventually, in April 1992, Constitutional Court decided that MRF is not unconstitutional because every Bulgarian citizen could join to the party which means party opened its doors to every Bulgarian citizen.²⁴⁰ By that decision, Bulgaria turned critical corner in its democratization process. Although discussions about MRF continued in the following years, participation and representation of Turkish minority in Bulgarian political life was guaranteed by the decision of Constitutional Court.

Although it is generally accepted that democratization of Bulgaria started with 1991 Constitution, it cannot be said that 1991 Constitution was totally democratic. Instead it clearly reflected concerns about Bulgaria's national unity and Cypriotization paranoia. The document stated that Bulgaria is an integral state, its territorial integrity is inviolable and no autonomous territorial formations may exist.²⁴¹ Constitution outlawed ethnic and religious parties and made Bulgarian Orthodoxy as the traditional religion of the country. (Article 13 (3): Eastern Orthodox Christianity shall be considered the traditional religion in the Republic of Bulgaria)²⁴² Religious denominations separated from state administration but state intervention on religious affairs, if necessary, were guaranteed.²⁴³ On the other hand, 1991 constitution guaranteed cultural, linguistic and religious rights and freedoms of minorities through international instruments, in which international law was superior over national law. (Article 5 (4): International treaties which have been ratified in accordance with the constitutional procedure, promulgated and having come into force with respect to the Republic of Bulgaria, shall be part of the legislation of the State and shall have primacy over any conflicting provision of the domestic legislation.)²⁴⁴ As a result, 1991 constitution satisfied Turks basically by guaranteeing three priorities: religious freedoms, linguistic rights and political participation (by Constitutional Court decision). This was enough at the first stage.

²⁴⁰ Dimitrov, pp. 18-19

²⁴¹ Petkova, pp. 49

²⁴² "Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria,"

²³¹ Bulgarian Helsinki Committee Report, (2003) p. 90

²⁴⁴ "Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria"

Moreover, Article 5 (4) of the Constitution became the most important one for Turkish Minority as Bulgaria applied for the EU membership in the following years.

3.3. EU Membership Process and Turkish Minority

After the fall of communism Bulgaria made a choice to become a part of Europe. Commission's opinion on Bulgaria's Application for Membership of the European Union prepared in 1997 strongly emphasized the strategic objective of integration with the EU maintained by consensus by all the governments since 1990 by referring President Stoyanov's and Prime Minister Kostov statements.²⁴⁵ 1991 Constitution was the first step of the process. In May 1991, Government signed the European Convention on Human Rights, which means accepting compulsory jurisdiction of European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). Bulgaria became a member of the Council of Europe in 1992. Then European Association Agreement was signed in 1993 and Bulgaria officially applied to EU membership in 1995. Hence, democratization process in Bulgaria and its positive effects on minority rights should not be evaluated differently from EU membership process. Instead starting from 1991 especially, EU was a clear actor in democratization process of the country.

In minority policies, EU was so sensitive especially in enlargement process of CEECs. Because minority problems were common in CEECs, Commission gave special attention to increasing tolerance against minorities and ensuring their rights and liberties in those countries. Problems were serious especially in Baltic States where Russian minority was suffering from great discrimination, in Romania where Hungarian minority were struggling for their rights and liberties, and in nearly all CEECs where Roma minority was extremely excluded from society. As a result improving minority rights became a conditional factor for EU membership for CEECs and in some states it was one of the most important obstacles for full membership. About Bulgaria and particularly for Turkish minority, EU always declared its pleasure about the improvements in the rights and liberties of Turks especially started from the beginnings

²⁴⁵ Commission Opinion on Bulgaria's Application for Membership of the European Union, (1997) p.8.

of 1990s. Generally it can be said that issues about Turkish minority was one of the less problematic issues in EU membership process and Commission highly concentrated on problems about Roma minority.

Commission's opinion on Bulgaria's Application for Membership of the European Union was the first detailed document of the EU about Bulgaria. Concerning the Turkish Minority, report was highly positive:

The situation of the Turkish minority, which had suffered considerable discrimination before 1989 under the Communist regime, has improved very appreciably in the past few years. Its relations with the rest of the population also appear more harmonious. Some members of the Turkish minority sit in Parliament (fifteen Members of the MRF elected in April 1997). In the 1995 local elections, 25 MRF mayors and more than 1000 MRF town councillors were elected. The Turkish minority receives education in its own language.²⁴⁶

First Commission report on Bulgaria's accession which was prepared in 1998²⁴⁷ was emphasized problems about integrating of Roma community. Turkish minority was mentioned in only two sentences:

The Turkish minority continues to be fully integrated and represented in political life. No particular complaints as regards their educational and language rights were reported.²⁴⁸

As it is seen this report was also highly positive. 1999 report mentioned economic problems such as low investment and high unemployment in regions where Turks are concentrated, and advised to improve Turkish language education.²⁴⁹ Following reports concerning Turkish minority were also positive and main concern of Commission in these reports were again Romas. Especially after MRF became coalition partner in 2001 elections, reports about Turkish minority were more positive and critics usually concentrated on worse conditions of Turks who live in economically less

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁷ Regular Report, from the Commission on Bulgaria's Progress Towards Accession (1998) p.11

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁹ European Commission, *Regular Report, from the Commission on Bulgaria's Progress Towards Accession, 1999* http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/1999/bulgaria_en.pdf 11.07.2008

developed regions. In 2005 report, part of “protection and integration of minorities” totally covers problems about Roma minority and does not mention Turkish minority.²⁵⁰

To understand the effects of EU membership process on Turkish Minority, we should look into Chapter II where evolution of rights and freedoms of Turkish Minority is explained by detail. There it can be seen that although main aim of Bulgarian governments was homogenization of society by assimilation or more easily by forced immigration, they could not initiate their policies freely, except in Revival Period, because of international conjecture. However, the rights and freedoms of Turkish Minority had been frequently violated. Although Turks sometimes enjoyed a period of tolerances, these were short periods and the main objective of Bulgarian governments had never changed. EU membership process changed everything and became more effective than the international treaties of the past which obliged Bulgaria to respect its minorities but frequently breached by Bulgarian governments. Therefore, conditions of Turkish Minority gradually improved. They use their mother tongue freely; education in mother tongue is freely conducted in schools, religious practices are conducted in hundreds of mosques throughout the country. Basically, the most problematic issues of pre-democratization process mostly about their Turkish-Islamic identity are not interrupted as it was seen before.

In addition to that, participation in Bulgaria’s politics has been accomplished by MRF which was unthinkable before the democratization process. So that, considering the violations and assimilation policies of the past, general conditions of Turkish minority has been considerably improved in the past 20 years. Therefore, reports from Commission prepared in the negotiation process were not a surprise. Although some members of Turkish minority were displeased from Commission reports generally, it was a fact that conditions of Roma minority were so awful that could not be compared with the conditions of Turks. In addition, regulation about Roma minorities usually covers regulations about other minorities and means improvement of living conditions of all minorities. Furthermore, it is completely true that Bulgaria took many

²⁵⁰ European Commission, *Bulgaria, Comprehensive Monitoring Report, 2005*
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2005/sec1352_cmr_master_bg_college_en.pdf
11.07.2008

steps to improve the conditions of minorities and Commission was always an encouraging actor in that process. Ratification of the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe for the Protection of National Minorities, the European Convention on Nationality, the Revised European Social Charter; incorporation of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; establishment of National Council for Ethnic and Demographic Issues, and Consultative Council on Education of Children and Schoolchildren from the Minority groups; adaptation of comprehensive anti-discrimination law and formation of Commission for Protection against Discrimination were some steps that were taken by Bulgarian governments in the EU membership process to improve conditions of minorities in Bulgaria. According to Dayıoğlu, Bulgaria not only ratified those documents but also put into practice them substantially.²⁵¹ Of course all these developments related with not only Roma minority but also Turkish minority. Therefore, Turkish minority should accept that EU membership process and particularly Commission was the main factor for the improvement of the conditions of minorities in Bulgaria and they should be appreciate to that process which guaranteed their rights and liberties on paper at least and also, cordially or not, increased the tolerance against all minorities in Bulgaria.

Democratization in Bulgaria accelerated as Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) government put EU membership as the most important target. On October 1997, President Peter Stoyanov signed Council of Europe's FCPNM in Strasbourg. Few months before, in July 1997 in his speech in Turkish Parliament, he apologized for the treatment of communist regime to Turkish minority.²⁵² In the meantime, Muslims democratically elected Mustafa Hadji as their Chief Mufti.²⁵³ In addition, ADF government set up a National Council on Ethnic and Demographic Questions²⁵⁴ for improving minority rights and religious freedoms, and for building tolerance and good relation between different ethnic and religious groups. In 1999 Kostov government

²⁵¹ Dayıoğlu, p.488.

²⁵² Petkova, p.55.

²⁵³ Marushiakova and Popov, p. 29

²⁵⁴ Later it was transformed into The National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Demographic Issues (NCCEDI) with Council of Ministers Decree No. 333 dated 10 December 2004. <http://www.ncedi.government.bg/en/index.html>

ratified FCPNM and Protocol 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights²⁵⁵ which was concerning the abolition of the death penalty. By ratifying FCPNM, Bulgaria guarantees all cultural, social, political, religious and economic rights of its ethnic minorities. FCPNM was such a detailed paper that guarantees all linguistic, educational, religious, and judicial rights and freedoms in five sections and 32 articles.²⁵⁶ In theory it was a significant step about minority rights in Bulgarian territories. In practice on the other hand problems were continuing. Even though Bulgaria entered into EU membership process and was signing and ratifying international human rights and minority rights agreements, problems in practice could not be eliminated. Two important problematic issues were about instruction of religion (particularly Islam) in schools and education in Turkish language. In December 2000 government decided to instruct Islam in schools in optional religious classes. It was a positive step but lessons must be in Bulgarian language and Chief Muftis' Office must finance those classes, while Orthodox religious lessons in the same schools were funded by the government.²⁵⁷ Then another arrangement was made and Islam lessons started to be taught one hour per week as freely selectable lessons.²⁵⁸ This time budgeting of those lessons was transferred to municipalities which creates financial problem for studying Islam lessons. Today there are also denominational Islamic schools for raising imams in Shumen, Russe and Momchilgrad which are financed by Office of the Chief Mufti and there is an Institute of Islam in Sofia for raising teachers for those schools.

The process of democratization was not without obstacles and pitfalls. Even though EU membership process accelerated especially after 2001 elections, problems about minority rights were continuing in some issues. In December 2002, new law of Religion Denominations was published which strongly emphasized separation of religious matters from state issues and identified Orthodox Christianity as traditional religion of Bulgaria that suits with 1991 Constitution.²⁵⁹ Other religious communities

²⁵⁵ The Council of Europe, *Protocol No. 6 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms concerning the abolition of death penalty*. <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/114.htm> 26.06.2007

²⁵⁶ The Council of Europe, *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*.

²⁵⁷ Bulgarian Helsinki Committee Report, (2003) p.94.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 110-111.

²⁵⁹ The Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, *Report on New Bulgarian Law on Religion known as the Confessions Act 2002*, Doc.10065, 9 February 2004, <http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/WorkingDocs/Doc04/EDOC10065.htm> 26.06.2007

had to register to Sofia City Court to get legal status, and The Council of Ministers' Religious Confessions Directorate used to be responsible for that registration process.²⁶⁰ However, process was too complicated and bureaucratic that registration could take too much time and it was criticized by human rights organizations strictly. Concerning educational rights, in 1999 Educational Act, instruction of mother tongue in both primary and high municipal schools was made obligatory /compulsory selectable.²⁶¹ Ministry of Education would be responsible for finance and support of schools, and staff would be directly appointed by ministry. This was an important step towards increasing the quality of mother tongue education. Before the amendment, mother tongue education was freely elective only in municipal primary schools and financed by municipal budgets which creating too much problems. Today there are also departments of Turkish language and literature in the Universities of Sofia and Shoumen.

In 2004 Law on Protection against Discrimination entered into force. Article 4 of the law states that any direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, nationality, ethnical belonging, citizenship, origin, religion or belief (.....) is forbidden.²⁶² Article 7 underlines that it shall not be deemed discrimination;

15. the measures for protection of originality and the identity of persons, belonging to ethnic, religious or language minorities, and their right of sustaining and developing, individually or jointly with the rest of their group members, their culture, of professing and practicing their religion, or of using their own language;

16. the measures in the field of the education and training to ensure participation of persons belonging to the ethnical minorities, as far and while these measures are necessary;²⁶³

Article 38 on the other hand states that²⁶⁴ “The state and public bodies and the bodies of local self-government shall conduct a policy to encourage the balanced

²⁶⁰ US Department of State, *International Religious Freedoms Report, Bulgaria, 2005*. Released by the Bureau of Human Rights Democracy and Labor, on November 8, 2005. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2005/51545.htm> 27.06.2007.

²⁶¹ Bulgarian Helsinki Committee Report, (2003) p. 105-106.

²⁶² Bulgarian Parliament “Law on Protection Against Discrimination” (2004) <http://www.ncedi.government.bg/en/index.html> 15.09.2009

²⁶³ *Ibid*

²⁶⁴ *Ibid*

participation of women and men, as well as for the sufficiently representative participation of persons belonging to ethnic, religious or language minorities in the governance and the decision-making.” Moreover, Commission for Protection against Discrimination was established by that law. Today two members of the commission are representing Turkish minority including chairman of the Commission Kemal Eyüp.²⁶⁵ Lastly Bulgaria ratified Lisbon treaty in 2008 which makes Charter of Fundamental Rights legally binding. As a result, directly affected by EU membership process, today rights and freedoms of minorities are guaranteed by several internal and external regulations. Again conditions of Turkish Minority are incomparable with pre-democratization process in internal and international legal assurances.

In a survey realized by European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in the six EU countries Turks live in Bulgaria have lowest rates together with Turks live in Austria about discrimination and victimization rates and police stops.²⁶⁶ Only 15 % of Turks of Bulgaria think that discrimination is widespread about their ethnic or immigrant origin, whereas this rate is more than 50% in Turks who live Western European states.²⁶⁷ In all report it is seen that Turks in Bulgaria reported the lowest levels of discriminations for most of the domains surveyed. It should be noted that in the beginnings of 2000s MPs from MRF frequently complained about discrimination towards their voters.²⁶⁸

In addition to improvements in educational and religious rights, efficiency of Turkish media in Bulgaria was increased in the EU membership process. Today several newspapers and magazines are published in Turkish language. Bulgarian National Television and Bulgarian National Radio started to broadcast daily news in Turkish.

The Integration of Minorities Programme was conducted for the development of underdeveloped regions and to decrease unemployment among minorities. Moreover,

²⁶⁵ See Commission for Protection against Discrimination;
<http://www.kzd-nondiscrimination.com/start/index.php>

²⁶⁶ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *EU-MIDIS European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey*, Main Results Report, 2009. Pp.196-197

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.* p.198

²⁶⁸ Open Society Institute “Minority Protection in Bulgaria”, 2002. p.98.

http://www.eumap.org/topics/minority/reports/minority0102/minority02/international/sections/bulgaria/2002_m_bulgaria.pdf 03.09.2009.

EU Pre-accession funds towards regional developments directly channelled to underdeveloped mixed regions. Especially NMSS–MRF government took several concrete measures concerning the underdeveloped regions; enterprises were granted significant tax cuts which increased the investments from other parts of the country, some of the administrators have undergone special training, financed by PHARE, on how to prepare and write projects, municipalities also prepare, win and realise their own projects.²⁶⁹ Gradual and stable economic improvement is seen in the mixed regions by the help of EU funds. MRF’s local administrators are trying to inform Turks how to utilize the opportunities granted under EU funds. With the PHARE program more than 10% of the budget funds (nearly 250.000 Euro) have been received by the six regions of South Central Region of Bulgaria.²⁷⁰ However, economic activities in those districts are higher both among the Christian and Muslim Bulgarians, than Turks who are indifferent or sceptic about EU funds.²⁷¹ They usually prefer to work in textile factories opened by Turkish or Greek investors in those regions. Tobacco growing and stockbreeding are still the main sources of income of Turkish Minority. However, Lozanova and Hajdinjak also state that²⁷²” Despite the difficulties, respondents note that participation in the EU programs raises the self-confidence and prestige of the people and the effects of the pre-accession assistance are evaluated positively.”

One of the main priorities of the European Social Fund in Bulgaria for the period of 2007- 2013 was defined as providing better access to education, training and career guidance for minority ethnic groups, disabled people and young school leavers.²⁷³ Approximately 1.2 billion € will be allocated from European Social Fund for human resources development and improving administrative capacity of Bulgaria between the period of 2007-2013.²⁷⁴ Overall, their standard of living is increasing gradually depending to the increasing economic stability in whole Bulgaria, thanks to EU

²⁶⁹ Lozanova, et.al. pp. 49-50.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 39

²⁷¹ Galina Lozanova and Marko Hajdinjak, “Regions, Minorities and European Integration: Policy Paper on Muslim minorities (Turks and Muslim Bulgarians)in the South Central Region of Bulgaria” International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations- IMIR, December 2006. p.5.

http://www.imir-bg.org/imir/reports/Bulgaria_Muslims_Policy%20Paper-revised.pdf 19.11.2009

²⁷² *Ibid.* p.6.

²⁷³ European Commission, “European Social Fund- Bulgaria”

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/esf/members/bg_en.htm 20.01.2010

²⁷⁴ *Ibid*

membership process. Most importantly they are aware of that there is a supranational body which is not indifferent to their political and economic problems.

Consequently, Maeva claims that “Bulgaria has achieved a lot with reference to the rights of the Turkish minorities in the country and to the synchronization of the Bulgarian to the European legislation, even though there is still a lot to be done with reference to their economic status.”²⁷⁵ Özlem underlines positive transformation in Bulgaria about minority rights after the collapse of the communism and integration of the Turkish Minority not only into Bulgarian system but also to the European system.²⁷⁶ Lozanova and Hajdinjak claims that “The most important external factor stimulating the democratic changes in Bulgaria and directly influencing the development of the minority rights is the European integration and the European regional policy in particular.”²⁷⁷

3.4. The Role of Movements for Rights and Freedoms in the EU Membership Process

The role of MRF in the democratization and EU membership process should be evaluated separately. MRF played a critical role about normalization of ethnic issues in Bulgaria. Within years MRF became one of the crucial political actors in Bulgaria’s politics and also liberal power which encouraged Europeanization of the country. As Özlem underlines in the most difficult periods of the country MRF always initiated constructive policies rather than disruptive ones and played a crucial role in the formation of coalitions.²⁷⁸ MRF strongly supported EU membership process of the country.²⁷⁹ They believe that EU membership would be a guarantee for protection of rights and freedoms of minorities. Of course EU membership was again a dominant

²⁷⁵ Mila Maeva, “Bulgarian Turks and European Union” in Rusu, H. and B. Voicu (eds.) *EU Integration Process from EAST to EAST: Civil Society and Ethnic Minorities in a Changing World. Proceedings from a Round Table for young Social Scientists*. Sibiu: Psihomedica Publ. House, 2005, pp 119-126

²⁷⁶ Kader Özlem, “Bulgaristan Türklerinin Tarihsel Süreç İçerisinde Dönüşümü, AB Üyelik Süreci ve Türk Azınlığa Etkileri” *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, Sayı 1/2 Kış 2008, pp. 367.

²⁷⁷ Lozanova and Hajdinjak, p.4.

²⁷⁸ Özlem, p.358.

²⁷⁹ Dayıoğlu, 454-455.

factor for participation of MRF into Bulgarian politics without any intervention from Bulgarian officials.²⁸⁰

In the first years of 1990s, MRF initiated more aggressive policies for protecting minority rights and took support from Turks, Pomaks and Romans. On the other hand, BSP and nationalist parties attacked aggressively to MRF' existence in Bulgaria. UDF, as more democratic and liberal party, did not shot his eyes to nationalist groups especially after the defeat in 1990 elections. Fortunately, MRF did not choose obstinacy policies. MRF leaders rejected demands for territorial autonomy come from radical and separatist groups inside the movement, and chose more pragmatic policies. They mostly avoided from ethnic confrontations by pursuing a policy of defending minority rights based on loyalty to national independence and territorial integrity of Bulgaria.²⁸¹ They were cautious about any extremist or radical expressions coming inside the Turkish Community and distanced themselves from such a radical views.²⁸² Its' moderate non-extremist tone contributed to its wider political acceptance.²⁸³ As a result, thanks to moderate, democrat Bulgarians also, MRF got legality from Constitutional Court in 1992. This was turning point for both MRF' and Bulgaria's history. Any other result, exclusion of Turks from Bulgarian politics, would be resulted with radicalization of Turkish community as it is seen in some countries.

Relatively low threshold in the elections (only 4%) also increased the chance of small parties' representation in Bulgarian parliament.²⁸⁴ As a result, MRF became a key party in the beginnings of 1990s and supported both UDF and BSP governments from outside. That process helped to the normalization of relations between MRF and two biggest political parties of Bulgarian politics: UDF and BSP. Especially normalization of relations between MRF and BSP was very important considering the great hostility between the parties in the beginnings of 1990s. MRF did not isolated itself from Bulgarian citizens, frequently expressed its loyalty to Bulgaria's territorial integrity, supported democratization and liberalization process, and distanced itself from Turkish

²⁸⁰ Özlem, pp. 363-364.

²⁸¹ Vassilev, p 46.

²⁸² Dayioğlu, pp.421-422.

²⁸³ Maria Bakalova, "The Bulgarian Turkish Name Conflict and Democratic Transition" *The European Journal of Social Sciences*, Innovation, Vol. 19, Nos. 3/4, 2006 p. 239.

²⁸⁴ Vassilev,p. 48.

government and radical Turks throughout the 1990s.²⁸⁵ 2001 elections resulted with unexpected 7.45% of votes and 21 seats in parliament. MRF became a key party in the parliament and formed coalition with NMSS, took two ministries and several deputy ministries, became a real executive power for the first time. Turks who had dual citizenship started to vote in Bulgaria's elections from 2001 elections which affected MRF positively.²⁸⁶ Pomaks and Romas who established separate political movements understood that they could not pass 4% threshold in the elections, and re-gave their support to MRF.²⁸⁷ Moreover, lower turnout of Bulgarians in the elections affected MRF positively and increased the representation of Turks in the parliament.²⁸⁸ MRF's votes were doubled in 2005 elections and it took 34 seats in parliament, entered into coalition with three ministries including Deputy Prime Minister. Moreover, MRF became a key party in the presidential elections and supported Parvanov in 2001 and 2006 elections. Hundred thousands of Turks from both Turkey and Bulgaria voted in favour of Parvanov.

Those accomplishments disturbed nationalist Bulgarians naturally. Racist, extremist National Union Attack (ATAKA) movement emerged as a new nationalist party in 2005 elections and got unexpected achievement. Steady rise of MRF votes also disturbed centrist parties. Before elections for European Parliament in May 2007, discussions intensified about whether dual citizens who live out of the EU borders (specifically targets Turks who live in Turkey) can vote or not? Potential 100.000 votes of dual citizens frightened all parties, and MRF as coalition partner insisted that any restriction would mean violation of human rights and Bulgarian Constitution. Opposition parties insisted on only permanent residents who settle in Bulgaria should have a right to vote, and because there is no equivalent situation elsewhere in the EU, there is no established EU precedent to follow.²⁸⁹ BSP, as a coalition partner of MRF, supported Turks at first. Maya Manolova, deputy of BSP, said that even those outside

²⁸⁵ Lozanova, et.al. p. 33.

²⁸⁶ Dayioğlu, p.441.

²⁸⁷ Marushkieva and Popov, p 31.

²⁸⁸ Semih İdiz, "Türkler Bulgaristan'ı Faşizme Karşı Koruyor" *Milliyet*, 02.11.2006, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2006/11/02/yazar/idiz.html> 30.06.2007

²⁸⁹ Krassen Nikolov, "Turkish Voting Rights Come Under Attack in Bulgaria" Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) Released in 08.02.2007. <http://www.birn.eu.com/en/45/130/2275/?tpid=84> 22.02.2009

the country, have the right to vote.²⁹⁰ However, at the end, decision was taken about citizens who reside in Bulgaria or any EU member at least 3 months before the elections would be able to vote.²⁹¹ Decision was accepted by 111 votes in favour to 55 against, only 21 BSP members supported MRF, and MRF criticized its coalition partners for not supporting their rights in the parliament.²⁹²

This example shows that even moderate Bulgarians are disturbed from the achievements of MRF. Especially nationalist Bulgarians criticized MRF more severely today. Critics mostly concentrated on ethnic policies and narrow vision of MRF. Some claims that MRF is an undemocratic party and need a reform to adapt itself into modern politics. MRF's coalitions with both BSP and UDF are defined as a habit of switching loyalties for political gains.²⁹³ Minchev criticizes MRF strictly:

Local policies in mixed regions are establishing an ethno-corporatist political and economic monopoly which gives advantages to Turkish investors. Local administration in mixed regions, which are usually governed by MRF representatives, is a source of corruption. There is a great centralization in the party and rivals are isolated. MRF is not letting any real, democratic alternative to Turkish minority. The MRF more and more transforms itself into a "state within a state", as its actions are not subject to real control on behalf of national institutions.²⁹⁴

In addition, emergence of ATAKA is seen as result of MRF's ethnic policies, and MRF is blamed for creating its own opposite rival. Minchev suggests solutions such as amending the election law, revising the dual citizenship status, designing an effective policy for attracting immigrants with preferable ethnic background and compensating for the demographic crisis; strengthening the transparency and the control over functioning of the democratic national institutions, and revising the status of MRF.²⁹⁵ More moderate

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁹¹ "Komşuda entrika" *Hürriyet* 15/02/2007, <http://arama.hurriyet.com.tr/arsivnews.aspx?id=5954987> 22.02.2009

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ Milena Borden, "Bulgaria: Turkish Party Urged to Rethink Policies." Institute for war & peace reporting (IWPR), Balkan Crisis Report, No.555, 11.05.2005. http://iwpr.net/?p=bcr&s=f&o=242237&apc_state=henfbcr242245 30.06.2007

²⁹⁴ Ognyan Minchev, "The Case of Turkey in the EU" Institute for Regional and International Studies (IRIS) Strategic Papers Collections, pp. 12-14.

http://www.iris-bg.org/files/The%20Case%20of%20Turkey%20in%20the%20EU_eng.pdf 22.02.2009

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.* p.15.

scholars like Zheliazkova believes that Ahmet Dogan is capable of changing MRF from an ethnic to a national party.²⁹⁶

Of course, critics are just to some degree but some critics directly target to weaken the efficiency of MRF in Bulgarian politics. For instance, it is true that MRF concentrated on ethnic policies and have narrow vision especially in the local administrations of mixed regions. For instance Lozanova claims that many Bulgarians left Kardzhali and moved to live in other parts of the country because of the policies of the MRF, which has occupied all power positions.²⁹⁷ Naturally, it tries to protect the rights of Turks and other minorities in the parliament. However, these can be seen as a normal and rationalist policies enforced by all political parties in democratic systems. Parties try to satisfy their electors, but this does not mean that parties neglect national problems and the needs of opponent party electors. Perhaps, ethnic bases of MRF disturbed some Bulgarians but it should be remembered that MRF has been crucial coalition partner in the governments since 2001 elections, and held three ministries and several deputy ministries who were responsible for the needs of all Bulgarian citizens not only the needs of minorities.

Critics about switching loyalties for political gain are unjust. Yes, MRF supported both UDF and BSP in the 1990s and built coalitions with both NMSS and BSP in the 2000s, but it is normal for liberal-centrist party to build coalitions with both centrist-rightist and centrist-leftist parties. MRF, as a member of ELDR in the European Parliament, has both Muslim and non-Muslim, Turk and Bulgarian members in the Bulgarian and the European parliaments.²⁹⁸ Therefore, it is unjust for blaming such a multicultural, centrist and liberal party as being disloyal or making ethnic policies. About corruption; it is a fact that, corruption is not a problem only in local administrations of mixed regions but also in all layers of administrative structures in Bulgaria. In EU membership process corruption was one of the most problematic issues for Bulgarian governments and even after full membership it is still criticized by EU

²⁹⁶ Borden,

²⁹⁷ Lozanova and Hajdinjak, p.4.

²⁹⁸ Today MRF is represented by three members in the European Parliament; Filiz Hyusmenova, Metin Kazak, Vladko Todorov Panayotov.

bodies. So that, corruption is not a specific problem of MRF but a serious issue that interested all Bulgarians and can be solved by cooperation of different state structures.

About obstructing alternative, more democratic Turkish formations; it is true that in democratic systems there must be alternative choices for people. In fact, Turks established lots of alternative parties against MRF, but in democratic systems you can also respect to the choices of people. Turks choose to support MRF and do not give their support to alternative parties. Therefore, in democracy we cannot force MRF or Turks to create any alternative party. About emergence of ATAKA; of course successes of MRF was one of the reasons for emerging of nationalist, racist movement but it is not the only reason. Even in western democracies we can see ATAKA like racist, ultra nationalist movements and parties. In countries where minorities or immigrants are more effective, such marginal movements and parties are also much stronger. In every state, we can mention a potential for ultra nationalist movements. ATAKA is not a unique movement in Europe and MRF is not the main reason for emerging of ATAKA movement; instead it is an antidote for racist, nationalist movements in Bulgaria by participating in moderate, centrist coalitions and easing the way for formation of such a moderate coalitions. We should remember that if MRF was not so stronger, centrist parties would need ATAKA to establish coalitions and ATAKA might become a crucial party in parliament which would be a disaster for country's EU membership process.

Overall, MRF is an important contributor in Bulgaria's ethnic peace and stability, and a protector of the rights of Turkish minority of course. Like other centrist parties, MRF also have some problems that must be solved in order to continue democratization and liberalization of the party. It should be remembered that Bulgaria have short democratic history and solving some serious problems may take time. When we look to the party programme of MRF, we understood that Bulgaria needs such a multicultural, liberal party for continuing ethnic stability of the country. Main orientations in party programme are:

- Expanding the state policy for the integration of minorities in civil society; learning the mother language - a condition for preserving and developing the cultural variety of Bulgaria; active participation of Bulgaria in the international initiative Decade for Roma Inclusion.

-Achieving a better quality of life (effective social policy, accessible health care, overcoming the demographic challenge, etc...) by development of an economy that would ensure employment.

-Making the Bulgarian economy more competitive, accelerating the modernization of the infrastructure and improving the business climate through tax preferences, application of the one- stop shop and e-government project to make Bulgaria a more attractive centre for foreign investments.

-Implementing education reforms providing for the teaching of the Bulgarian language at preschool and ensuring that all young Bulgarians obtain a high degree of education; bringing secondary and higher education in accordance with the real needs of the Labour market.

-Overcoming the disparities in the social and economic development of the regions and updating programs for regional development taking into account EU requirements.

-Aligning legislative provisions concerning Bulgarian agriculture with the European ones with a view of effective absorption of European funds.²⁹⁹

Sasse states the role of MRF for normalization of ethnic policies in Bulgaria;

(.....)The Bulgarian case is a clear example of a gradual democratization with a strong emphasis on individual rights. In Bulgaria – even more so than in Romania and Slovakia – the political rights of minorities are best understood as a process. The MRF has been represented in parliament since the fall of the communist regime and repeatedly provided the swing vote, thereby illustrating the stabilizing effect of political representation. In turn, it has enshrined the salience of ethnic issues and interethnic bargaining in daily politics. The MRF has called for rights to guarantee political representation and limited cultural autonomy, but it has stayed clear any demand for political or territorial autonomy. Thus, political representation of minorities, whether facilitated by the state or brought about by mobilization and stealth, can be politically stabilizing.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁹Movements for Rights and Freedoms, *Party's Policy and Beliefs*. <http://www.dps.bg/cgi-bin/e-cms/vis/vis.pl?s=001&p=0365&n=&vis> 18.09.2009

³⁰⁰ Gwendolyn Sasse, "Gone With Wind, Minority Rights in Central and Eastern Europe before and after EU Enlargement" Draft Paper, Workshop 'Ethnic Mobilization in the New Europe', Brussels, 21-22 April 2006. p.23.

3.5. ATAKA and Re-birth of Nationalism in Bulgaria in the EU

Membership Process

People in Bulgaria believe that ATAKA movement emerged as a protest against MRF's successes in the beginnings of 2000s. ATAKA exploited nationalist emotions of ordinary Bulgarians and use the potential of extremist groups in Bulgaria who has been waiting for such a movement since the collapse of communism. Their slogan is 'Bulgaria belongs to Bulgarians' and they directly target minorities in Bulgarian territories.³⁰¹ They declared MRF as unconstitutional because of its ethnic bases and praised Zhivkov's name change campaign.³⁰² In 2005 elections ultra nationalist, racist ATAKA alliance took 21 seats in parliament which terrified both other centrist parties, minorities of Bulgaria and EU structures. Centre parties declared that they would not form a coalition with ATAKA,³⁰³ and EU warned them to avoid such a coalition. 2500 nationalist demonstrators, in front of the parliament, protested central parties after the coalition was established between BSP-NMSS and MRF. Their slogan was 'We do not want Turks in power'. However, racist expressions (against Romas and Jews especially) of Siderov disturbed and alienated some ATAKA members also.³⁰⁴ Siderov was so radical that he does not avoid legitimizing Nazi officers' actions in WW II. Those racist and inhuman expressions resulted with resignation of some members from party who just want to make more nationalist policies against central parties.

Even then, ATAKA has not lost so much power. In 2006 Presidential elections candidates of movement compete with Parvanov in the second round and took support of one fourth of the electors. Furthermore, in EU Parliament elections took approximately 15% of votes and 3 seats. These results show that ATAKA will be an important political actor in the future, just like today. This is a big surprise for scholars because Eurosceptic and ultra nationalist movements in Bulgaria was not significant before 2005 elections. For instance, Euroscepticism in Romania was nearly 20%, in

³⁰¹ "Hitler of Bulgaria is Siderov" http://www.diplomaticobserver.com/news_read.asp?id=1239 18.09.2009

³⁰² Dayioğlu, pp.446-447.

³⁰³ "Hitler of Bulgaria is Siderov"

³⁰⁴ "The Economist Country Briefings, Bulgaria: Political Forces, Ataka,"

<http://www.economist.com/countries/Bulgaria/profile.cfm?folder=Profile-Political%20Forces> 19.09.2009

Latvia 27%, in Estonia 33% in Slovakia 36% in Poland 37% and in Hungary 51%.³⁰⁵ In Bulgaria proportions were too low before 2005 elections that did not worth to evaluate. Why things have changed and ultra nationalists empowered in Bulgaria like other East European states?

Most logical explanation is liberalization and democratization process in Bulgaria enabled minorities to openly display their ethnic origins and religious beliefs which disturbed some Bulgarians. Free atmosphere of 2000s and successes of MRF increased the tolerance against minorities which was unacceptable for radical Bulgarians. Moreover, hate speeches towards minorities in media, nationalist propaganda in school textbooks, general prejudice and stereotyping towards minorities in Bulgarian community and development of technology which enabled quick organization on internet channelled young Bulgarians to radical movements.³⁰⁶ Economic difficulties that could not be solved even in the EU membership process like unemployment, high inflation and poverty also eased for radical groups to attract the people.³⁰⁷ Increasing Turkish investments in Bulgaria, giving dual citizenship right to Turks and increasing visits of those dual citizens, and also settlement of Romas to the cities after migration of Turks were the other reasons of emergence of radical, nationalist movements. Radical nationalist parties in France, Belgium and Austria and their anti-EU speeches also inspired radical Bulgarians.³⁰⁸ They took those parties as an example and organized similarly. Indeed, Siderov even today believes that Bulgaria is under Turkish rule.³⁰⁹ As it is seen fear policies and paranoia, which are the biggest obstacles for compromise, dialogue and peace, are used in every state and supported by masses.

³⁰⁵ Kanev, p. 67.

³⁰⁶ Albena Shkodrova, "Nationalism Retains Grip on Bulgaria's Youth" Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) Balkan Crisis Report, No. 555, 11.05.2005
http://iwpr.net/?p=bcr&s=f&o=242245&apc_state=henfbcr242237 30.06.2007

³⁰⁷ James Pettifer, "Bulgarian Elections 2005, A Difficult Result for EU Accession." Conflict Studies Research Centre, Balkan Series, 05/35, July 2005, pp.2-3. <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail?ots591=0C54E3B3-1E9C-BE1E-2C24-A6A8C7060233&lng=en&id=39233> 05.07.2007

³⁰⁸ Anton Pelinka "The Rise of Populism" in Hannes Swoboda and Jan Marinus Wiersma (Eds.) Democracy, Populism and Minority Rights (Belgium: Renner Institut, 2008) p. 45

³⁰⁹ "Bulgaria nationalists stage rally" in BBC News, 3 March 2006 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4772360.stm> 19.09.2009.

3.6. Problems which could not be solved in the EU Membership Process

First of all Article 36 of Bulgarian Constitution rather than saying minority uses a definition of; citizens for whom the Bulgarian language is not native. Constitution abstains to use a word of “minority” which can be seen undemocratic in today’s world.

More detailed researches and reports prepared by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or specifically by western governments give us important information about the situation today. Naturally in these reports, priority is given to terrific conditions of Roma minority. However, more detailed reports also mention the problems of Muslim community generally and Turkish community particularly. For instance, US Department of State’s Country Reports on Human Right Practices-2006 criticized Bulgaria about politicization of Chief Mufti’s Office, unjust treatment of governments to other religious entities comparing with Orthodox Church, strong anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim expressions of ATAKA members, attacks against mosques in some regions, and ethnic prejudices against Roma minority especially but also against other ethnic groups including the Turks.³¹⁰ Report particularly mentions Turks only by stating attacks and desecration of 100 Turkish graves in Haskovo region.³¹¹ US Department of State’s Country Reports on Human Right Practices 2008 on the other hand praises well representation of Turks in Bulgaria’s local and central governments and criticizes Siderov’s discriminatory statements against ethnic minorities.³¹² It is more positive comparing with 2006 Report. Report of Amnesty International is similar to US Human Rights Report. It mainly concentrates on discrimination against Roma minority and, concerning Turkish minority, it mentioned about Sofia Court’s decision which found Siderov guilty of using hostile and discriminatory language against the ethnic Turkish minority and of creating an atmosphere of animosity towards them.³¹³

³¹⁰ US Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Bulgaria, 2006*. Released by the Bureau of Human Rights Democracy and Labour on March 6, 2007. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78805.htm> 12.07.2008

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

³¹² US Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Bulgaria, 2008*. Released by the Bureau of Human Rights Democracy and Labour on February 25, 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/eur/119072.htm> 20.09.2009.

³¹³ Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 2009*,

These reports show us that living conditions of Turkish minority in Bulgaria has already improved highly. Especially democratization and liberalization process, started in the beginnings of 1990s, eased the integration of Turkish minority to Bulgarian social, political and economic life. These reports consider those developments and compare conditions of Romas with Turks. As a result, problems of Turks seem to be softer and easily solvable comparing with serious survival problems of Romas. Although Turks sometimes displeased from such an underestimation, they are aware of difficulties of Roma minority and they know that development of conditions of Roma minority means increasing peace and stability in their regions. On the other hand, some NGOs like Bulgarian Helsinki Committee prepared more detailed special reports that emphasize the problems of Turkish minority separately from other minority groups. For instance, Alternative Report prepared by organization in 2003 stated financial and technical difficulties of Turkish press in the country, unfavourable representation of Turks and Romas in media, and continuing educational problems of Turkish minority.³¹⁴

In fact, if we look more closely there are still serious problems which make life more difficult for Turkish minority members. First of all, mother tongue and religious education lessons which was prepared as obligatory selectable bring a great dilemma towards minority students. Number of obligatory selectable lessons per week is limited, and not only mother tongue lessons but also other foreign language lessons such as English, French and German and lessons like arts and music are obligatory selectable.³¹⁵ Therefore students have to make a choice between choosing foreign languages for continuing higher education in the future and choosing mother tongue lessons which would block or limit their chance for higher education. That dilemma usually resulted with graduation of Turkish students from high schools with poor command of mother tongue, Bulgarian language and also foreign language which decreases their chance of higher education significantly. Therefore, fewer Turkish students continue their education in Bulgarian, Turkish or foreign universities

³¹⁴ Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, *Alternative Report, to the Report Submitted by Bulgaria Pursuant to Article 25, Paragraph 1 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, Sofia: November, 2003. http://www.bghelsinki.org/special/en/2003_Shadowrep_FCNM.doc 10.10.2006

³¹⁵ *Ibid.* Pp. 32–33.

comparing to the Bulgarian students. According to the sociological surveys, more than 97% of the well-educated individuals in the country are Bulgarians, while the share of university educated Turks among all the university educated population is approximately 1.2 % which means that only 2.7 % of the Turkish population has a university education.³¹⁶ This also put Turks into a disadvantageous position in labor market. Moreover, textbook shortages, poor quality of textbooks, and lack of government support for improvement of those lessons make mother tongue education less effective.³¹⁷

In addition, Turkish department in Kardzhali University was closed down three years ago because of financial difficulties and indifference of Turkish students to the department.³¹⁸ This was a big stroke to mother tongue education in south-eastern Bulgaria. Moreover, decisions of municipalities to display traditional local names and street names in the minority language usually and illegally blocked by the central government.³¹⁹

Nowadays there are also discussions to abandon 10 minutes daily Turkish news in Bulgarian National Television. Even some ministers from newly established Borisov government claims that Turkish news on national television is unnecessary because nobody watching them. On the other hand Turkish newspapers and magazines are struggling with financial burdens³²⁰

Northeast and especially southeast of Bulgaria, where Turks are in majority, are still the least developed regions of Bulgaria.³²¹ Unemployment rates in those regions are higher than the country average. Living standards of people are lower comparing with other regions. Especially in mountainous south-eastern regions, agriculture and cattle breeding are still the most important incomes. Investments are not enough in those regions to prevent younger people to immigrate European countries. Seasonal

³¹⁶ Lozanova, et.al. p. 48.

³¹⁷ BHC Alternative Report (2003) pp. 34-35

³¹⁸ *Balkanlarda Türk Kültürü*, Nisan-Mayıs-Haziran 2006, pp. 5-6

³¹⁹ BHC Alternative Report (2003) pp. 27-28.

³²⁰ Özlem p. 365

³²¹ BHC Alternative Report. 37-38

migration of younger men. to the Western Europe is still common among Turkish Minority.³²² Many Turkish families continue their life by the help of those family members who works seasonally in Western Europe. Moreover, lack of capacity especially at regional and municipality level, weak regional structures to support economic development on a geographic contex, insufficient attention given to build capacity of municipalities create problems about absorbtion of EU funds and development of those regions.³²³

Lastly and most importantly, prejudices and stereotyping are still important tools used by nationalist groups against Turkish minority. Memories of Ottoman yoke, fear of Islamic fundamentalism, and Turkish invasion are frequently used by nationalist Bulgarians against Turkish existence. More recent example; a Turkish businessman Levent Nazifoğlu purchased all shares of Lokomotiv Plovdiv, one of the most popular football clubs of Bulgaria, who werw struggling with financial crisis. However, fans of Loko Plovdiv declared that they do not want a Turkish president and money.³²⁴ In the meantime, attacks against MRF in the media are still common. For instance new star of Bulgarian politics Boiko Borisov (prime minister now) and his party Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB) tried to convince other parties to ally on one candidate in Kardzhali against MRF in the last local elections. Nationalist parties immediately gave support. However, BSP did not look such a policy positively and defined it as undemocratic which was highly criticized in Bulgarian media. BSP was blamed as giving Kardzhali to MRF.³²⁵

Every day it is possible to read and watch critics towards MRF in newspapers and televisions. In the last local elections common candidate of GERB and other nationalist parties has been supposed to be a priest of Kardzhali; Boyan Sariev, to took support of conservative Bulgarians. Interestingly, Metropolitan of Plovdiv Nikolai has

³²² Maeva, pp.119-126.

³²³ European Commission, Phare Ex-post Evaluation, Phase 2, National Programmes: Bulgaria, November 2007, pp. 24-25.

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/financial_assistance/phare/evaluation/ex_post/bg_ex_post_report_nov_07_en.pdf 12.12.2009

³²⁴ “Fenove na Loko Plovdiv c ultimatum kim Levent” (Fans of Loko Plovdiv give ultimatum to Levent), *7 Dni Sport* (7 Days Sport) 13.08.2007. pp. 8.

³²⁵ Mihail Konstantinov, “BSP podari Kardzhali na DPS” (BSP is giving Kardzhali to MRF), *24 Chasa (24 Hour)* 30.07.2007. pp. 11.

not allowed candidacy of Sariev by emphasizing that such a candidacy means politicization of Orthodox Church. It is a surprise because Bulgarian Orthodox Church usually supports all activities towards MRF. Television of ATAKA, Skat TV, responded to that process by humiliating Metropolis Nikolai in a special program.³²⁶ Not only ATAKA but also Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO) and its leader Krassimir Karakhachanov some other smaller nationalist parties are initiating strong anti-Turkish campaign. Posters and graffiti's that are humiliating Turks, attacks against mosques and MRF bureaus, humiliation of Turks in official publications and in television programs of nationalist parties are common.

On the other hand Lozanova and Hajdinjak states generally good relations between Bulgarians and Muslim Minority in the mixed regions and a solidarity created by the common interest in improving the economic status of the region in the EU membership process.³²⁷ This may be a proof of that; majority of Bulgarians are moderate people and ultra-nationalists are in minority but their voices are stronger than the moderate ones.

3.7. Future of the Turkish Minority and the Role of Turkey

Although three years have passed from Bulgaria's EU accession, it is not easy to reach concrete results about how these three years affected Turkish Minority. Their participation on Bulgaria's central and local administration and also in the European Parliament is continuing successfully, even though MRF is in opposition nowadays. Gradual influx of EU funds into mixed regions is improving the infrastructure, roads, schools, hospitals and general living conditions in those regions. Salaries of employees are higher than three years ago. Turks have become EU citizens and can visit EU states easily. Most importantly their rights and freedoms are guaranteed by several internal and international regulations. Of course EU does not have a magic stick to change positively everything within several years. Turks of Bulgaria should not forget that Turks in Western Thrace still have problems even though nearly thirty years passed over the EU membership of Greece.

³²⁶ "Skat TV vricni fes na vladika" (Skat TV offered fes to Metropolitan), *Truth*, 07.08.2007, pp.4.

³²⁷ Lozanova and Hajdinjak, p.4

Ensuring peace and tolerance in Bulgarian territories is crucial for the future of all ethnic minorities of Bulgaria including Turkish minority, which should be achieved by efforts of Bulgarian governments firstly and then by all moderate ethnic Bulgarians. Because ethnic tensions and conflicts could be resulted tragically, as it was seen in the past, both sides should avoid triggering further tensions and try to develop an idea of “living together with accepting differences of others”. Although EU membership process eased the way of normalization of the issues between Turkish Minority and Bulgarian state, some serious problems especially about ultra-nationalism is still continuing. Naturally, both sides have responsibilities to ensure peace and tolerance in the country. First of all state should give more importance to mother tongue education and revise continuing system. Education is crucial for eliminating minority problem and ensuring equality between minorities and the majority. Ignorance is the main obstacle for developing peace and tolerance. Secondly, economic development of mixed regions should be ensured. Unemployment should be reduced and discrimination in participation of administrative and judicial bodies should be eliminated. It is a fact that poverty is one of the main reasons of radicalization of the masses. Thirdly, eliminating prejudices and stereotyping in the society may be the most important factor for developing peace and tolerance. Developing feel of empathy, understanding other side, increasing communication and dialogue between the parties are crucial for overcoming bias in the society. Creation of third culture, which means long term relationship such as marriage and deep friendship between individuals from different cultures, should also be very helpful.³²⁸ In Bulgaria, marriages and deep friendships between Turks and Bulgarians are in very low level.

Accepting responsibility and developing feel of forgiveness instead of revenge about happenings in the past is also very important for healing painful memories.³²⁹ Revising and cleaning up the publicized historical records and history schoolbooks is another important factor. Especially eliminating hostile expressions about Turks in

³²⁸ Benjamin J. Broome, “Managing differences in conflict resolution: The role of relational empathy.” in Dennis Sandole and Hugo Van Der Merwe (Eds.) Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice: Integration and Application. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993) pp. 103–104.

³²⁹ Joseph. V. Montville, “The healing function in political conflict resolution” in D. Sandole and H. Van Der Merwe (Eds.) Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice: Integration and Application. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993) p. 117.

schoolbooks is essential. Imposing hostility to children in the schools create irreversible prejudices in their brains. According to Turkish General Staff's survey, in Bulgarian schoolbooks, in 50 different paragraphs Turks are defined as occupier, cruel and barbarian.³³⁰ Same problems are effecting relations between Turkey and Greece. Fortunately, Greece has taken brave step recently and decided to eliminate hostile bias towards Turks in schoolbooks which was strictly criticized by Greek Orthodox Church and radical nationalists. Maria Frangu states that youth from both sides in Cyprus are educated with nationalist, hostile propaganda which makes rewrite of history and revise of school curriculum inevitable to stop the rise of fanaticism among the youths.³³¹ Glafkos Klerides also states that school curriculum' in both sides are promoting fanaticism among the youths which is creating distrust between the nations.³³² Same hostile bias and expressions in Bulgarian schoolbooks should be eliminated to build trusteeship between the parties. May be, as Education Minister of Germany Annette Schavan has suggested recently, it is time to write common history schoolbooks against racism, nationalism and radicalism in the EU.³³³ Furthermore, media can play a crucial role to transform public consciousness by avoiding stereotyping of minority members and showing their positive sides. Even though general media in Bulgaria is liberalizing gradually, it is still far from taking such a role.

Fourthly, relations between MRF and other parties will again play an important role in the future which directly effects relations between Turks and Bulgarians. Social democrat BSP and central right parties National Movement for Stability and Progress (NDSV), former NMSS, and UDF have mostly understood that MRF is an important actor in Bulgarian politics and all have more moderate relations with MRF. All of three major parties formed a coalition with MRF. Although there are still more radical fractions inside those parties who look to MRF and Turks more sceptical, those radical groups are not strong enough to change liberal or social democrat party policies. Rising power of central right; GERB have more radical expressions towards MRF. Even though leader of GERB Boiko Borisov strongly emphasized before the European

³³⁰ "Asker arařtırdı: 27  lke T rkleri k t   ğretiyor" *Sabah*, 07.09.2007 p. 16.

³³¹ Maria Frangu, "Kıbrıs'ta Barıř  in Gen lerin Eđitilmesi Gerek" *Radikal online*, 19.03.2007, firstly published in *Haravgi* in 13.03.2007.

³³² Glafkos Klerides, "Hepimizin Hataları Oldu" Reportage by Stelyo Berberakis, *Sabah*, 02.05.2007 p.16.

³³³ Mehmet Barlas, "AB'nin ortak tarihine karřı T rk ortak tarihi", *Sabah*, 05.03.2007, p.5

Parliament elections that they are a central right party, do not have a problem with Turks and he personally has lots of Turkish friends,³³⁴ unexpected victory in the elections changed everything. GERB immediately declared that if they win next general elections, they would not accept MRF as a coalition partner.³³⁵ Borisov has been saying that they (MRF) have to be put into opposition.³³⁶ Borisov also claimed that Turks are overrepresented in the parliament because of votes coming from Turkey. It is true, votes come from Turkey help MRF to get 3 or 4 more seats in the parliament but that's all. The biggest problem about the elections is lower turnout of Bulgarians. Therefore, it is a failure of major parties not failure of MRF. They can not attract Bulgarian electors, MRF on the other hand organizes well and turnout rates of Turks are relatively high in the elections. Even former Prime Minister Sergey Stanishev praised the Turkish minority's well-organised campaigning after the EU parliament election results.³³⁷ If GERB want to stop overrepresentation of Turks in the parliament, they should concentrate on increasing turnout rates of Bulgarians in the elections which could solve the problem automatically. Attacks and humiliations against Turks only lead to increase solidity of Turkish community which directly prevents emergence of alternatives to MRF inside the community. Only in full democracy and in full tolerance conditions, possibility of emergence of serious alternatives to MRF increases. Oppressions and attacks empowered MRF much more. More dangerously, some parties promoting ethnic hostility without thinking the future. Nationalist populism of GERB has been in competition with the ATAKA.³³⁸ Parties like GERB can be naturally soften their expressions when they come to power. However, triggering ethnic hostilities by populist expressions today will darken country's future. Expressions and attacks of radical and racist parties are expected and normal, but centrist parties should be more careful about ethnic problems and try to develop common sense rather than triggering hostilities.

³³⁴ Boiko Borisov," Sofya'da köklü değişiklikler yapılması gerek", Reportage by Nuri Eken in *Zaman Bulgaria* in 11.12.2006, www.zaman.bg 11.07.2007

³³⁵ GERB has been the winner of the parliamentary elections held on July 2009 and centre right coalition is governing Bulgaria nowadays. MRF is in the opposition with 38 seats in the parliament.

³³⁶ "Karate champion strikes a local chord" by Stefan Wagstyl in *Young Democracy under a Watchful Eye*, Financial Times Special Report: Bulgaria, Tuesday July 8, 2008 p.2.

³³⁷ "Poor turnout mars Bulgaria's first European elections" 21 May 2007 <http://www.eubusiness.com/Bulgaria/1179691202.12> 28.05.2008

³³⁸ Jean Michel de Waele, "Faces of Populism in Central and Eastern Europe" in Hannes Swoboda and Jan Marinus Wiersma (Eds.) *Democracy, Populism and Minority Rights*, (Belgium: Renner Institut, 2008) p. 52

Even though EU is still a decisive actor about solving the problems of Turkish Minority, from now on the role of centrist political parties and governments will be also crucial. Because there are enough binding national and international regulations about minority issues especially after Lisbon Treaty, implementation of those regulations totally belongs to governments. However about Turkish Minority, in addition to EU, there is an indisputable actor (Turkey) which can even affect minority policies of Bulgaria. Samuel Huntington in his famous book *Clash of Civilizations* claims that although Bulgaria tries to become a part of western civilization, its historic ties with Orthodox Byzantium and Russia will never be ended.³³⁹ Therefore, Huntington foresees clashes between Orthodox ally of Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria and the protector of Balkan Muslims Turkey, and defines that process as religious balkanization.³⁴⁰ However, this does not mean foresights of Huntington are always proven to be true. In the same book he claims that full EU membership chance of Bulgaria and Romania is doubtful up to indefinite time in the 21st century and NATO enlargement process would not cover Orthodox states because organization have western Christendom character.³⁴¹ Conversely, today Bulgaria is a member of both EU and NATO which makes Huntington's foresights invalid.

Today friendly relations between Turkey and Bulgaria are continuing, relations are improving in economic, political and social areas and day by day interdependence between two states is increasing. Every year hundred thousands of Turks, who have double citizenship, visit Bulgaria and vitalize Bulgarian economy. Equivalently, hundred thousands of Turks who live in Bulgaria visit their parents in Turkey and Bulgarians spend their holidays in southern parts of Turkey. According to data of Turkish Statistical Institution, in 2007 1 239 667, in 2008 1 255 343 Bulgarian citizens visited Turkey which was 4th biggest number coming after Germans, Russians and British citizens.³⁴² According to the report of Office of the Commercial Counsellor of Turkish Embassy in Sofia, a Turkish direct investment in Bulgaria has reached to 356

³³⁹ Samuel Huntington, *Medeniyetler Çatışması ve Dünya Düzeninin Yeniden Kurulması*. Mehmet Turhan ve Cem Soydemir (çev), (Okuyan Us yayınları, 3.Baskı, İstanbul: 2004) p. 223

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.* pp.175–176.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.* pp. 234- 235.

³⁴² Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, Turizm İstatistikleri, http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreIstatistikTablo.do?istab_id=320 20.09.2009

million Euros in 2008 and Turkey is the 18th biggest foreign investor in Bulgaria.³⁴³ Trade volume between two states has reached to 2 754 million Euros in the same year.³⁴⁴

Bilateral relations of leaders of two states have been generally good since the collapse of communism. Some leaders developed special personal relations with its counterparts which sometimes play an important role in solving high level problems. Zheliu Zhelev and Süleyman Demirel, Simeon II and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Georgi Parvanov and Ahmet Necdet Sezer developed a personal relations and made frequent reciprocal visits which was helpful for solving the problems between two states. For instance, visa problem which affected Turkish workers who work in Western Europe and pass from Bulgaria, and also Turkish investors in Bulgaria has been solved by the help of reciprocal visits and personal warm relations of leaders in March 2007. Although two states are competing for becoming an energy corridor of Europe, and Bulgaria took an advantage by Burgaz- Alexandropolis natural gas pipeline, there are also alternative lines such as Nabucco pipeline project which covers both states. In energy wars both states are located in a very special geography that cannot be neglected. Increasing cooperation against illegal human, drug, and arm trafficking in the borders will be also essential.

Consequently, economic, political, cultural and social interactions between two states are increasing day by day and two states are gradually becoming more interdependent to each other. Bulgaria needs such a generous investor and hundred thousands of visitors every year, Turkey needs support from an EU member in its EU membership process and also hundred thousands of visitors coming from Bulgaria every year. The 2007 report of German Marshall Fund about Transatlantic Trends shows us that, 45% of Bulgarians believe that Turkey will join the EU, whereas only 26% of Turks is optimist about the EU membership³⁴⁵. Turkey should look Bulgaria as an ally and a model in the EU accession process. Interestingly, Turks who reside in Turkey and

³⁴³ T.C. Sofya Büyükelçiliği Ticaret Müşavirliği 2008 Yılı Raporu, p.46
<http://www.musavirlikler.gov.tr/altdetay.cfm?AltAlanID=368&dil=TR&ulke=BG> 06.08.2009

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p.50

³⁴⁵ Transatlantic Trends, Key Findings 2007. p. 24. http://www.gmfus.org/trends/doc/2007_english_key.pdf
06.08.2008

have dual citizenship have started to repair their houses in Bulgaria and spend more time there in their vacancies. Some younger Turks even decided to return permanently to Bulgaria after EU membership process of Bulgaria was finished. This means even though radicalism, nationalism and prejudices prevent Turks for developing warmer relations with Bulgarians, interaction between parties will be increasingly continued in the following years.

Both sides should clear themselves from nationalist hostilities and racial prejudices. Alain Berliner, in his surrealist film *Le Mur*³⁴⁶, shows us how prejudices can affect our life. Two main characters of the film Albert, a French speaking Walloon, and Wendy, a Dutch speaking Flemish, wake up in divided Brussels one morning. City is divided into Walloon and Flemish regions by an enormous wall. In both sides, oppressive regimes arrest other linguistic group members. Living in Walloon region as a Flemish or in Flemish region as a Walloon become impossible. At the end of the movie, our main characters realize that the real wall is in their minds, and only by breaking the walls, which we built in our minds, we can live together with ethnic, linguistic or religious differences. We have two options; capitulating to our prejudices and drown in the pool of endless nationalism and racism as newspapers report every day³⁴⁷, or breaking the walls in our minds and learning to live together with ethnic, linguistic and religious differences.

³⁴⁶ *Le Mur* (the Wall), directed by Alain Berliner, Belgium/France, 1998.

³⁴⁷ "İrkçı Bulgarlar Türk amını tahrip etti" *Milliyet*, 01.09.2007, p. 18.

CONCLUSION

This thesis argues that Europeanization process in Eastern Europe eased an integration of minorities into a larger society in the case of Bulgaria. Although European Union has only recently taken an important step for formation of a common minority policy by Lisbon Treaty, conditionality put by Copenhagen Criteria forced candidate states to improve living conditions of their minorities and integrate them into a larger society. Therefore, especially in the case of Bulgaria administrative and legal issues rather than democratic ones became an obstacle for the full membership.

This thesis has also shows that before the communist era rights and liberties of Turkish minority in Bulgaria were depend on to the international conjecture and to instable policies of Bulgarian governments. Hence, even though international treaties or bilateral agreements with Turkey obliged Bulgaria to treat its minority equally with ethnic Bulgarians, governments usually infringe the rights and liberties of its' Turkish minority. The result was usually immigration of hundred thousands of Turks to Turkey.

Similar unstable minority policies were seen in the first years of communist rule. On the one hand regime had been trying to transform Turks and other minorities to comrade and look them as a part of their ideal socialist society; on the other hand it had been quietly watching immigration of its citizens or comrades to Turkey. When Zhivkov became a one man, he initiated more planned assimilation policy against the minorities which resulted with Big Excursion in 1989.

The thesis analyzes post-communist period in the scope of EU accession process mainly. Although 1991 Constitution of Bulgaria defined Turks as “Bulgarian citizens whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian”, Turkish Minority becomes a part of not only Bulgarian administration but also EU system by the help of MRF mostly. The role of MRF has been crucial in the normalization process. However, it has also triggered the rise of ultra nationalism in Bulgarian territories. Of course the main target of ultra nationalists is MRF. In the 7th National Congress of MRF which was held on December 2009, Ahmet Doğan has strictly criticized anti-MRF and anti-Turkish talking in the

Bulgarian public opinion and called for opening a new chapter of tolerance and democracy. He also emphasized that MRF is a necessity for the EU because it is the only working model for balancing and developing collective human rights. It is clearly seen that the sole representative of Turkish Minority is determined to protect the rights and freedoms of Turks but also to respect territorial integrity and developing democracy in Bulgaria.

It is also good to see that Borisov, who has come to power with nationalist expressions, is learning to act as a centrist leader who represents all of citizens. Over the proposed referendum on the 10-minute Turkish-language news emissions on the national TV channel Borisov revoked his first statements by saying that such a referendum will not be accepted well in Europe. Leader of the group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Guy Verhofstadt has declared that they will put the issue on the European Parliament's agenda. On the other hand, Bulgarian National Television's Director General Uliyana Pramova has stated that in the future development of Bulgarian National Television, multiple programs for minorities in their mother tongue will be provided. This is a good example about how minority issues of Bulgaria have internationalized and how EU has become a deterrent factor even for Prime Minister who has come to power by radical expressions about minorities.

Consequently, it is seen that discussions about the Turkish Minority will accelerate in the following years, although Bulgaria's EU membership has been concluded in 2007. Today the rights and freedoms of the Turkish Minority are guaranteed by internal and external regulations and conditions of them is not comparable with the conditions of pre-democratization. It is a fact that there is a problem about underdevelopment and unemployment in the mixed regions. Corruption in all administrative levels makes everything more difficult. Moreover there is a problem also about absorption of EU funds. However those economic problems can be solved in the long run. Just as a degree of EU funds influx to the region has already started. However attacks, statements and demands of ultra-nationalists remind us pains of the past. Especially moderate Bulgarians who are still in majority should consider that such attacks and oppressions only enforce the unity of minority groups and even

can radicalize them rather than eliminating the existence of minorities. Turks of Bulgaria have never thought such an option (radicalization) and participated Bulgarian politics legally and peacefully. No matter what extreme right does, by the help of MRF they should continue their peaceful resolutions.

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