

**EUROPEANIZATION OF MINORITY RIGHTS IN BULGARIA:
TURKS OF BULGARIA AS A CASE STUDY**

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MUZAFFER VATANSEVER KUTLAY

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

Prof. Dr. Meliha Altunışık
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

Prof. Dr. Hüseyin Bağcı
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. M. Fatih Tayfur
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Assoc. Prof. Dr. M. Fatih Tayfur (METU, IR) _____

Prof. Dr. İlhan Uzgel (Ankara University, IR) _____

Assist. Prof. Dr. Ş. İnan Rüma (İstanbul Bilgi University, IR) _____

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last name: Muzaffer, Vatansever Kutlay

Signature:

ABSTRACT

EUROPEANIZATION OF MINORITY RIGHTS IN BULGARIA: TURKS OF BULGARIA AS A CASE STUDY

Vatansever Kutlay, Muzaffer

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This thesis aims to find an answer to the following question: What are the shifts and continuities of Bulgaria's minority policy over the last two decades and what is the impact of the EU, thereby Europeanization, in the process, if any? To answer to this question, three sub-periods (1989-1999, 1999-2007 and 2007-2012) are to be investigated separately to reveal the role of the EU in the process. In this context, this study develops a historical perspective on Bulgaria's treatment of Turkish minority as a case study. The overall conclusion of this study is that the Europeanization of minority rights in Bulgaria has remained fragmented, restricted and limited. The findings of this study confirm other studies in the relevant literature in the sense that EU's leverage on minority rights is rather limited and non-linear especially in comparison to other standardized policy areas.

Keywords: Turkish minority in Bulgaria, minority rights, Europeanization of minority rights, Bulgaria.

ÖZ

BULGARİSTAN’DA AZINLIK HAKLARININ AVRUPALILAŞMASI: TÜRK AZINLIK ÖRNEĞİ

Vatansever Kutlay, Muzaffer

Yüksek Lisans, Uluslararası İlişkiler Ana Bilim Dalı

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Bu tezin amacı Bulgaristan’ın son yirmi yılı aşkın sürede azınlık hakları rejiminde yaşanan dönüşümün boyutlarını ve limitlerini, ülkede yaşayan Türk azınlık merkeze alınarak “Avrupalılaşıma” kavramsal çerçevesi ekseninde incelemektir. Bu soruya cevap aramak için söz konusu dönem analitik kolaylık sağlaması açısından Avrupa Birliği’nin Bulgaristan üzerinde artan etkisi dikkate alınarak 1989-1999, 1999-2007 ve 2007-2012 olmak üzere üç ana alt kısma ayrılmıştır. Çalışmanın vardığı temel sonuç, Bulgaristan’da Türk azınlığın haklarının iyileştirilmesi konusunda önemli adımlar atılmış olmakla beraber genel olarak azınlık haklarının Avrupalılaşması sürecinin parçalı, kısıtlı ve doğrusal olmayan bir seyir izlediği yönündedir. Bu sonuç, Avrupalılaşmanın azınlık hakları gibi AB düzeyinde standartlaşmış politika alanları arasında yer almayan ve bu nedenle ulusal düzeyde karar alma süreçlerinin baskın olduğu bir alanda üye ülkeler arasında büyük farklılıklar gösterebileceğini öngören literatürle uyumluluk göstermektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Bulgaristan’daki Türk azınlıklar, azınlık hakları, azınlık haklarının Avrupalılaşması, Bulgaristan.

To My Family,
who witnessed the brutality of Zhivkov regime and 1989 migration

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The political regimes in Central and Eastern Europe passed through significant transformation starting from the beginning of 1990s. The collapse of planned economies and transition to democracy created deep changes in the political economy structures of ex-communist countries. In this context, the European Union (hereinafter, EU) has turned out to be one of the influential transformative powers over the Balkans region during this period mainly thanks to the enlargement prospect and “conditionality principles” attached to it. Many countries in the region turned their face to the Western system; accordingly, they re-oriented their economic and political structures extensively to become eligible for EU membership.¹

The transformation of domestic politics in these countries, *inter alia*, affected their minority rights regimes as well. In the literature, the EU’s transformative role on candidate and member countries is discussed within the context of a rather controversial term of Europeanization.² Since the political criteria in the EU are used almost synonymous with Copenhagen criteria and one of the indispensable parts of Copenhagen criteria is about the minority rights in

¹ For a comprehensive study on this issue, see, Heather Grabbe, *The EU’s Transformative Power: Europeanization through Conditionality in Central and Eastern Europe*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

² For the definitions of “Europeanization” concept in the literature, see, part 1.1.1 in this chapter.

the member and potential member countries, “Europeanization of political structure” inherently incorporates “Europeanization of minority rights.” As a result, one has to review the EU’s impact on minority rights policy in candidate countries so as to reveal the political impact of Europeanization in candidate/member countries. As a country that experienced regime change and passed through EU membership process as a result of which she became a member of the EU, Bulgaria’s changing attitudes towards minorities is an illuminating case in this context.

This thesis aims to find an answer to the following question: What are the shifts and continuities of Bulgarian minority policy over the last two decades and what is the impact of the EU, thereby Europeanization, in the process, if there is any? In search of an answer to this question, three sub-periods that are categorized according to Bulgaria’s EU membership process (1989-1999, 1999-2007 and 2007-2012) are to be dealt separately to reveal the role of the EU in the process. In this context, this study develops a historical perspective on Bulgaria’s treatment of Turkish minority starting from early days of the establishment of Bulgarian Principality in 1878 up to the present day. Turkish minority in the country represents the biggest minority group. Furthermore, the Zhivkov regime’s assimilation campaign towards Turks during the second half of 1980s and the recovery process during 1990s make Turkish minority an important case for the development of minority rights in Bulgaria.

As documented in many comparative minority studies, minority rights issues are one of the areas in which states pay the crystal clear examples of “lip service” at international fora. While the national governments support the “reforms” in form, they may continue implementing discriminatory policies in practise under the disguise of “national security” and “political unity”.³ Moreover, even if legal amendments are made on paper thanks to the pressures from international and supranational organizations, it still remains a question mark whether these amendments are reflected on the ground. Bulgaria, in this context, is not an exception. The following parts will discuss and try to demonstrate why this is so.

1.1. Conceptual Framework

1.1.1. The Concept of Europeanization

For many years, European integration studies have concentrated on the descriptive analysis of EU institutions, EU policies and the member states’ adoption of European legal texts.⁴ As the European integration transformed from an economic organization toward a political entity, the impacts of EU policies on member and candidate countries have unprecedentedly deepened. Not surprisingly, as a result,

³ “Securitization of minorities” has turned into an increasingly important research area for scholars especially over the last couple of years. For example, Roe in his article “assesses the possibilities for applying the concept of desecuritization to the area of minority rights.” Paul Roe, “Securitization and Minority Rights: Conditions of Desecuritization”, *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 35, No. 3, 2004, p. 279-294.

⁴ There are many standard books on European integration written in this context. For the two leading ones, see Desmond Dinan, *Ever Closer Union: An Introduction to European Integration*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005; Helen Wallace, William Wallace, and Mark A. Pollack (eds.), *Policy-Making in the European Union*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

the research agenda of the students of European politics has switched to “analyzing the impact of European integration and Europeanization on domestic political and social processes of the member states and beyond.”⁵

Europeanization is a relatively recent concept. Similar to all recently emerged social sciences concepts, there are important grey areas, conceptual and causal loopholes.⁶ In the literature, there are different definitions of Europeanization. Ladrech defines it as “an incremental process reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC [EU] political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making.”⁷ According to Börzel, Europeanization is defined as a two-way process. It entails a “bottom-up” and a “top-down” dimension. The former emphasizes the evolution of European institutions as a set of new norms, rules and practices, whereas the latter refers to the impact of these new institutions on political structures and processes of the member states.⁸ On the other hand, some studies put emphasis on conceptualizing Europeanization as interplay between member states’ domestic policies and the EU level policy-making.⁹ In this context, Major

⁵ Tanja A. Börzel and Thomas Risse, “When Europe Hits Home: Europeanization and Domestic Change”, *European Integration Online Papers*, Vol. 4, No. 15, 2000, p. 1.

⁶ Ian Bache and Stephen George, *Politics in the European Union*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 58.

⁷ Robert Ladrech, “Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: The Case of France”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 1994, p. 69-87.

⁸ Tanja Börzel, “Pace-Setting, Foot-Dragging, and Fence-Sitting: Member State Responses to Europeanization”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 2, 2002, p. 193-194.

⁹ These approaches resemble Robert Putnam’s “two level games” metaphor. Putnam argues that the dynamics of international negotiations are best conceptualized as a interactive interplay

defines Europeanization as “an ongoing, interactive and mutually constitutive process of change linking national and European levels, where the responses of the member states to the integration process feed back into EU institutions and policy processes and vice versa.”¹⁰ Buller and Gamble identify five different ways in which Europeanization has been used: (1) to refer to the necessary institutions of governance at the European level, (2) to refer to the examples where distinct European forms of organization have been exported outside Europe’s territorial boundaries, (3) to denote the achievement of the political unification of Europe, (4) as a process whereby domestic politics that has become subject to EU policy-making, and (5) as a smokescreen for domestic political tug-of-wars.¹¹

It is clear that Europeanization is a fruitful yet controversial concept.¹² Over the last decade the concept has turned out to be one of the catchwords to examine the changes in domestic policies, politics, and polities of the EU member and candidate countries. This study relies on the definition provided by Risse, Cowles and Caporaso. Accordingly, they define “Europeanization” as;

between domestic audience and international actors. Robert Putnam, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games”, *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 3, 1988, p. 427-460.

¹⁰ Claudia Major, “Europeanization and Foreign and Security Policy—Undermining or Rescuing the Nation State”, *Politics*, Vol. 25, No. 3, 2005, p.177.

¹¹ Jim Buller and Andrew Gamble, “Conceptualising Europeanization”, *Public Policy and Administration*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2002, pp. 4-24. See also Ian Bache and Stephen George, *Politics in The European Union*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 59.

¹² Johan P. Olsen, “The Many Faces of Europeanization”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 5, 2002, p. 921-952.

*Emergence and the development at the European level of distinct structures of governance, that is, of political, legal, and social institutions associated with problem-solving that formalizes interactions among the actors, and of policy networks specializing in the creation of authoritative rules.*¹³

According to this definition Europeanization refers to the domestic impact of the EU rules, regulations, and norms on candidate and member countries. It implies that the candidate and member states tend to adopt their diverging rules, regulations, and norms to those of the EU level governance structures. Since this definition refers to change within a broad and ambiguous set of domestic realms, Börzel and Risse differentiate three sets of domestic realms that “Europeanization hits” (see table 1).¹⁴ The first set is *policies*, which refers to the major policy areas through which the EU impacts on domestic structures. The EU produces about 500 policy decisions annually; the body of Community Legislation is composed of more than 5.000 Directives and Regulations.¹⁵ Since the member and candidate countries have to comply with these policies, the impact of Europeanization on domestic policy realm becomes the most visible one. The second set is *politics*, which refers to the changing dynamics of domestic interest formation, and societal/political representation.¹⁶ In this context, politics at the European level becomes a business as usual practise for local/domestic interest groups because

¹³ Thomas Risse, Maria Green Cowles, and James Caporaso, “Europeanization and Domestic Change: Introduction”, in Maria Green Cowles, James Caporaso, and Thomas Risse (eds.), *Transforming Europe: Europeanization and Domestic Political Change*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000, p. 2.

¹⁴ Tanja A. Börzel and Thomas Risse, “When Europe Hits Home: Europeanization and Domestic Change”, *European Integration Online Papers*, Vol. 4, No. 15, 2000, p. 3-5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

they understand that most of the policies are produced at the EU level; therefore they have to strive further to upload their agendas to the EU level as well. From this point of view, Europeanization means the orientation shift for domestic interest groups in their style of making politics. The third set is *polity*, which refers to the change in domestic institutions of interest formation and mediation.¹⁷ From polity point of view, Europeanization has substantial impact upon the national bureaucracies and regulatory structures,¹⁸ judicial structures¹⁹ and socio-economic structures²⁰ etc.

Table 1. Domestic Effects of Europeanization²¹

POLICIES	POLITICS	POLITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards • Instruments • Problem-solving approaches • Policy narratives and discourses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest formation • Interest aggregation • Interest representation • Public discourses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political institutions • Intergovernmental relations • Judicial structures • Public administration • State traditions • Economic institutions • State-society relations • Identities

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁸ See for example, Volker Schneider, “Institutional Reform in Telecommunications: The European Union in Transnational Policy Diffusion”, in Maria Green Cowles, James A. Caporaso, and Thomas Risse (eds.), *Transforming Europe: Europeanization and Domestic Political Change*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000.

¹⁹ See for example, Jan Smits, “The Europeanization of National Legal Systems: Some Consequences for Legal Thinking in Civil Law Countries”, in Mark Van Hoecke (ed.), *Epistemology and Methodology of Comparative Law*, Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2004, p. 229-245.

²⁰ Kenneth Dyson, “EMU as Europeanization: Convergence, Diversity and Contingency”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 4, 2000, p. 645–666.

²¹ Börzel and Risse, *op.cit.*, 2000, p. 23.

It becomes apparent that Europeanization has impacts on candidate and member countries from various ways. The facilitating mechanisms of institutional adaptation and norm convergence and the basic motivations of policy-makers throughout this process have become the focus of Europeanization discussions. Accordingly, two schools of thought to Europeanization come to the fore:²² (1) The rationalist and (2) the constructivist accounts of Europeanization. The reasons to concentrate on these two accounts are twofold. First, rationalist and constructivist approaches provide a fertile conceptual ground to test many hypotheses in terms of the main motivations of policy-makers in member and candidate countries. Second, these two approaches provide useful conceptual toolkits for collapsing the various puzzling terms into a manageable format regarding EU's impact on domestic policies in the candidate and member countries.

1.1.1.1. Rationalist Accounts of Europeanization

Rationalist accounts of Europeanization investigate the new opportunities and constraints in the pursuance of relevant actors' interests over the domestic institutional change and adaptation processes. The take-off point of rationalist theory is the "rational actors" that are goal-oriented and purposeful actors acting

²² For different categorizations in the literature, see Ulrich Sedelmeier, "Europeanization in New Member and Candidate States", *Living Reviews in European Governance*, CONNEX/NEWGOV, 2006, p. 10; Ian Bache and Stephen George, *Politics in the European Union*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 58-65; Mark Pollack, "The New Institutionalisms and European Integration", in Wiener, A. and Diez, T. (eds.), *European Integration Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 137-159.

according to rationalist cost-benefit analysis.²³ Accordingly, rationalist theory takes actors preferences as given. They engage in interactions to maximize their utility functions separately. Since the actors are regarded as “individuals” who are not engaging in constant interactions in a societal environment, the rationalist theory does not pay attention to the possibility of actors’ changing preferences.²⁴ The Europeanization, from rationalist point of view, refers to the “emerging political opportunity structures” that favour certain interest groups vis-à-vis the others.²⁵ As the EU membership process forces the domestic actors, institutions and structures to change in line with the EU’s prescriptions, new political opportunity structures and power distribution/redistribution mechanisms are opened up. The different interest groups, argues the rationalist accounts of Europeanization, try to exploit these opportunity structures according to a rationalist cost-benefit analysis.²⁶ Rationalist accounts of Europeanization rely on the “logic of consequences”, which refers to the rational actors’ political actions

²³ Andrew H. Kydd, “Methodological Individualism and Rational Choice”, in Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 425-443.

²⁴ Burawoy, in his controversial study, discusses the limits of rationalist theory and “positivist methodology.” For details, see Michael Burawoy, “The Extended Case Method,” *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1998, p. 4-33. In IR theory, Robert Cox is one of the influential figures that demonstrated the pitfalls of rationalist theory. See, *inter alia*, Robert Cox, “Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method”, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 1983, p. 162-175.

²⁵ Börzel and Risse, *op. cit.*, 2000, p. 6.

²⁶ James G. March and John P. Olsen, “The Institutional Dynamics of International Political Orders”, *International Organization*, Vol. 52, No. 4, 1998, p. 943-969.

derived from rational calculation to maximize their preferences.²⁷ Consequently, the ultimate benefit expected to be derived from an action determines the characteristics of the action itself.

Rationalist accounts of Europeanization determine two facilitating mechanisms for *Europeanization* of domestic structures. These mechanisms are (1) multiple veto points, and (2) formal institutions. Accordingly, if the veto points in a country, namely the formal channels through which different interest groups pursue their interests, are numerous, it is less likely for this country to achieve further Europeanization because the diverging veto groups may inhibit the decision-making processes if they perceive the adaptation to EU rules as threats to their vested interests.²⁸ The second facilitating mechanism is the formal institutions, which refers to the legal and administrative platforms via which domestic interest groups may exploit the opportunity structures at the EU level. The availability of these platforms enables the domestic actors to circumvent their governments and have an owner to their voices at the EU platforms. For the materialization of this opportunity, however, two preconditions must exist. First, there must be very well established platforms at the EU level regarding the subject field in question. If there are legal and administrative loopholes at the EU level, it becomes extremely difficult for domestic interest groups to circumvent domestic

²⁷ Kjell Goldmann, "Appropriateness and Consequences: The Logic of Neo-Institutionalism", *Governance*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 2005, p. 35–52.

²⁸ The origins of "veto points approach" go to the works of George Tsebelis. See, George Tsebelis, "Decision Making in Political Systems: Veto Players in Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, Multicameralism, and Multipartism", *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 25, No. 3, 1995, p. 289-325.

mechanisms so as to take advantage of the European opportunity structures. This aspect is crucially important for minority rights protection, which will be discussed in detail in section three. Second, the domestic interest groups (the minorities in our case) must be aware of their opportunities and must acquire the required capacity to exploit the opportunity structures created by formal institutions during the Europeanization process. This point is also vitally important in terms of Turkish minority in Bulgaria, a point to be elaborated on the third section of this chapter too.

1.1.1.2. Constructivist Accounts of Europeanization

Opposite to the rationalist accounts, constructivist approaches to Europeanization concentrate on shared norms, and ideational change of domestic policy makers throughout Europeanization process. Accordingly, constructivists do not regard preferences as taken for granted. Instead they argue that people are prone to change their ideas, norms, and preferences as a result of societal interaction at sub-national, national, and supra-national levels.²⁹ Constructivists, in this regard, defence the ontological dependence of structure to the process. As Wendt argues;³⁰

The parameters of social organization themselves are reproduced only in and through the orientations and practices of members engaged in social interactions over time.... Social configurations are not 'objective' like

²⁹ Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996.

³⁰ Wendt quotes this phrase from Jeff Coulter. For details, see, Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 2, 1992, p. 406.

mountains or forests, but neither are they 'subjective' like dreams or flights of speculative fancy. They are, as most social scientists concede at the theoretical level, intersubjective construction.

The main point of constructivist approach is the prioritization of social matters such as ideas, norms and rules, which are supposed to shape the interests of actors.³¹ Accordingly, the human beings are not assumed as atomistic individuals making cost-benefit analysis in an isolated environment from broader socio-economic subjectivities.³² Contrary, they are perceived as parts of broader societal collectives, which “strongly influence the way of actors define their goals and what they perceive as rational action.”³³ In terms of Europeanization, constructivist accounts prioritize “logic of appropriateness” that refers to *appropriate* political actions derived from norms and identities in given situation. Mainly two channels facilitate the Europeanization, according to this perspective. First channel is norm entrepreneurs or “change agents” in domestic policy-making procedures. Norm entrepreneurs refer to opinion leaders who believe in the appropriateness of European norms and aim to transform domestic policy sphere in line with these norms. Peter Haas calls these groups as epistemic communities that are “a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within

³¹ Thomas Christiansen, Knud Erik Jørgensen, Antje Wiener, “The Social Construction of Europe”, *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 1999, p. 530.

³² Thomas Risse, “Social Constructivism and European Integration”, in Antje Wiener and Thomas Diez (eds.), *European Integration Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 159-176.

³³ Börzel and Risse, *op. cit.*, 2000, p. 8.

that domain or issue-area.”³⁴ The second channel is the informal institutions that promote further Europeanization. These informal institutions over the Europeanization period produce a shared culture, consensus-building criteria, and norms for appropriate behaviour. The key role of these platforms is their clustering capability that helps epistemic communities to internalize the appropriate behaviour. The logic of appropriateness refers to the internalization of certain European norms, values, and preferences as the take-off point in Europeanization studies. These two theoretical approaches provide a useful framework to discuss the Europeanization of minority rights in Bulgaria.

1.1.2. Europeanization of Minority Rights

This section links minority rights discussions to the conceptual Europeanization framework discussed in the first section. Within the context of the framework, the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequences are of crucial importance. These two concepts are keys to understand the Europeanization’s impact on minority rights regime in a country. The logic of consequences argues that the state in question changes its domestic legal and institutional structures as a consequence of a rationalist cost-benefit analysis. The logic of appropriateness, on the other hand, argues that states make convergence in their norms, perceptions

³⁴ Peter Haas, “Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination”, *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 1, 1992, p. 3.

and ideas in line with the European norms, perceptions, ideas, and discourse.³⁵ The driving force, this approach argues, is not the rationalist cost-benefit analysis but the norm changes throughout the integration process that leads to Europeanization.

The interpretation of minority rights in terms of these two logics is the following: The logic of consequences argues that the protection of minority rights in candidate/member countries tend to be underdeveloped because the legal framework is not strictly binding in the EU *acquis*. Therefore candidate countries have ample room to circumvent the reference of European frameworks. According to this framework, moreover, after a country becomes a member of the EU, its reform performance on minority rights may slow down because of the non-binding nature of minority protection framework. From this point of view, it is understandable for a candidate country to be more eager to launch major reforms on minority rights because the candidate country perceives it as part of a broader rationalist cost-benefit analysis. It makes necessary reforms (which are perceived as “costs”) in return for membership (which is perceived as “benefits”). However, after becoming a member of the EU, the logic of consequences may wane because the hands of the member country untied so that it may slow down the reform process.³⁶

³⁵ Plamen Ralchev, “Europeanization and the Instrumentality of Imposing a Minority Discourse”, Paper prepared for the 48th Annual Convention of the International Studies Association in Chicago, USA, 28 Feb.- 3 March 2007.

³⁶ In the literature, there are studies that match logic of consequence with candidate countries and logic of appropriateness with member countries. For an example to both approaches see, *inter alia*,

The logic of appropriateness on the other hand foresees that the reform process may continue even after the membership because the member states throughout their candidacy process develop new norms on minority rights based on reference European frameworks. Moreover, the minorities in the country in question -in addition to the political elites- gain consciousness about their rights thanks to constant contact with their European counterparts and thanks to projects and platforms conducted at the European level. Their initiative, logic of appropriateness argues, provides pressure mechanisms so that it becomes extremely difficult for any member state to step back in minority policies.³⁷

1.1.3. Europeanization of Minority Rights in Bulgaria

Many Europeanization studies acknowledge that Europeanization is not a uniform process across the countries. In other words, it has different domestic impacts in different countries.³⁸ Moreover, one-dimensional perspectives that only concentrates on state level analysis falls short of revealing the complexity of the issue. In the early 1990s, Bulgarian society took advantage of regime change and different minority groups mobilized so as to extent their economic, political, social, educational, religious and cultural rights in a peaceful manner within the system. This process was also accompanied by institutional level transformation

Ece Özlem Atikcan, "European Union and Minorities: Different Paths of Europeanization", *Journal of European Integration*, Vol. 32, No. 4, 2010, p. 375-392.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 377-378.

³⁸ Kevin Featherstone and Claudio M. Radaelli, *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

in the sense that starting from mid-1990s EU membership process gained momentum and was transformed into a formal format. The Bulgaria's political institutions and legal codifications started to be changed accordingly, though the process followed a non-linear path.³⁹

According to the widely accepted view, the EU has become the most important actor and anchor in transforming the domestic political, economic, and legal systems of the Central and East European countries.⁴⁰ In this context, the benefits of membership are directly connected with the potential political will in the applicant countries on full compliance to *acquis communautaire* and to meet the criteria of Copenhagen in order to become a member of the Union.

In the area of minority protection, three main conditions emerged as a prerequisite of EU membership for applicant countries: Adoption of Council Directive 2000/43 (known as Race Equality Directive), adoption of Council of Europe (hereinafter CoE) Framework Convention, and adoption of governmental strategies and programs for the inclusion of the Roma minority –in the countries that have substantial amount of Roma minorities, including Bulgaria. Starting in 1998, the European Commission published regular annual reports on the progress of applicant countries. The basic weakness of the EU's approach, however, is its narrow concentration on Roma minority and to exclude other minority groups to a

³⁹ Gergana Noutcheva and Dimitar Bechev, "The Successful Laggards: Bulgaria and Romania's Accession to the EU", *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 2008, p. 114-144.

⁴⁰ Peter Vermeersch, "Minority Policy in Central Europe: Exploring the Impact of the EU's Enlargement Strategy", *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2004, p. 3.

certain extent in the Bulgarian case. Accordingly, as Rechel argues the relevant literature does not pay adequate attention to the state of Turks, Macedonians, Pomacs, and other small minority groups living in the country.⁴¹ Even recently, one of the interviewees underlines this point as follows:

*“European Union does not pay enough attention to the state of Turkish minority in Bulgaria. The only minority group that captured the attention of the EU is the Roma minority. They receive more funding and subsidies than the Turks receiving.”*⁴²

At Helsinki Summit in December 1999, Bulgaria (along with five others) was declared as candidate country and invited to fulfill the Copenhagen political criteria on the way to full membership. Formal negotiations between Bulgaria and the EU were opened on February 15, 2000. The EU Summit in Copenhagen in December 2002 was a deep disappointment for the country since Bulgaria was not included in targeted accession on 1 May 2004. Along with the economic criteria of membership and accommodation of the *acquis*, the political criteria, including the protection of minorities, have taken a back seat in Bulgarian accession to the EU. Although Bulgaria signed CoE Framework Convention in 1997 and ratified by Bulgarian Parliament in 1999, the term *national minorities* was a highly contested concept in the country. With regard to the Race Equality Directive, European Commission reminded Bulgaria in its regular reports between 2000 and

⁴¹ Bernd Rechel, “State Control of Minorities in Bulgaria”, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 23, No. 3, 2007, p. 352-370.

⁴² (Author’s interview with Dr. Ismail Cambazov, on 14 May 2010). Krasimir Kanev, the Chairman of Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, argues that “the EU has been very passive. In the pre-accession period urged the government to integrate Roma. So, the policies mostly focused on Roma.” (Author’s interview with Krasimir Kanev, on 4 May 2010).

2002 that it had to bring her legislation into the terms of the EU antidiscrimination *acquis*. In addition, as the Commission noted its *Opinions* on Bulgaria, especially on the situation of Roma minority that originally referred as “gypsies”, Sofia’s performance was not treated as “satisfactory”. There are “no arrangements for allowing minorities to use their own language for official communication in areas where they represent a significant percentage of the population.”⁴³ These examples show that progress in minority rights in post-communist Bulgaria is still limited.

In this context, this thesis specifically focuses on the state of Turkish minority in Bulgaria. Despite the existence of studies on the issue,⁴⁴ nearly none of them develops an explicit Europeanization perspective. This study, accordingly, aims to pinpoint the continuities, ruptures and transformations in Bulgaria’s minority policy within the broader Europeanization framework with a central emphasis on Turkish minority in the country.

1.2. Methodology

This study applies case-study methodology since “case studies are the preferred strategy when ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events [and] when the focus is on a contemporary

⁴³ European Commission, *Commission Opinion on Bulgaria’s Application for Membership of the European Union*, Brussels, 15 July 1997, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/bulgaria/documents/abc/bu-op-1997_en.pdf, (accessed on: 15 May 2012).

⁴⁴ These studies are reviewed and cited in the relevant parts of this thesis.

phenomenon within some real-life context”⁴⁵ Due to the fact that the main aim of this thesis is to search for answers of how and why the impact of Europeanization has been limited on minority rights in Bulgaria with reference to Bulgarian policies towards Turkish minority over the last two decades, the case-study methodology is utilized.

In this study, primary and secondary sources are used. In this context, the official data and texts released by the relevant institutions of Bulgarian state, the EU’s official institutions are used throughout the chapters. In addition, the books, articles, newspapers and country reports are examined. The literature on the transformation of Bulgarian minority policy is relatively an underdeveloped topic. Therefore it is quite difficult to gather solid information by just relying on secondary sources. Moreover, the existing sources may be deceptive having taken the undiversified media and weak civil society in Bulgaria. In order to overcome this intellectual barrier, elite interviews were conducted with the Bulgarian officials, minority representatives, scholars, bureaucrats and diplomats during a four-month field study (15th February-30th May, 2010) in Sofia, which is dedicated to investigate about state of minorities in Bulgaria. The scholarship is provided by Centre for Excellence Dialogue for Europe at Sofia University, “St. Kliment Ohdriski”. In total, 22 interviews were conducted and five semi-structured questions were directed to the interviewees regarding the past and

⁴⁵ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Designs and Methods*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003, p. 1.

present situation of Bulgaria's minority regime with special reference to the state of Turks in the country.

1.3. Organization of the Chapters

The present study is organized under five chapters. Following this introductory chapter, in the second chapter, minority concept will be analysed in relation to international law and politics. A special emphasis will be put on the regulations of and implementations in the EU. The second chapter aims to draw the conceptual framework for the Bulgarian case.

The third chapter analyses the state of Turkish minority in Bulgaria. First, four major minority groups in Bulgaria, Turks, Macedonians, Pomaks and Roma, are evaluated in terms of their status in legal texts and in terms of their practical treatment by the Bulgarian state. It is a known fact that states wish to treat minorities under "individual rights" umbrella, yet the minorities struggle for "collective rights". This tug-of-war is also the issue for Bulgarian case. Second, the "revival policy" that put into during the final years of Zhivkov regime is investigated. The assimilation attempts toward the Turkish minority and its impacts on the minority-majority relations in Bulgaria are also discussed in detail. Third, the chapter also focuses on the dynamics of the recovery of Turkish minority's rights in the post-communist era with special reference to the role of the EU, if there is any.

The fourth chapter is devoted to the transformation of minority rights in Bulgaria over the last two decades. This chapter is divided into three sub-periods (1990-1999, 1999-2007 and 2007-2012) in line with the three turning points in the history of modern Bulgaria. The first period (1990-1999) is identified with the collapse of Soviet system and rise of free market economy model. In this context, Bulgaria turned her face towards the West and began to take steps to establish a capitalist and liberal system. In the same vein, the integration with the Western institutions, especially with the NATO and the EU, became the most important foreign policy priorities. All these changes in domestic and foreign policies have reflected loosely in minority rights in the country. Hence the first period is named as “loose Europeanization”. The second turning point is 1999-2007 period. The important point in this period is that Bulgaria was declared as a candidate country in 1999 and became a member in 2007. During this period, conditionality was reached its apex. Hence this period is named as “intense Europeanization”. The third turning point was the post membership process, 2007 and afterwards. Bulgaria became a member of the EU in 2007, yet post-monitoring process continued because of the shortages in basic reform areas. Hence this period is named as “stagnation”. The fourth chapter also aims to establish a bridge between conceptual framework and Bulgarian case by revealing the extent to which political Europeanization created spill-over effects on Bulgaria’s minority policy and the state of Turkish minority.

The concluding chapter makes an overall evaluation of the changes and continuities of Bulgarian minority policy over the last two decades and draws some major conclusions for the limits of Europeanization impact on the issue in question.

CHAPTER 2

THE CONCEPT OF MINORITY AND THE EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK

“Minority” concept is a very controversial term in both scholarly discussions and policy debates. As a term came into existence with the consolidation and spread of nation-states, “minority” has always been a “dangerous” word for policy makers.⁴⁶ This is perhaps more valid for the European nation-states than the rest of the world. Europe, as a continent in which the nation-state and nationalism is born and spread to the rest of the world, has witnessed many bloody wars revolved around the terms directly or indirectly related to the minorities.⁴⁷ Finally, the havoc created by the World War I and World War II paved the way for European states to think more on the protection of minorities.

The rise and penetration of globalization into the inter-state system over the last twenty years further push the nation-states to change their paradigms on treatment of minorities. In the literature, there are many different approaches to globalization.⁴⁸ Since, globalization is a multi-layered and multi-dimensional term that makes its effects asymmetric on different nation states, especially in the

⁴⁶ David Wippman, “The Evolution and Implementation of Minority Rights”, *Fordham Law Review*, Vol. 66, No. 2, 1997, p. 598.

⁴⁷ For a comprehensive discussion on the emergence and spread of European nation-states see, Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States: AD 990-1992*, Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990.

⁴⁸ For selective readings among a vast literature, see David Held and Anthony McGrew, *The Global Transformations Reader: An Introduction to Globalization Debate*, Oxford: Polity Press, 2004; Frank J. Lechner and John Boli, *The Globalization Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004; David Held, *A Globalizing World? Culture, Economic, Politics*, Open University Press, 2004; Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson, *Globalization in Question*, Oxford: Polity Press, 1996.

economic, political, and sociological realms, the controversy over the concept is understandable. Nevertheless, most of the researchers argue that globalization has restricted the political autonomy of nation states, particularly in sensitive issues like minority rights, by way of supranational institutions and international organizations.⁴⁹ The impact of globalization on the paradigm change of nation states in terms of minority rights is twofold. First, thanks to the technological innovation accompanied by globalization enabled the minorities within nation states to reproduce their consciousness via media, cultural, political and, social mobilization.⁵⁰ The minorities, most of the time, are not regarded as “passive obedient” to nation states’ policies and political choices, but they turned into more active agents mobilizing, organizing and demanding segments for materializing their rights and freedoms.⁵¹ Second, new supranational regimes started to emerge especially after the Cold War in disfavour of political autonomy of nation states. The crystal clear example of this kind of regimes is the transformation of the EU from a mere economic bloc to a political entity after Maastricht Treaty signed in 1993.⁵² The emergence of supranational institutions and/or the consolidation of international human rights regimes further curtailed the political autonomy of

⁴⁹ Hirst and Thompson, *op. cit.*, 1996, p. 177.

⁵⁰ Douglass Kellner, “Theorizing Globalization”, *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 2002, p. 285-305.

⁵¹ This point is succinctly underlined by leading nationalism researcher, Anthony D. Smith; see Anthony D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*, Oxford: Polity Press, 1995, p. 13.

⁵² Maastricht Treaty is seen by many students of European politics as a major turning point for the establishment of a “political unity” for the EU. See, *inter alia*, Desmond Dinan, Desmond Dinan, *Ever Closer Union: An Introduction to European Integration*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

nation states. The internationalization of domestic political issues, and minority rights concerns among others, increased the visibility of “low politics” in global affairs. The minority rights regimes tend to become an important issue for international institutions as well. For example, the EU, today, is one of the entities that developed the most sophisticated minority regimes in the world.

This chapter aims to investigate the evolution of minority regime in Europe by concentrating on the historical trajectory. In the first part, the emergence and consolidation of minority rights in Europe will be scrutinized in four sub-periods, namely the Westphalia system, the interwar period, the Cold War period, and finally the post-Cold War period. The second part of the chapter deals with the legal framework on minority rights in the EU by revealing the key legal documents embodied in the European *acquis*. Despite the progress, the minority regime in Europe is still discussed within “individual rights-collective rights” dichotomy. Therefore, in the third part of the chapter, this dichotomy and its impact on European minority regime will be evaluated. Also in this part, the inherent problem and double-standards in EU’s minority treatment will be highlighted with reference to centre-periphery distinction in Europe, which in fact closely concerns the Bulgarian case investigated in this thesis. The final part concludes the chapter.

2.1. Evolution of Minority Regime in Europe

The evolution of minority rights in Europe starts with the emergence of nation states system in mid-17th century and spread into centuries to take its current form. The process is by no means linear and unidirectional in the sense that major wars, balance of power concerns among nation states and different political concerns paved the way for interruptions and reversals in minority treatment in Europe. Nevertheless, four separate periods may be labelled in terms of the main philosophy towards minority regime.

2.1.1. Westphalia System: Emergence of “Minority Rights”

The Congress of Westphalia is taken as the dividing line between medieval and modern eras in the conduct of international relations. Albeit the transition from medieval city states and religious authorities into territorial and sovereign states occurred in a gradual manner, the Congress of Westphalia is the first major turning point for the spatial organization of territorially based-sovereign states.⁵³ The recognition of territories as the dividing line among separate states and recognition of sovereignty of nation states based on certain territorial boundaries created an inherent problem for minorities because every boundary on the European continent created “insiders” and “outsiders”.

⁵³ For a discussion on the issue, see Benno Teschke, “Theorizing the Westphalian System of States: International Relations from Absolutism to Capitalism”, *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2002, p. 5-48.

The recognition of territorially based-sovereign states, therefore, created the origins of minority problems in Europe. However, the first exemplars of the minority rights concentrated on religious minorities since the emergence of “national identity” dates back to later periods vis-à-vis the emergence of nation-states.⁵⁴ The international agreements of the 17th and 18th centuries reveal that religion rather than culture and/or language was taken as the major dividing line across societies, which means that religious freedom created the linchpin of minority rights. As Preece underlines;⁵⁵

Men and women in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries defined their social relationships in terms of religious similarity or difference; Catholic or Protestant, Lutheran and Calvinist rather than Irish or English, German or French were the labels variously used to separate insiders from outsiders.

In addition to general redistribution of territories among the countries participated in the Thirty Years War with the Treaty of Westphalia, substantial concessions were granted to the Protestants living in different sovereign states in Europe. Protestants, accordingly, had the right to freely exercise their religious customs in public and private right without any violation imposed by the nation states in which they live. In this context, many bilateral treaties were signed between the European states. For example, Treaty of Nijmegen (1678) and the

⁵⁴ This is mainly due to the fact that “nationalism” and “national identity” is imagined and politically created in the modern era. For a deeper discussion on the emergence of nationalism and nation states, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London and New York: Verso, 2006 (revised edition).

⁵⁵ Jennifer Jackson Preece, “Minority Rights in Europe: From Westphalia to Helsinki”, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 23, 1997, p. 77.

Treaty of Ryswick (1697) that settled the disputes between Spanish and French states acknowledged the “honours, dignities and benefices” of the religious minorities living in the territorially disputed areas before the political settlement.⁵⁶

In summary, the Westphalia system is regarded as the basic turning point in terms of the recognition of the existence of minorities. However, Westphalia system approached the minority issue from a narrow perspective due to two main reasons. First, only religious minorities were taken into consideration, and the national minority problems were put aside since the very concept of national identity was still in the making at that time. Second, even the treatment of religious minorities were transferred to the bilateral relations among territorially based-sovereign states, thereby no internationally binding rules were imposed upon the princes or national rulers. It was the post-revolution era in Europe that paved the way for a paradigm shift in the treatment of minorities, which will be discussed in detail below.

2.1.2 Interwar Period: Explicit Recognition of “Minority Rights”

The consolidation of nationalism and nation states mainly started with another major turning point in European diplomatic history, namely the Congress of Vienna. The two major revolutions occurred in the last quarter of 18th century changed not only the physical but also the cognitive map of European continent.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁵⁷ J. M. Roberts, *A History of Europe*, Oxford: Helicon Publishing Ltd., 1996, p. 303-321.

The American Revolution in 1776 played a major role for the spread of tolerance and political representation. The French Revolution in 1789 and the subsequent Napoleonic expansion facilitated the spread of nationalist ideas throughout the continent. As a result, the Congress of Vienna gathered in 1815 acknowledged the nation states and nationality, as the new facts of international state system despite the dominant figures in the conference were staunch conservative supporters of old regime. Therefore, the dividing line between different political groupings gradually transformed into ethnic and linguistic minorities in addition to religious groups.

Despite the participating states of the Vienna Congress recognized existence of ethnic, linguistic and cultural minorities, it was by no means adequate to avoid the assimilations of emerging nation states. On the contrary, the acknowledgment of minorities was seen compatible with homogenizing policies of the nation states in order to overcome “minority threats to national sovereignty.”⁵⁸ Moreover, the minority concept has turned into a frequently manipulated term by great powers to tame the newly emerging “independent” nation states born as the capitalist interstate system expanded towards Balkans and Eastern and Central European region.⁵⁹ In terms of minority treatment, the asymmetry between great powers and peripheral countries was insurmountable.

⁵⁸ Preece, *op. cit.*, 1997, p. 77.

⁵⁹ Carole Fink, “The Paris Peace Conference and The Question of Minority Rights”, *Peace and Change*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 1996, p. 273-288.

Great powers attributed themselves a unidirectional interference right if the peripheral states mistreated the minorities in domestic politics.

Behind such great power minority dictates was of course the presupposition that people outside of Western Europe were backward, if not intrinsically inferior, and therefore required great-power tutelage in matters such as minority questions, which could potentially threaten international order and stability as defined by great-power interests.⁶⁰

Accordingly, the wish to protect minorities had become an excuse for several interventions in foreign states. The institutionalized version of this understanding came into existence with the establishment of League of Nations after WWI. Central and Eastern European states along with Near and Middle Eastern ones were to come to terms with their own minorities and recognize their rights. Ortakovski succinctly underlines this point;⁶¹

When new states were created after the First World War, in spite of the proclaimed principle of self-determination of nations, many ethnic, language and religious minorities remained within the new borders. At that time, international obligations regarding the protection of those minorities were imposed on the nation states defeated in the First World War and on the newly created, enlarged or newly admitted states in the League of Nations. Implementation of these obligations was guaranteed by the League of Nations.

The system, however, was quite unequal right from the very beginning because none of the major powers that established the League of Nations system fulfilled the criteria that they demand from the defeated countries in WWI. In practise, the recognition of minorities remained in the realm of bilateral relations

⁶⁰ Preece, *op. cit.*, 1997, p. 80.

⁶¹ Vladimir Ortakovski, *Minorities in the Balkans*, New York: Transnational Publishers, Inc., 2000, p. 1.

between the states.⁶² Therefore, in the interwar period, the minority rights issue was transformed into “excuses” for revisionist states like Germany to expand their territory.⁶³

In summary, the League of Nations was relying on idealist principles of post-World War I era. In this vein, League of Nations had become the first organization recognizing the rights of minorities at the international fora rather than transferring the issue into the *ad hoc* relationship among nation states. The great power politics, the asymmetric organizational structure and the instability of interstate system, however, did not enable the League of Nations to make progress in terms of minority rights. Quite the contrary, the interwar period experience distanced the states and many political figures from idealistic tendencies and, in this context, they refrained establishing an internationally binding minority regime in Europe.⁶⁴ Therefore the Cold War context had become an interval in which minority rights were by-passed under the disguise of “human rights.” Furthermore, an ambiguous and selective implementation of human rights

⁶² Carole Fink, “The League of Nations and the Minorities Question”, *World Affairs*, Vol. 157, No. 4, 1995, p. 197-205.

⁶³ Preece, *op. cit.*, 1997, p. 83.

⁶⁴ The idealistic perspectives of interwar period suffered a serious blow after WWII. The realist ideas, on the contrary, made a strong call back in continental politics and foreign policy issues. For a very influential book deciphering this period from a realist angle, see Edward H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939*, London: The Macmillan Press, 1981 (revised edition).

discourse enabled the western powers to intervene into the domestic affairs of the Soviet bloc.⁶⁵

2.1.3. Cold War Period: “Human Rights”, Not “Minority Rights”!

The interwar period experience in terms of minority rights created havoc because the minority issue tend to be perceived as a source of instability and destabilizing factor for international state system. There were two major reasons for this perception. First, certain minority groups became victims of the aggressive irredentist policies of the revisionist states, like the Jewish minority in Germany. Second, some minority groups played suspicious roles in attracting the revisionist states’ attention to implement more aggressive policies, especially in the successor states of “greater state nationalisms” in Bulgaria, Albania, Serbia, and Romania.⁶⁶ In either case, “minority” term was coupled with “problem.” Not surprisingly, as a result, the minority rights were subsumed into a general framework of human rights issue instead of being dealt separately in the post-WWII era.

The main agenda of European states during the Cold War era is to forge human rights.⁶⁷ It was thought that if states concentrate on human rights, it would

⁶⁵ For a detailed account of Cold War history and the related anecdotes, see John Lewis Gaddis, *Soğuk Savaş: Pazarlıklar, Casuslar, Yalanlar, Gerçek*, İstanbul: YKY, translated by Dilek Cenkçiler, 2008.

⁶⁶ Ortakovski, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-40. For a comprehensive treatment of the twentieth century in Europe, see Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe’s Twentieth Century*, Vintage Books, 2000.

⁶⁷ A detailed account on the issue is offered in the following source: Steven Wheatley, *Democracy, Minorities and International Law*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

become possible to solve the minority issues within the context of individual rights rather than acknowledging the collective rights of national minorities.⁶⁸ The fundamental assumption was that granting collective rights may pave the way for the territorial fragmentation and disintegration of sovereign nation states. The leading approach to minority policies in this era was assimilation. The Western states aimed the assimilation of minorities within the context of homogenizing modernist paradigm of 1950s and 1960s.

None of the international organizations including the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe put into force a legally binding text on minorities between 1945 and 1990.⁶⁹ The only text that raised the issue is UN's Covenant on Civil and Political Rights adopted in 1966, which incorporated a separate clause on minorities.⁷⁰ However, the ultimate right was given to nation states to define what is minority in their country, as a result of which the practical value of the clause became worthless since all states used their entire creativity to find names to the different groups in their societies rather than labelling them as "minority."⁷¹

⁶⁸ The San Francisco Conference (1945) and the Paris Peace Conference (1946) in this context did not make any single reference to minority rights, but commitment to human rights only.

⁶⁹ Wippman, *op. cit.*, 1997, p. 603.

⁷⁰ Thornberry investigates the UN Covenant in detail. See, Patrick Thornberry, *International Law and the Rights of Minorities*, Clarendon Press, 1993.

⁷¹ For a detailed account of this period, see Naz Çavuşoğlu, *Uluslararası İnsan Hakları Hukukunda Azınlık Hakları*, İstanbul: Su Yayınları, 2001, p. 35-53.

In summary, in the aftermath of the WWII, instead of being dealt separately, the minority rights were perceived as part and parcel of “protection of human rights.” It was believed that protecting the very rights of every individual would be adequate to protect specific minorities as well. It proved in time, however, that treating minorities with reference to basic human rights texts such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was insufficient. In this context the paradigmatic shift occurred in the post-Cold War period.

2.1.4. Post Cold War Period: Turn Back of “Minority Rights”

The post-Cold War context is regarded as the final turning point for minority regime in Europe.⁷² There were three main reasons for such a kind of paradigm shift in minority regime. First, the collapse of Soviet Union and the end of Cold War shifted the focus of international system from a security-obsessed high politics perspective to an economy and identity-driven low politics environment. In this context, the liberal norms and capitalist economic system penetrated into ex-communist states in Central and Eastern Europe in a surprisingly swift manner.⁷³ Along with the spread of “multiculturalism”, “tolerance” and “political representation” as basic norms, minority issue also made a strong call back. Second, the collapse of the balance of power regime consolidated in the bipolar Cold War era, escalated the frozen conflicts, which were set-aside in the Cold War

⁷² According to Preece a “substantial normative shift” was occurred in the post-Cold War period in Europe. See, Preece, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

⁷³ Some scholars even went further to the extent to declare the “end of history.” See Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and The Last Man*, Penguin Books, 1992.

status quo.⁷⁴ The escalation of intra-territorial ethnic conflicts dictated a fact that it was by no means possible to deal minority issues within the context of general human rights regimes. Finally, the interdependence of the states underpinned with the surge of globalization enabled the international organizations to improve their position vis-à-vis nation states, which in turn empowered them in agenda setting and policy formulation in terms of minority rights. All of these developments underpinned a paradigm shift in Europe, foremost the EU as the unique supranational institution of post-Cold War period.

In the Cold War context, many “minority” definitions are offered and the older definitions are revisited. Accordingly, Francesco Capotorti offered one of the widely accepted definitions in 1978, which reads;

*A minority is a group 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 explicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their cultures, traditions, religion or language.*⁷⁵

This definition determines two conditions that are required to be simultaneously exist for a group to be accepted as “minority”. First, it underlines the objective criteria that the group must be “numerically inferior”, “non-dominant”, “[group members] must be nationals of the state”, and must have

⁷⁴ For a theoretical and empirical investigation of the rise of ethnic conflicts in the post-Cold War era see, Ann Hironaka, *Neverending Wars: The International Community, Weak States, and the Perpetuation of Civil War*, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2005.

⁷⁵ Francesco Capotorti, *Study on the Rights of Persons Belonging to Ethnic, Religious, and Linguistic Minorities*, New York: United Nations, 1979, prg. 568.

demarcating characteristics from the rest of the population. Second, the definition in question refers to the subjective criterion that the group members must “show sense of solidarity”, which means that they have to be aware of their minority position.⁷⁶

Capotorti’s definition is taken as benchmark for minority definitions in many European legal texts, especially in the post-Cold War context. In most of the European legal documents, accordingly, the concept of minority refers to “a historical minority group, which has long acquired a permanent status within a state and whose members are citizens and desire to preserve their ethnic-cultural traits that distinguish them from the rest of the population.”⁷⁷

2.2. The Legal Framework of Minority Rights in the EU

The EU does not have a separate legal body on the protection of minorities in Europe. Instead, it relies on the definitions of United Nations (UN), mainly the one made by Capotorti, and the definitions and practises of Council of Europe (CoE), and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The rest of the chapter makes a brief overview of the legal instruments provided by CoE and OSCE.

⁷⁶ Baskın Oran, *Türkiye’de Azınlıklar: Kavramlar, Lozan, İç Mevzuat, İctihat, Uygulama*, İstanbul: TESEV Yayınları, 2004, p. 16, 17.

⁷⁷ Thomas Benedikter, “Legal Instruments of Minority Protection in Europe: An overview”, available at: <http://www.gfbv.it/3dossier/eu-min/autonomy-eu.html> (accessed on: 30 September 2012).

2.2.1. Legal Minority Protection Instruments in the Framework of CoE

The CoE has become one of the most important organizations that set the basic standards on the protection of minorities in Europe, including the EU.⁷⁸ In addition to the “principle of non-discrimination” incorporated in the European Convention on Human Rights and protected by the European Court of Human Rights, the CoE has developed two legal texts that determine the basic framework, which are (1) European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (hereinafter, “Language Charter”) and (2) Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (hereinafter, “Framework Convention”).

Language Charter is the first legally binding text that protects the minority languages in Europe.⁷⁹ The text is specifically designed to address the problems in protecting the minority languages in signatory countries. The article 7 of the Language Charter provides “the recognition of the regional or minority languages as an expression of cultural wealth”, encourages the “facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of regional or minority languages”, and supports the “the provision of appropriate forms and means for the teaching and study of

⁷⁸ The Council of Europe founded on 5 May 1949 by 10 countries, based in Strasbourg (France), now has 47 member countries. The Council of Europe “seeks to develop throughout Europe common and democratic principles based on the European Convention on Human Rights and other reference texts on the protection of individuals.” For more on CoE, see www.coe.int.

⁷⁹ France, Greece, and Turkey did not sign the document due to its binding nature.

regional or minority language.”⁸⁰ Benedikter aptly reveals the main purpose and limitations of the Charter as follows:⁸¹

Language Charter tries to ensure the use of these languages in education and the mass media, allowing also their use in administrative, judicial, economic and social fields. The Charter does not establish individual or collective rights for the speakers or regional or minority languages, but sets out the obligations of states and their respective legal systems with regard to the use of these languages. Indeed, the Language Charter seeks to promote regional or minority languages and only in an indirect way can it be considered as a legal instrument to protect linguistic minorities as such.

In addition to Language Charter, the most comprehensive legal document produced by CoE is the Framework Convention of 1994, which is the first multilateral legally binding document in minority rights regime.⁸² The aim of the Convention is to enable the conditions to fully protect the existence of minorities in Europe. In this context, article 7 of the Convention enables minorities to benefit from the “freedom of peaceful assembly”, “freedom of association”, “freedom of expression”, and “freedom of thought, conscience and religion.”⁸³ Article 8 provides minorities to “establish religious institutions, organisations and associations.” Article 9 guarantees the minorities not to be “discriminated against

⁸⁰ For the full-text, see “European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages”, available at: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/html/148.htm>, (accessed on: 30 September 2011). Unless otherwise stated, all quotations are taken from this official version of the Charter.

⁸¹ Benedikter, *op. cit.*, 2011.

⁸² France and Turkey did not sign the document for domestic concerns.

⁸³ For the full-text, see, “Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities”, available at: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/html/157.htm>, (accessed on: 30 September 2011). Unless otherwise stated, all quotations are taken from this official version of the Convention.

in their access to the media.” The articles 12, 13, and 14 guarantee the minorities to use, protect and disseminate their languages. Despite all these path-breaking rights, however, the Framework Convention recognizes the legal sovereignty of the already existing states. For example, article 21 underlines that “recent Framework Convention shall be interpreted as implying any right to engage in any activity or perform any act contrary to the fundamental principles of international law and in particular of the sovereign equality, territorial integrity and political independence of states.”

2.2.2. Legal Minority Protection Instruments in the Framework of OSCE

In addition to CoE, OSCE constitutes the other important pillar of minority regime in Europe in general and EU in particular. OSCE emerged as an organization to provide security in Europe. However, in time, it turned into an important platform to promote national minority rights and their linguistic protection. The OSCE produced plenty of documents relevant for the rights of national minorities and established the High Commissioner for National Minorities.⁸⁴ The OSCE’s most important document on the protection of minority rights is the Copenhagen Document came into existence in 1990 that contains the standards on the right to use of the mother tongue, education in mother tongue and non-discrimination (Article 34). The document acknowledges that “to belong to a national minority is a matter of a person’s individual choice and no disadvantage

⁸⁴ For details, see the official web-site of OSCE, <http://www.osce.org/>

may arise from the exercise of such choice” (Article 32) and shifts the burden on the shoulders of states to protect the minorities in their countries: “The participating states will protect the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of national minorities on their territory and create conditions for the promotion of that identity” (Article 33).⁸⁵

2.2.3. Copenhagen Political Criteria

The developments under the institutional auspices of CoE and OSCE have determined the very fundamentals of EU’s minority protection regime. In other words, the EU relied on these legal texts to frame its own minority regimes in the EU. In Copenhagen Summit in 1993, the “protection of minorities” is incorporated into EU’s *acquis communautaire*. In the Presidency Conclusions of the Copenhagen Summit, by the following statement, minority rights have become part of the political criteria for further EU enlargement waves;

*Membership requires that the candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities, the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union. Membership presupposes the candidate’s ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.*⁸⁶

⁸⁵ For the full text of Copenhagen Document, see <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/14304> (accessed on: 1 November 2011).

⁸⁶ European Council in Copenhagen, 21-22 June 1993-Conclusions of The Presidency, Reference: DOC/93/3 Date: 22/06/1993.

In summary, the European minority regime developed significantly over the post-Cold War period. The international institutions' proactive stance yielded positive results and the EU incorporated these improvements into its *acquis*. Furthermore, the treatment of minorities has become one of the “conditionality principles” of the EU enlargement process and imposed upon the candidate countries including Bulgaria. The minority regime of the EU, however, suffers from an inherent contradiction in the sense that some researchers and policy-makers complain about “double standards” in terms of the implementation of minority rights principles in the EU. Due to its centrality within the context of Europeanization of minority rights discussions, next part deals with this problematique in more detail.

2.3. Individual vs. Collective Rights: The Lack of Standard Template in the EU

The EU has developed a relatively established minority protection regime over the years following the end of the Cold War. The minority regime in the EU, however, has a fundamental shortage and ambiguity regarding majority-minority tensions along the lines of individual vs. collective rights. The legal texts do not make a distinction between individual rights and collective rights. Collective rights are granted to protect a group of people, whereas individual rights directly protect the individual.⁸⁷ In theory, granting collective rights to minorities is the

⁸⁷ Some scholars argue that it is not in fact possible to protect minorities by just relying on individual rights paradigm. For example, see Miodrag A. Jovanovic, “Recognizing Minority Identities Through Collective Rights”, *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 2005, p. 625-651.

most progressive stance because it is the most effective way to protect minorities from the majority. The minority rights, however, have always been evaluated within the context of individual rights because granting collective rights to minorities are seen as kicking off a process that may end in increasing the collective identity and separatist demands of the minority groups.⁸⁸ This scepticism towards collective rights, in fact, is mainly based on the bad memoirs of the interwar period. The post-Cold War documents, as a result, pursue a two-sided strategy simultaneously. On the one hand, it is aimed to protect the rights of the minorities by granting them separate rights just because they are minority. On the other hand, the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the nation states are aimed to be put under the legal guarantee by these texts. Therefore, the balance had turned into providing individual rights to minorities without distorting the territorial integrity of the nation states.

Since the legislation tilts in favour of individual rights over the collective rights, all of the legal texts give the exclusive right to nation-states to define their own minorities. Accordingly, the member states, especially the core countries in the EU, define their own minorities according to their preferences and priorities. In fact, this peculiarity created a dual minority regime diverging in the “core” and “periphery” of the EU. On the one hand, the core countries, including Germany, France and Italy, define their own minorities and resist any kind of foreign intervention. For example, Germany is one of the EU countries that signed the

⁸⁸ Douglas Sanders, “Collective Rights”, *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 368, 1991, p. 368-386.

Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, yet defines “minority” concept different than Capotorti. Accordingly, in addition to Capotorti’s definition, Germany has two further criteria which are (1) being the autochthon people of Germany (indigenous minorities) and (2) living in their historical places within German territories.⁸⁹ According to this definition, only a negligible proportion of Germany, approximately 250,000 people, are perceived as minorities,⁹⁰ which is obviously far from creating “security threat” for the country.⁹¹ France is a more rigid core country in the EU in terms of minority regime because France does not recognize any group as “minority” in the country. Despite the fact that 25 different languages and dialects are spoken within French territories, like Basque, Flemish, Franco-Provencal, France is the only EU country that did not sign and ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages on the ground that France respects the cultural diversity of Europe rather than granting collective rights to different “groups” living in France.⁹² France also did not ratify the Framework Convention of CoE.

It becomes apparent that the minority regimes of core countries in the EU do not completely comply with the Copenhagen criteria and supplementing

⁸⁹ Federal Ministry of the Interior, National Minorities in Germany, available at: <http://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/EN/Broschueren/2010/natminderheiten.pdf?blob=publicationFile> (accessed on: 1 November 2011).

⁹⁰ Minorities in Germany: The Integration Dilemma, *The Economist*, July 19, 2007.

⁹¹ Steffen Amling and Fabian Giorgi, “The Nation-State Building and Cultural Diversity in Europe”, available at: www.emz-berlin.de (accessed on: 1 November 2011).

⁹² Eric Bleich, *Race Politics in Britain and France*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

European official documents. The minority rights, however, have turned into a very active instrument for the latecomer Central and Eastern European countries via conditionality principles imposed during membership process.⁹³ The core-periphery divergence in minority treatment even led some scholars to believe that West European states “impose something of a double-standard in a handful of areas, chiefly the protection of ethnic minority rights, where candidates are asked to meet standards that the EU-15 have never set for themselves.”⁹⁴ According to Jones, moreover, the Western European EU members are never warned by any OSCE report or European Commission report, which led different experts to conclude that “the EU is trying to enforce laws with prospective members while not holding existing members to the same standards.”⁹⁵

The importance of the divergence outlined above from this thesis’ point of view is that there is no single track and standardized minority rights practices within the EU. This ambiguous and somehow arbitrary nature renders problems in terms of Europeanization debates. This thesis will argue that this problem is also valid within the context of Turkish minority in Bulgaria. In other words, Bulgarian state opts for “selective Europeanization” in terms of the rights of Turkish minority.

⁹³ The details of EU’s conditionality pressures on Central and Eastern States are not dealt in detail here. For an excellent investigation, see Michael Johns, “‘Do As I Say, Not As I Do’: The European Union, Eastern Europe, and Minority Rights”, *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 2003, p. 682-699.

⁹⁴ Andrew Moravcsik and Milada Anna Vachudova, “National Interest, State Power, and the EU Enlargement”, *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 2003, p. 46.

⁹⁵ Johns, *op. cit.*, 2003, p. 698.

CHAPTER 3

TURKISH MINORITY IN BULGARIA DURING COMMUNIST ERA

Throughout the history, the Balkan Peninsula has been a homeland for many diverse ethnic groups that were able to preserve their national identities despite being lived together and ruled by different dominant powers. Located in the core of Balkans, Bulgaria, offers a highly distinct ethnic structure in that sense composed of Turks, Pomaks, Roma, Macedonians, Greeks, Albanians, Romanians, Armenians, Jews, Vlachs and others. Migrations and boundary changes, as a result of the two world wars, considerably reduced the list and few Greeks and Romanians remained in Bulgaria by 1990. In addition to that, minorities were often seen as destabilizing factor in the country and Bulgarian leaders often tended to refute the existence of minority groups by manipulating or suppressing census data or by forcibly assimilating them, such as Turks in the period 1984-1989. After the fall of Zhivkov government (in November 1989), Bulgaria moderated its minority policy substantially to improve relationships with its neighbouring countries. Despite these progressive steps in the beginning of 1990s, and reforms during the EU membership process, minorities are still one of the most sensitive issues in Bulgaria.

During the five centuries long Ottoman rule of the Balkan Peninsula, the ethnic composition of Balkan states had dramatically changed first in favour of Turks and other Muslim communities and then in favour of non-Muslim

communities as a result of different immigration waves.⁹⁶ Bulgaria, like many others, inherited a considerable number of minorities living on her own territory. Among others, Turks deserves special attention because they are the largest minority group⁹⁷ in the country (588.318 according to 2011 census) and some of the scholars, like Valerie Stoyanov, define them as “traditional” ethnic group.⁹⁸

This chapter deals with the changing position of Turkish minority in Bulgaria during the Cold War years. The rest of the chapter proceeds as follows: The first part provides a brief statistical overview of the historical minorities in Bulgaria with a special emphasis on Turks. The second part directly concentrates on the changing positions of Turkish minority in Bulgaria between 1945 and 1989. The third part concentrates on the so-called “national revival policies” pursued by Zhivkov government. The fourth part concludes the chapter.

3.1. Historical Minorities in Bulgaria: Some Stylized Data

The Russia-Ottoman war in 1877-1878 became an important turning point for modern Bulgaria not only because the Ottoman Empire was defeated by Russia and Bulgaria was recognized as an autonomous principality but also a new debate

⁹⁶ Carl Brown, *İmparatorluk Mirası, Balkanlarda ve Orta Doğu'da Osmanlı Damgası*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000, p. 9-10.

⁹⁷ Since the term of minority is quite controversial in Bulgaria, it is not used in any official documents and statements. During the interview with the *Interior Minister of Bulgaria Tsvetan Tsvetanov*, in his office on 28th of May, 2010, I largely used Turkish minority term. However, at the end of the meeting Mr. Tsvetanov asked me to note in my study that the term minority should be read as “Bulgarian citizens with Turkish origins”.

⁹⁸ Tahir Tahir, “Minority Policies in Bulgaria: Continuity and Change” Unpublished MSc Thesis, The Graduate School of Social Sciences of the Middle East Technical University, 2003, p. 35-36.

was opened up on minorities in Bulgarian politics as well. Under the provisions of the Treaty of San Stefano, which was signed at the end of Russia-Ottoman war, the territories between the Danube in the north, the Black Sea in the east, the Rhodopes and including some of the Aegean coast in the south and the Ohrid Lake and beyond in the West were reserved to Bulgaria.⁹⁹ In that sense, Bulgaria reached its largest territorial boundaries, which was seen as historically “natural” borders of the Bulgarian nation-state.¹⁰⁰ However, the size of the territory alarmed the European powers simply because this was meaning the penetration of Russian power into Balkans. Moreover, some regional countries, like Greece and Serbia, perceived this development as a great leap forward in the formation of “Greater Bulgaria.” As a result, Treaty of San Stefano faced with a wide objection and revised at Congress of Berlin in 1878.

The Treaty of Berlin was signed four months after Treaty of San Stefano as the final act of Congress of Berlin held on the dates between 13 June and 13 July 1878, in Berlin with the attendance of European Great Powers and statesmen’s of Ottoman Empire.¹⁰¹ According to the Treaty, Bulgaria was established as an independent but territorially reduced principality. In this regard, Eastern Rumelia province and Macedonia remained as a part of Ottoman Empire. However, after a while, in 1886 Eastern Rumelia annexed to Bulgaria as a result

⁹⁹ Georges Castellan, *Balkanların Tarihi*, Çev. Ayşegül Yaraman-Bağbuğ, Milliyet Yayınları, 1. Baskı, Mayıs 1993, p. 333.

¹⁰⁰ Ali Eminov, *Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria*, London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers Ltd., 1997, p. 5.

¹⁰¹ The Great Powers of the time are Great Britain, France, Germany, and Russian Empire.

of Bulgarian Secret Central Revolutionary Committee's (BSCRC) consistent efforts.¹⁰² This was the territorial border where the independent Bulgarian state was to be established in 1908. After the defeat of Ottomans in 1878, the Bulgarian lands was home of different ethnic groups. In fact, it is quite difficult to find reliable statistics regarding the numbers of these ethnic groups. According to Turan, censuses held in 1880 and 1881 covering the region of Eastern Rumelia and Bulgarian Principality, 1,909,067 was Bulgarian-speaking out of 2,813,618 of the total population. In this regard, the rest, which refers to 904,551 people, constitutes the non-Bulgarians.¹⁰³ According to Crampton, in 1880/4 census, covering the Eastern Rumelia only, 2,037,241 was Bulgarian speaking population out of the 2,932,949 total population, while the Turks were consisting of 727,772, which refers to 24.81% proportionally.¹⁰⁴ According to Şimşir, in 1887 Turkish minority in Bulgaria comprised 602,331 inhabitants while in 1892 it was 569,728, in 1900 it was 539,656, in 1905 it was 505,439, 1910 it was 504,439, in 1926 it was 577,555, in 1934 it was 618,268 and in 1956 it was 656,028.¹⁰⁵ Finally, according to Bulgaria's official statistics, in 1900, minorities in Bulgaria comprised 856,064 people out of 3,744,283 total populations.¹⁰⁶ 531,240 of them

¹⁰² Richard Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 97-100.

¹⁰³ Ömer Turan, *The Turkish minority in Bulgaria (1878-1908)*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1998, p. 98-99.

¹⁰⁴ Richard Crampton, "The Turks of Bulgaria, 1878-1944", in Kemal Karpat (ed.). *The Turks of Bulgaria*, İstanbul: The Isis Press, 1990.

¹⁰⁵ Bilal Şimşir, *Bulgaristan Türkleri (1878-1985)*, İstanbul: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1986, p.18.

¹⁰⁶ The oldest official statistics in Bulgaria in terms of population census dates back to 1900.

were Turks and 89,549 were Roma as well as 123.650 included in other group which means persons who do not indicate their ethnic group.¹⁰⁷

The composition of population had dramatically changed afterwards mostly because of the political conditions in Bulgaria. In this regard, the first turning point was 1877-78 Turkish-Russian War, which too many Turks were killed along with too many of them migrated to Anatolia including the ruling elite.¹⁰⁸ As a result, the population balance significantly changed in favour of Bulgarians after that catastrophic event. Despite the devastating ebbs and flows of the history, Turks still consists the largest minority group in contemporary Bulgaria. The second largest minority group is Roma (325.343 according to 2011 census). The specific percentage of other minority groups is not determined because the Bulgarian officials do not ask the ethnic origins of people in census. In a more subtle way, up to 1975 census persons who do not indicate their ethnic group are included into "other" category in the census documents. Then, during the 1985 population census, the existence of ethnic groups denied officially, except a small number of Armenians and Jews. In 1992 and 2001 censuses, persons who do not indicate their ethnic groups are included into "not stated" category. The breakdowns on ethnic identification in 2001 and 2011 censuses

¹⁰⁷ Population by Ethnic Group, National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria, 2011.

¹⁰⁸ According to Bilal Şimşir, the number of Turks was almost equal to the number of Bulgarians before the 1877-78 Turkish-Russian War, even in some districts Turks were outnumbering the Bulgarians. In 1876, six district (*sancak*) of Tuna province consisted of 1,130,000 Bulgarians and 1,120,000 Muslim Turks. In Filibe and İslimye districts, which are renamed as Eastern Rumelia after Berlin Treaty, there were 483,000 Bulgarians in comparsion to 681,000 Turks were living. Şimşir, *op.cit.*, 1986, p. 26.

include persons answered to the voluntary question. In this regard, according to the latest census in Bulgaria, the total population of the country is 7,364,570 including 5,664,624 Bulgarians, 588,318 Turks, 325,343 Roma, 49,304 other group and 53,301 not stated.¹⁰⁹

Table 2. Number of Ethnic Groups in Bulgaria¹¹⁰

CENSUS YEAR	TOTAL	BULGARIANS	TURKS	ROMA	OTHERS	NOT STATED
1900	3,744,283	2,888,219	531240	89,549	235,275	-
1905	4,035,575	3,203,810	488010	99,004	244,751	
1910	4,337,513	3,518,756	465641	122,296	230,820	-
1920	4,846,971	4,036,056	520339	98,451	192,125	-
1926	5,478,741	4,557,706	577,552	134,844	208,639	-
1934	6,077,939	5,204,217	591,193	149,385	133,144	-
1946	7,029,349	5,903,580	675,500	170,011	280,258	-
1956	7,613,709	6,506,541	656,025	197,865	253,278	-
1965	8,227,966	7,231,243	780,928	148,874	66,921	-
1975	8,727,771	7,930,024	730,728	18,323	48,696	-
1992	8,487,317	7,271,185	800,052	313,396	94,203	8,481
2001	7,928,901	6,655,210	746,664	370,908	69,204	62,108
2011	7,364,570	5,664,624	588,318	325,343	49,304	53,391

¹⁰⁹ Population by Citizenship according to Censuses, National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria, 2011.

¹¹⁰ The date is retrieved from the following source, Population by Ethnic Group, National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria, 2011.

3.2. From Tolerance to Assimilation: Turks in Bulgaria in 1944-1989

Bulgaria's official policies toward the Turks in the country varied significantly during the Cold War era. Therefore, it is not possible to refer to one kind of policy pursued by Communist regime toward Turks in Bulgaria. Rather one has to concentrate on different time periods so as to understand the changing position of Bulgarian state toward Turks between 1944 and 1989. However, it is still possible to figure out a path from tolerance to assimilation. As Brown argues in his in-depth analysis, the totalitarian system fostered by Communist Party targeted the full control of the different segments of Bulgarian society.¹¹¹ The policies toward national minorities were also shaped by this same fundamental logic. Although the state policies tend to ebb and flow over time, the tendency to keep the minority groups under control remained the same.¹¹²

In the initial phase of Communist Regime, the approach toward Turkish minority was conciliatory and inclusionary. For example, at the Communist takeover in September 1944, there were about 367 private Turkish-language primary and secondary schools administrated by Turkish community and some of the teachers were native Turkish speakers coming from Turkey.¹¹³ In a decade,

¹¹¹ For a detailed analysis on different aspects of public policy throughout the initial phases of Communist rule, see, J. F. Brown, *Bulgaria Under Communist Rule*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970.

¹¹² (Author's interviews with Prof. Dr. Cengiz Hakov from Bulgarian Academy of Science, Institute for Balkan Studies, on 4 May 2010); (Prof. Dr. İbrahim Yalimov, Rector of Sofia High Institute of Islam on 27 April 2010); and (Nikola Theodossiev, researcher at American Research Center in Sofia, on 10 May 2010).

¹¹³ Rossen Vassilev, "Restoring the Ethnolinguistic Rights of Bulgaria's Turkish Minority", *Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 9, No. 3-4, p. 296.

Turkish-language schools proliferated gradually especially in the regions mostly populated by Turks and school attendance became compulsory.¹¹⁴ According to Şimşir, the number of private Turkish schools in Bulgaria was 673 in 1946, which increased to 987 in 1948 and 1,199 in 1950.¹¹⁵

Table 3. Number of Turkish Schools in Bulgaria¹¹⁶

School type/year	1943-1944	1949-1950
Kindergarden	-	20
Primary school	397	1,018
Secondary school	27	157
High school	-	1
Peadgogy institution	-	1
Evening primary school	-	2
Total	424	1,199

The Communist government allowed instruction in Turkish in many primary and secondary schools. The Turkish minority was free to attend college level pedagogy institutions and universities including Sofia University. Despite

¹¹⁴ Julia Stefanova, “Transition in Bulgarian Education”, *International Journal of the Sociology Language*, No. 179, 2006, p. 162.

¹¹⁵ According to the relevant treaties signed between Bulgaria and Turkey, Turkish schools in Bulgaria were legally recognized as “private schools.” The number of private Turkish schools were about 1,700 in 1920s. During the Fascist regime more than 1,000 of them were closed down. All of the remaining schools were nationalized in 1946. For details, see Bilal Şimşir, *Bulgaristan Türkleri (1878-2008)*, Genişletilmiş İkinci Basım, 2009, p. 213-215.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

these positive steps, Turkish-Language schools were nationalized in 1946 and state appointed instructors started to determine the curriculum. According to Zhelyazkova, “the Communist government had a different purpose: to promote the re-education of the Turkish minority in conformity with the Party spirit through the channels of education and culture.”¹¹⁷ In a similar vein, Kostadin Grozev, professor of History Department at Sofia University states that:

“This policy could be interpreted as cultural assimilation of Turks through education, through privileges to young Turks to study in the Universities, through job promotions provided by the Communist Party -since they have a certain kota for the members of Turkish community that rezerved for the Turks in the Communist Party.”¹¹⁸

On the other side of the coin, Turkish minority was allowed to publish in their mother tongue to the extent that there were many Turkish newspapers in addition to the regularly broadcast on the Bulgarian National Radio.¹¹⁹ For example, 35 different newspaper, journal and bulletin were published in Turkish language between 1944 and 1985.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Antonina Zhelyazkova, “The Social and Cultural Adaptation of Bulgarian Immigrants in Turkey”, in Antonina Zhelyazkova (ed.), *Between Adaptation and Nostalgia: The Bulgarian Turks in Turkey*, Sofia: International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (IMIR), 1998, p. 16.

¹¹⁸ (Author’s interview with Prof. Dr. Kostadin Grozev, Sofia University ‘St. Kliment Ohridski’, on 6 May 2010).

¹¹⁹ James W. Warhola and Orlina Boteva, “The Turkish Minority in Contemporary Bulgaria”, *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 31, No. 3, 2003, p. 260-264.

¹²⁰ M. Türker Acaroğlu, “Bulgaristan’da 120 Yıllık Türk Gazeteciliği, 1965-1985”, *Gazeteciler Cemiyeti*, Vol. 28, 1990, cited in İsmail Cambazov, *Bulgaristan Türk Basını Tarihinde Yeni Işık Gazetesi*, İstanbul, 2011, p. 32.

The tolerant approach of the Communist government toward Turkish minority, however, started to change gradually during 1960s. The number of Turkish-language courses in the schools gradually declined.¹²¹ The ethnic Turks were denied to access to primary school education in Turkish and Turkish courses on state schools were transferred from ordinary to extraordinary curriculum. Finally no Turkish language courses were offered at all.¹²² The creeping exclusionism continued during 1970s as the regime became intolerant to minority groups in the country.

On March 4, 1954 Todor Zhivkov became the First Secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party, in other words Head of the State of the People's Republic of Bulgaria and remained on this position for 35 years. One of the first steps of Zhivkov on the issue was to make an important change in the constitution. In 1971, a new constitution, known as the "Zhivkov" Constitution was adopted. The 1971 Constitution replaced the "Dimitrov" Constitution of 1947, which recognized the existence of "national minorities" in Bulgaria. It is important to state that according to Article 79 of 1947 Constitution, "The citizens have the right for education. The education is secular, with democratic and progressive spirit. National minorities have the right to learn their mother tongue and to develop their national culture as the learning of Bulgarian language is

¹²¹ The Bulgarian Ministry of Culture and Education unified the Turkish schools with the Bulgarian ones on 16 June 1960. The mixed schools did not offer any Turkish classes in the first year. Şimşir, *op.cit.*, 2006, p. 272-282.

¹²² Glenn E. Curtis, *Bulgaria: A Country Study*, Washington: Library of Congress, 1993, p. 82.

obligatory.”¹²³ Zhivkov replaced the term “national minorities” with “the citizens of non-Bulgarian origin” in 1971 Constitution. In Article 45 (7) of 1971 Constitution the term was introduced as follows: “The citizens of non-Bulgarian origin besides the obligatory learning of Bulgarian language shall have the right to learn also their language.”¹²⁴

The exclusionary policies of the Bulgarian government reached its climax in the winter of 1984-1985 with Zhivkov’s announcement of the so-called “national revival process.” It was in fact a cultural and ethno-linguistic assimilation campaign because the government banned speaking Turkish in public within the context of “national revival process.”¹²⁵ The violators of the ban were levied high amounts of fines. Furthermore, all Turkish minorities were regarded as “ethnic Bulgarians,” who were “assimilated by Ottoman Empire during 500 years of Ottoman yoke.”¹²⁶ The government denied all Turkish minorities in the country and pursued a coercion policy to return Turkish minority into the “Great Bulgarian family.” Stanko Todorov, the Chairman of the National Assembly,

¹²³ Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bulgaria, 1947, available at: <http://www.parliament.bg/bg/18> (accessed on: 12 May 2013).

¹²⁴ Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bulgaria, 1971, available at: <http://www.parliament.bg/bg/19> (accessed on: 12 May 2013).

¹²⁵ (Author’s interview with Prof. Dr. İbrahim Yalimov, Rector of Sofia High Institute of Islam on 27 April 2010). Yalimov stated that “national revival does not refer to the change in names but also refers to the assimilation of ethnic, religious, and cultural identity of Turks of Bulgaria by using force.”

¹²⁶ The “Turkish and/or Ottoman yoke” is a catchword that is frequently used by Bulgarian nationalists to mobilize the masses in Bulgaria. Ivan Vazov, the famous Bulgarian novelist, poet and playwright, even wrote a famous novel titled “Under the Yoke”, which depicts the Ottoman despotism in Bulgaria. The novel is translated into more than 30 languages.

defended this assimilation campaign on the ground of “national unity” in March 1985 as follows:

Entire regions of strategic significance were forcibly Turkicized, that young Bulgarians, stolen from their parents' homes as young boys, were enrolled in the Janissary corps. Assimilation in the Islamic imperium was a standing policy of the state, whose goals was to take national consciousness from our people. Thus a portion of our people was forcibly turkicized. One can see from their way of life, folklore, speech, and clothing that Bulgarian citizens of the Islamic faith are the descendants of Bulgarians... Exactly for that reason, the reconstruction of Bulgarian names is a historic act, a revolutionary measure that shows that these of our compatriots, who a short time ago found themselves in a complicated situation, have thrown off their shackles ... But at the same time they were exposed to the intensive working- over of bourgeois Turkish propaganda, which created pan-Turkish nationalism, religious confusion, and a conservative life-style. The reactionary forces in neighbouring Turkey made futile efforts to speak in the name of citizens with Turkish-Arabic names living in Bulgaria and arbitrarily draw them into the Turkish nation. The reconstruction of their Bulgarian names will contribute to withdrawing the reactionary Turkish influence from our co-citizens... With full justice we can say that we are returning to our Bulgarian family our dear brothers and sisters for whom the conqueror had darkened their national consciousness for centuries. This people are blood of our blood, flesh of our flesh.¹²⁷

One of the important phases of “national revival policy” was to slavicize the names of the Turkish minority in the country.¹²⁸ All of the Turks were forced to change their names into Slavic ones. The repressive policies targeted about

¹²⁷ Quoted in Vassilev, *op. cit.* 2010, p. 298.

¹²⁸ Bulgarian State Archive Agency published the Bulgarian Communist Party, Politburo Archives on “National Revival Process” in two volumes, see: “*The Revival Process*” *Bulgarian State and Turks in Bulgaria: From mid-1930s to the beginning of 1990s*, Archives’ Speaking Series, Volume 1 and Volume 2, Sofia: State Archives Agency, 2009 (translated from Bulgarian origin: “*Vizroditelnyat protses*” *Bilgarskata Dirjava i Bilgarskite Turtsi: Sredata na 30-te – Naçaloto na 90-te Godini na XX vek*, Arhivite Govoryat , Tom I - Tom 2, Sofia: Dirjavna Agentsiya “Arhivi”, 2009).

850,000 people, most of which were ethnic Turks.¹²⁹ All kind of Turkish communication in public was denied. The associations, newspapers, cultural and musical activities related to Turks and Turkish were banned by Zhivkov regime. Similarly Islamic holidays were cancelled and religious freedom was set aside and they were not even allowed to wear their traditional public clothes. They are compelled to write their new names on the gates of their houses. Public officials erased even the Turkish names on the tombstones.¹³⁰

3.3. Apex of the “National Revival Policy”

The ethnic Turks in the country resisted all these assimilation policies by organizing hunger strikes and mass demonstrations. In May 1989, the protesters started to gather in the city centres so as to attract the attention of international community and to call the Bulgarian government for the protection of their basic human rights as well as the end of sanctions and internal displacements.¹³¹ The counter-policy of Todor Zhivkov to these peaceful demonstrations was very harsh. Over 360,000 Turks were forced to leave the country in quite a short time period. Bulgarian government opened the borders with Turkey on May 29, 1989, “for an excursion” of the Turks in Bulgaria.¹³² The bulk of the Turks came to

¹²⁹ Maria Bakalova, “The Bulgarian Turkish Names: Conflict and Democratic Transition”, *Innovation*, Vol. 19, No. 3-4, 2006, p. 234.

¹³⁰ Türkaya Ataöv, *The Inquisition of the Late 1980s: The Turks of Bulgaria*, Washington: EAFORD, 1990, p. 2.

¹³¹ Dayıoğlu, *op.cit.*, 2005, p. 345-347.

¹³² Bakalova, *op. cit.*, 2006, p. 234.

Turkey after leaving almost all of their properties and belongings on the other side of the border.¹³³

Zhivkov tried to legitimize so-called “national revival policy” by referring to “separatist policies” of the Turks. In one of his speeches he puts his “main motivations” as follows:¹³⁴

The main reason for this was the fact that the Turkish government launched wide- scale subversive activities inside Bulgaria. It began to manipulate anti-Bulgarian citizens and to establish organizations with pan-Turkic goals and agendas... activities, which were in violation of the existing laws and at variance with the sentiments of the vast majority of Bulgarian Muslims. There were terrorist acts even before the so-called ‘revival process.’ Acts of terrorism continued thereafter, which further destabilized the situation in the country. Some of these pan-Turkic organizations had far-reaching goals, such as declaring autonomy for the regions inhabited by large numbers of Muslims... Without trying to explain in detail the complex realities behind the so-called revival process, I would like to emphasize in particular that it was these subversive activities, which prompted us to launch this dramatic program. We could not just sit and watch from the sidelines the unfolding of this illegal, externally organized pan-Turkic campaign. The legitimate interests of Bulgaria and its entire population, including the Muslims, were at stake. We needed effective measures to protect the interests, personal security, and the future of the population... These activities continued for many years until the tragically depressing events of 1989. Using promises, as well as psychological and physical pressures, Turkey’s agents persuaded thousands of ethnic Turks to abandon their homes and motherland, and emigrate to Turkey... The truth is that we begged the departing Turks to stay. We appealed to them that as Bulgarian citizens they should stay here, in Bulgaria. That they should reconsider. But all was in vain. Thousands

¹³³ (Author’s interviews with people who were subjected to forced migration by Todor Zhivkov, October 22-25, 2011, Bursa; January 12, 2012, Kardzhali).

¹³⁴ Quoted from Vassilev, *op. cit.*, 2010, p. 298. Translation from Bulgarian into English belongs to Vassiliev. The emphases are added.

slaughtered their livestock, sold their property, and left. They acted like zombies, as if hypnotized. Neither we, nor Turkey was prepared for such an exodus.

In fact, the nationalist outburst was seen as an exit way by Zhivkov to overcome the internal contradictions and accumulated problems of the regime.¹³⁵ Rather than lengthening the life of the regime, the assimilationist policies toward Turkish minority fastened the end of Todor Zhivkov because “national revival policy” attracted severe criticism all around the world, first and foremost criticized by Turkey.¹³⁶ The gross human rights violations are reported by different international organizations. For example, Helsinki Watch Committee, founded in 1979 to check the countries’ compliance with Helsinki Accords (1975) on human rights and non-discrimination, documented that on December 23, 1984, more than one hundred people were killed and more than 250 was imprisoned in one day just because of their resistance to change their original Turkish names.¹³⁷ The suppression policies openly breached the international and bilateral agreements such as Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1947), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), and the Helsinki Accords (1975). Council of Europe report

¹³⁵ Bakalova, *op. cit.*, 2006, p. 235.

¹³⁶ (Author’s interview with Kemal Eyüp, Chairman of Commission for Protection against Discrimination, Republic of Bulgaria on 12 May 2010); (Ahmet Hüseyin, an ex-MP of MRF, on 10 May 2010).

¹³⁷ Ted Zang, *Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Expulsion of the Bulgarian Turks*, New York: Helsinki Watch, 1987.

called on Bulgaria “to put an immediate end to this repressive policy and to restore their rightful names to all members of the Turkish community.”¹³⁸

After five years of oppression and the resistance of the Turkish minority, the international public became aware of the happenings. After acknowledging the failure of the assimilation policy, Zhivkov put the forced emigration strategy into implementation. On May 29, 1989, in Bulgarian National Television and Bulgarian National Radio, Zhivkov announced that borders were now open and anyone could leave Bulgaria, “if they wish so.” In his speech, Zhivkov argued that the “Turks in Bulgaria were enjoying a free and prosperous life” in comparison to other “rudimentary capitalist regimes.” He made a call to the Turkish authorities to open the borders and allow the Turkish minority in Bulgaria to enter into Turkey.¹³⁹ Zhivkov then forced the members of Turkish minority to leave the country in a very short time period without taking their belongings. Finally, on 10 November 1989, Zhivkov was ousted and succeeded by Petar Mladenov, minister of foreign affairs of the Communist regime for about 17 years. With Mladenov, a new term started in terms of the rights of Turkish minority because the new government accepted the gross human rights violations and some of the rights of

¹³⁸ Quoted in Ataöv, *op. cit.*, 1990, p. 18.

¹³⁹ For the full text of Zhivkov’s speech, see Todor Zhivkov, “National Unity of Bulgaria should be a Concern for Every Single Citizen of Our Beloved Country” (translated from Bulgarian origin: Edinstvoto na Bilgarskiya Narod e Grija i Sıdba na Vseki Grajdantin na Naşeto Milo Oteçestvo), in “*The Revival Process*” *Bulgarian State and Turks in Bulgaria: From mid-1930s to the beginning of 1990s*, Archives’ Speaking Series, Volume 1, Sofia: State Archives Agency, 2009, p. 517-519 (translated from Bulgarian origin: “*Vızroditelniyat protses*” *Bilgarskata Dirjava i Bilgarskite Turtsi: Sredata na 30-te – Naçaloto na 90-te Godini na XX vek*, Arhivite Govoryat , Tom I, Sofia: Dirjavna Agentsiya “Arhivi”, 2009, c. 517-519).

Turkish minority were recovered. All these developments suggest that the post-1989 process refers to a different era in terms of the rights of Turkish minority in Bulgaria and deserves a separate analysis in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

EUROPEANIZATION OF THE RIGHTS OF TURKISH MINORITY

This chapter deals with the Europeanization of minority rights in Bulgaria with special emphasis on the recovery of the rights of Turkish minority during the post-Communist era. The chapter is divided into three sub-periods according to the scope and depth of Europeanization. These sub-periods are 1989-1999 (loose Europeanization), 1999-2007 (intense Europeanization), and 2007-2012 (stagnation).

4.1. Bulgaria's Integration with Europe: 1989-1999

Bulgaria's diplomatic relations with the European Economic Community started in 1988 and Trade and Cooperation Agreement was signed in 1990 to deepen the bilateral economic relations. After the collapse of the Communist regime, Bulgarian political elite turned their face to Europe, which necessitated comprehensive free market oriented political economy reforms. As a demonstration of their willingness Bulgarian political-elite signed Europe Agreement on 8 March 1993 and put into implementation on 1 February 1995. Article 6 of the agreement made an explicit reference to "respect for the democratic principles and human rights" as an essential element of bilateral

relations.¹⁴⁰ Similar to other Central and Eastern European states like Poland and Hungary, Bulgaria also applied to membership in 1995. The European Council, however, rejected Bulgaria's application in 1997 due to Bulgaria's poor economic performance and inability to cope with competitive market pressures within the EU. Finally in December 1999, Sofia was invited by the European Council to negotiate the membership conditions, which triggered an intense Europeanization process in the country. This part covers 1989-1999 period with special emphasis on the Bulgarian state's changing policies toward Turkish minority in the country. It suggests that many of the policies of the Zhivkov regime toward Turks were reversed in this period. However, as the argument proceeds in this chapter, the rights returned to Turks in 1991-1999, not because of the direct transformative impact of the EU but due to the changing balance of power relations in Bulgarian domestic politics. The role of the EU in this period is secondary and indirect. Therefore, 1989-1999 period refers to a "loose Europeanization" in terms of the causal dynamics of change in Bulgaria's minority regime. The following part aims to substantiate this argument.

4.1.1. Changing Domestic Balance of Power Relations

The removal of Todor Zhivkov as the Bulgarian Communist Party leader and head of state on 10 November 1989 marked a new era not only in Bulgarian

¹⁴⁰ Europe Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, the full-text of the Agreement is available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/world/agreements/prepareCreateTreatiesWorkspace/treatiesGeneralData.do?step=0&redirect=true&treatyId=741> (accessed on: 22 November 2011).

politics but also in the state of Turkish minority. Zhivkov's dismantling was not the outcome of the demand of the masses; rather, it was planned as a "palace coup", designed and carried out within the higher echelons of Bulgarian Communist Party.¹⁴¹ There were three main reasons for the dethronement of Zhivkov regime. First, the crisis of the communist regimes at the international level inevitably hit the shores of Bulgarian political system too. Accordingly, the Bulgarian Communist Party rulers felt themselves in a delicate position to reform their policies. Different opposition factions emerged in the country with liberalization demands. On November 1989, fourteen of the non-communist groups came together to form a political platform for promoting the pluralisation of Bulgarian political system. The non-communist groups formed Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) and elected Zhelyu Zhelev as their first leader.¹⁴² The rising domestic dissidence as well as the changing international atmosphere triggered by the popular revolts against totalitarian regimes including Bulgaria's neighbour, Romania, forced Bulgarian Communist Party elite to put certain reforms into implementation. The first step in this direction was the removal of Todov Zhivkov.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Crampton, *op. cit.*, 1997, p. 216.

¹⁴² (*Author's interview with former President Zhelyu Zhelev, on 21 May 2010*). Also for an autobiographic history of the transformation period in Bulgaria, see Zhelyu Zhelev, *In at the Deep End*, Sofia: Trud Publishing House, 2008.

¹⁴³ For an analysis on the fall of Communism and transition period in Bulgaria, see, Iskra Baeva, "Political Changes in Bulgaria during the Years of Globalization" in Vasil Prodanov (ed.), *Bulgaria in Global Processes*, New York: Global Scholarly Publications, 2004, p. 297-325.

Second, the worsening economic conditions in the country fastened the end of Zhivkov regime. Bulgarian economy plunged into structural difficulties starting from the second half of 1980s. The volatility in growth and export figures, the rising inflation especially after 1988, and the worsening living conditions (see table 4) aroused the anger of masses against the Bulgarian Communist Party. The economy plunged into a production crisis after 1989 partly because of the forced migration of the Turkish minority in the country. Since Turks were mainly dealing with agricultural production, their exodus paved the way for poor harvests. Due to the shortages, food rationing was extended from rural areas to the provinces of Sofia.¹⁴⁴ After the removal of Zhivkov, it became apparent that the economic figures were in fact worse than Zhivkov wanted the society to believe. The foreign debt of the country, for example, stood not “at the 3 billion dollars figure admitted by Zhivkov, but at 12 billion dollars.”¹⁴⁵ Crampton succinctly summarizes bad economic conditions in the wake of 1990s:

“In the first seven months of 1990 production was 10 per cent below the poor levels of 1989; inflation in May and June alone had reached 108 per cent; unemployment was rising at a rate which seemed to be almost beyond calculation; establishing trading patterns had collapsed...”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ (Author’s interview with Prof. Dr. Cengiz Hakov, Bulgarian Academy of Science, Institute for Balkan Studies, on 4 May 2010).

¹⁴⁵ Crampton, *op. cit.*, 1997, p. 217.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

Table 4. Main Indicators of Bulgarian Economy (1986-1998)

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998
Gross domestic product (billions U.S. dollars)	24.8	28.7	47.0	47.8	21.1	8.3	8.0	10.1	13.1
Gross domestic product (% change)	5.3	4.7	2.4	-0.5	-9.1	-8.4	-3.6	-8.0	4.1
Total investment (% of GDP)	35.7	32.8	34.3	33.0	30.2	19.8	9.5	8.3	16.8
Gross national savings (% of GDP)	34.6	32.6	35.1	31.9	30.5	10.3	7.6	10.0	16.2
Inflation (% of change)	2.7	2.7	2.5	6.4	23.9	82.0	96.0	123.0	18.6
Volume of imports of goods and services (% change)	-30.7	21.7	75.4	-0.1	-66.8	40.0	-3.2	-11.4	11.7
Volume of exports of goods and services (% of change)	-38.6	34.7	7.9	-11.3	-16.3	19.5	-0.6	2.5	-1.8
Unemployment rate (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.025	2.9	13.2	14.0	10.9	12.3
Current account balance (% of GDP)	-3.8	-2.5	-0.8	-1.6	-8.0	-4.2	-0.3	0.1	-0.4
Source: IMF, World Economic Outlook Database, October 2012									

Third, the “national revival” policies of Zhivkov and the exodus of Turkish minority sparked a debate within the country and across international platforms that created a boomerang effect for Zhivkov. Beginning in the mid-December of 1989, the Turkish minority organized a series of protests for the restoration of their names. In this regard, the “silent presence” protest in front of the parliament on 28 December 1989 constituted a watershed.¹⁴⁷

The official policy change of the Bulgarian Communist Party was publicized by Alexander Lilov’s report, a member of the first echelon party faction, which openly denounced the policies of Zhivkov. The report, titled as *To Overcome the Distortions among the Turkish-Speaking and Muslim Population in*

¹⁴⁷ Ali Dayıođlu, *Toplama Kampından Meclise: Bulgaristan’da Türk ve Müslüman Azınlığı*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005, p. 376.

Bulgaria, accepted the Turks' rights to freely choose their names, and exercise all of their religious and ethnic rights provided by the constitution.¹⁴⁸ Bakalova argues that this paradigmatic change might also be interpreted as a "perfect hand-washing manoeuvre"¹⁴⁹ because by doing so the ruling Communist Party elite promoted the idea that "revival process" was not in fact a party policy and the whole party could not be held responsible for the mistakes of the Zhivkov era.¹⁵⁰ Lilov, in his report, also underlined the increasing international criticisms in the sense that it was by no means possible for the Communist Party elite to justify the assimilation campaign and convince international community about the mass exodus of Turkish minority. Accordingly, policy change turned into a necessity,

¹⁴⁸ For the change in the policies of Bulgarian Communist Party, see 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*, 2000, available at: <http://www.ecmi.de/fileadmin/downloads/publications/JEMIE/JEMIE01Dimitrov10-07-01.pdf> (accessed on: 21 May 2012).

¹⁴⁹ Bakalova, *op. cit.*, 2006, p. 236.

¹⁵⁰ This point is also underlined by many of the interviewees. For example, Marin Lessesnki, a Bulgarian political analyst, stated that "the former Communist Party wanted to back away from past. Turned its face to the new term." (*Author's interview with Marin Lessesnki, a Bulgarian political analyst, on 26 May 2010*). Similarly, Mihail Ivanov, an adviser on minority issues to former Bulgarian President Zhelyu Zhelev, stated that "[During the transition period], the newly formed democratic opposition determined Communist regime as common enemy [in order to be prevented an ethnic clash between Bulgarians and Turks]." (*Author's interview with Mihail Ivanov on 7 May 2010*). The opinion leaders of the Turkish minority shares the same idea. For example, Prof. Dr. İbrahim Yalimov, Rector of Sofia High Institute of Islam, puts the issue as follows: "During transition period, Communism was declared as the main guilty. This approach calmed down the people on both sides and avoided the emergence of an ethnic conflict." (*Author's interview with Prof. Dr. İbrahim Yalimov, Rector of Sofia High Institute of Islam, on 27 April 2010*). From another viewpoint, Yordanka Bibina, a Bulgarian scholar at Bulgarian Academy of Science, Institute at Balkans Studies states that "Denouncing Communism as the common enemy made it virtually impossible to determine the persons who actively involded in the so-called "national revival process."(*Author's interview with Yordanka Bibina, on 9 May 2010*).

rather than choice, for Bulgaria's ruling elite in order not to push Bulgaria into an isolated position at its international relations.¹⁵¹

All these factors underlined above paved the way for a policy change in Bulgarian state's approach toward Turkish minority. On 29 December 1989, the Central Committee of Bulgarian Socialist Party and the Council of Ministers decided to abandon the assimilation policies and implemented by Zhivkov.¹⁵² Accordingly, name restoration policy was officially declared. The Bulgarian Communist Party officials announced the right of the Turks to freely choose their names, conduct their religious affairs, and learn their native language.¹⁵³ The non-communist political groups in the country supported the paradigmatic policy change as well. Immediately after the abandonment of the "revival process" the Turkish minority in the country established their own parties in January 1990 under the leadership of Ahmet Doğan, named Movement of Rights and Freedoms (MRF), *Hak ve Özgürlükler Hareketi* in Turkish.¹⁵⁴

Yet, some segments of the Bulgarian state apparatus and civil society harshly reacted to the abandonment of the "revival process" on the ground of a possible dissolution of the country along ethnic lines. During the first days of

¹⁵¹ Hugh Poulton, *The Balkans: Minorities and States in Conflict*, London: Minority Rights Groups, 1993, p. 163.

¹⁵² Iskra Baeva, *Bulgarian Foreign Policy after November 1989*, National Institute for International Studies and Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Sofia: INTELA Publishing House, 1997, p. 31.

¹⁵³ Dayıoğlu, *op.cit.*, 2006, p. 376.

¹⁵⁴ For a detailed history of MRF, see Nurcan Özgür, *Etnik Sorunların Çözümünde Hak ve Özgürlükler Hareketi*, İstanbul: Der yayınları, 1999.

1990 more than 10,000 Bulgarian citizens, supported by local party organs, came together in Kardzhali to protest Bulgarian Communist Party's decision.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, around 500,000-600,000 people gathered in front of the parliament to demonstrate against the restoration of Turkish names. In a short time period, the country came on the brink of an ethnic clash.¹⁵⁶ Even a small minority of Bulgarian citizens, who were not happy with the recovery of the rights of Bulgarian Turks, declared the independence of Razgrad Republic. The upheaval, which was erupted in the Razgrad district of Bulgaria, a region known with its mixed demographic composition, was suppressed in a short time by the Bulgarian state officials. Nevertheless it demonstrated how sensitive the issue was. Antonina Zhelyazkova, well-known Bulgarian professor of sociology and Chairperson of International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (IMIR) in Sofia, underlined this point as follows:

*I denounce the so called "revival or name-changing process" as a shameful period in Bulgarian history. I define it as a political adventure that might have had fatal consequences.*¹⁵⁷

Interviews conducted for this thesis and existing research suggest that there are at least two main reasons for this backlash in addition to the nationalist sentiments. First, the execution of renaming process created an interest group composed of the people involving in the process. Many Bulgarian citizens took

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ This is one of the common points stressed strongly in almost all of my interviews in Bulgaria.

¹⁵⁷ (Author's interview with Antonina Zhelyazkova, Chairperson of International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (IMIR), on 1 November 2012).

part in the process and they feared that they would also be held responsible from the assimilation campaign.¹⁵⁸ Second, the political and economic balance in the country significantly changed after the exodus of the Turks. Accordingly, the Turks were forced to sell their properties to the ethnic Bulgarians at very low costs. Their possible return, therefore, created a possibility to turn the properties back to the Turks, which aroused the anger of ethnic Bulgarians and posed an obvious clash of interests.¹⁵⁹

The public outcry against the restoration of Turkish names necessitated a more subtle policy for the Bulgarian ruling elite. Therefore, Mladenov, the head of the state, invited different stakeholders (composed of 65 participating organizations) to a round table to discuss the decisions taken on 29 December, named as Public Council on the National Issue (7-11 January 1990).¹⁶⁰ Both the nationalist segments of the society and the representatives of MRF took part in the meetings.¹⁶¹ The result of the Public Council did not substantially change the 29 December Decisions. It reaffirmed the rights of the Turks to restore their names and the official version of the decisions taken by the Public Council published at the Official Gazette as the *Declaration on the National Question* on 19 January

¹⁵⁸ (Author's interview with Plamen Ralchev, Bulgarian political science professor, on 12 May 2010).

¹⁵⁹ *Inter alia*, see *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Albert P. Melone, "Bulgaria's National Roundtable Talks and the Politics of Accommodation", *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 15, No. 3, 1994, p. 257-273.

¹⁶¹ The round table meeting's role in the prevention of a possible conflict between Ethnic Bulgarians and Turks is one of the common points stressed strongly by almost all of my interviewees.

1990.¹⁶² Following 29 December Decisions and Declaration on the National Question, the Bulgarian National Assembly adopted the Bulgarian Citizens' Names Act on 5 March 1990. The Act turned into a compromise between nationalists and liberals. The nationalists did not succeed in holding a referendum on the issue yet achieved introducing difficult and time-consuming procedures for those who applied for name restoration.¹⁶³

The MRF became an active player of Bulgarian politics after the elections during the transition period (see table 5). In June 1990 elections, for instance, MRF became the third biggest party in the parliament with 23 seats out of 400 following Bulgarian Socialist Party (hereinafter BSP) and UDF.

Table 5. Election Results in Bulgaria during Transition Period¹⁶⁴

	1990		1991		1994	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
BSP	211	47.2	110	45.8	125	52.1
UDF	144	36.2	106	44.2	69	28.8
MRF	23	6.0	24	10.0	15	6.2
BANU	16	8.0	--	--	--	--
PU	--	--	--	--	18	7.5
BBB	--	--	--	--	13	5.4
Others	6	--	--	--	--	--
Total	400	100.0	240	100.0	240	100.0

¹⁶² Bakalova, *op. cit.*, 2006, p. 237.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ Ali Eminov, "The Turks in Bulgaria: Post-1989 Developments", *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 27, No. 1, 1999, p. 40.

The establishment of MRF as a political party was by no means an easy task for the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. The fourth paragraph of article 11(1) of the Bulgarian constitution adopted on 12 July 1991 states that “there shall be no political parties on ethnic, racial, and religious lines...”¹⁶⁵ The Political Party Act was also incorporating the same principle before the adoption of 1991 constitution. Bulgarian nationalists tried to ban MRF two times based on Political Party Act and article 11(1) during transition period. First attempt came just before the 1990 elections, in which MRF also aimed to take part. Accordingly, Sofia City Court and the Supreme Court denied MRF’s attempt to register as a political party prior to the 1990 elections. The Central Electoral Commission, however, granted permission to the party to register and attend to the elections in June 1990 elections.¹⁶⁶ The second attempt to ban the MRF came in late 1991 headed by Bulgarian Socialist Party members.¹⁶⁷ The nationalist Bulgarian deputies filed a petition at the Constitutional Court on the ground that MRF was violating Article 44(2) of Bulgarian Constitution. The relevant article reads as follows:

No organization shall act to the detriment of the country’s sovereignty and national integrity, or the unity of the nation, nor shall act to incite racial, national, ethnic or religious enmity or an encroachment on the rights and freedoms of citizens; no organization shall establish clandestine or paramilitary structures or shall attain its aims thorough violence.

¹⁶⁵ For the Constitution of Bulgaria, see: <http://www.parliament.bg/en/const>, (accessed on: 20 January 2013). All the questions in this study are from this document.

¹⁶⁶ Petya Nitzova, “Bulgaria: Minorities, Democratization, and National Sentiments”, *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 1997, p. 729-739.

¹⁶⁷ Eminov, *op. cit.*, 1999.

The claimants asked Constitutional Court to declare MRF unconstitutional on the basis of this article. In April 1992, the Constitutional Court rejected the application of nationalist deputies and decided MRF to continue its existence as a political party. According to Plamen Bogoev, legal counsel at Sofia City Court and the legal advisor to the former President Zhelu Zhelev, states that “the judgement of the Constitutional Court on Constitutional Case#1/1991 was a definite contribution both to the democratic process in the country and to the supremacy of law.”¹⁶⁸ Yet, the decision of the Court was taken by a very narrow margin, which demonstrated that MRF’s place in Bulgarian legal politics was by no means guaranteed.¹⁶⁹

The two abandonment attempts and various public protests against MRF enable us to make two inferences regarding the state of Turkish minority in the country. First, it shows that the Bulgarian state and society was not acting in a unitary way on the issue because while some segments of state and society supported the abolishment of “revival process”, some others staunchly backed Zhivkov’s extravagant policies. Second, as a natural consequence of the first qualification, the recovery of their rights was by no means a straightforward and easy process for Turkish minority. There was a delicate balance at that time and the role of MRF was quite important in terms of alleviating the inter-communal tension. The MRF never called for independence or autonomy for the Turks. The

¹⁶⁸ Plamen Bogoev, “The Bulgarian Constitution and Minority Rights”, in *1989-1999, Ten Years Later: Lessons Learned for the Future*, Sofia: Scorpion Publishing House, 2000, p. 190.

¹⁶⁹ The political character of the decision is to be discussed in the following pages.

party leaders even did not push for the recognition of Turks as a national minority, a point to be discussed in the next section. Krassimir Kanev underlines this point as follows: “Turks’ demands were minimalist. They just asked for their basic rights and freedoms. They never ask for autonomy and/or independence.”¹⁷⁰ The role of Ahmet Doğan, as the leader of MRF was quite important during the non-violent transition in Bulgaria. In the wake of the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern European countries, Bulgaria is among the countries that were sitting on the sharp edge of the knife in terms of inter-ethnic violence. The expectations, however, were not realized thanks to the “twin tolerations” in Bulgarian politics. Ahmet Doğan and MRF members more than welcomed the reversal of Zhivkov’s assimilation policies in the early 1990s. Ahmet Doğan constantly emphasized “peaceful transformation” and “democratization” in Bulgaria rather than “conflict” and “antagonism.” The following part of his November 4, 1991 speech is one of the many speeches he delivered during transition period:

*“The Movement for Rights and Freedoms is for guaranteeing social peace in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as for making democratization an irreversible process in the complete Europeanization of the country’s political and parliamentary life.”*¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ (Author’s interview with Krassimir Kanev, Chairman of Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, on 4 May 2010).

¹⁷¹ Ahmet Doğan, “Speech Delivered at Thirtieth Sixth National Assembly” in *The Spirit and Image of European Dimensions: Selected Speeches of Ahmet Doğan, 1991-2008*, Sofia, p. 10.

In fact, MRF was not a homogenous party at the beginning of its political life. There were ultra-nationalists seeking autonomy within the cadres of MRF and they could exacerbate the already existing scepticism among ethnic Bulgarians against the Turkish minority. Ahmet Doğan acted in a decisive manner to put the MRF into a moderate track by marginalizing ultra-nationalist rhetoric within the party echelons. One of the interviewees underlined this point as follows:

*“In the early days of MRF there were strong party members who were supporting the idea of autonomous Turkish regions within northern and southern Bulgaria. One of these members was in fact a member of parliament at that time. Their ideas were radical but very influential because these members were arrested by Zhivkov regime and sent to prisons and Belene camp. Ahmet Doğan clearly rejected these maximalist demands and cut these members’ links with the MRF.”*¹⁷²

As a matter of fact, the main policy of the MRF and Ahmet Doğan was to improve the rights of Turks and their participation into the political, social, and economic life in the country as equal citizens along with ethnic Bulgarians.¹⁷³ In this context, he openly and strongly rejected “armed resistance and denied all kind of maximalist demands.”¹⁷⁴ Plamen S. Tzvetkov, a Bulgarian professor of history and activist, puts the issue as follows:

The ethnic Turks have reacted to all the ordeals inflicted upon them with extreme forbearance. It should be noted that the MRF has acted very

¹⁷² (Author’s interview with Ahmet Hüseyin, an ex-MP of MRF, on 10 May 2010).

¹⁷³ (Author’s interview with Ruşen Rıza, Vice-Director of MRF, on 26 May 2010).

¹⁷⁴ (Author’s interview with Çetin Kazak, MP of MRF, 15 Mayıs 2010).

*prudently by neutralizing extremist elements in its own camp and keeping the whole problem on a civilized level.*¹⁷⁵

The MRF's forbearance and existence in the parliament provided important advantages for the Turkish minority to restore their religious and linguistic rights in addition to the political reclamations. The 1991 constitution, approved by the Parliament in which MRF also took active part, was an important yardstick in this regard. Article 13 of the 1991 constitution asserted that "(1) the practicing of any religion shall be free (2) the religious institutions shall be separate from the state..." Article 37, moreover, acknowledges the "state shall assist the maintenance of tolerance and respect among believers from different denominations..."¹⁷⁶ Accordingly during 1990s, the religious schools were reopened. Turks have had their rights to pray in mosques, the mass publication of Koran in Bulgarian and Turkish was legalized.¹⁷⁷

The Turkish minority also improved their situation regarding the ethno-linguistic rights parallel to the improvement in bilateral relations between Turkey and Bulgaria.¹⁷⁸ For instance, the complex legal procedure was amended in 1991 thanks to the determined policies pursued by MRF at the Bulgarian Grand National Assembly. After the legal amendments, the overwhelming majority of

¹⁷⁵ Plamen S. Tzvetkov, "The Politics of Transition in Bulgaria: Back to the Future?", *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 43, No. 3, 1992, p. 41.

¹⁷⁶ For the Constitution of Bulgaria, see: <http://www.parliament.bg/en/const> (accessed on: 20 January 2013). All the questions in this study are from this document.

¹⁷⁷ Stephen Lewis, "Islam in Bulgaria", *Aramco World*, Vol. 45, No. 3, 1994, p. 20-29.

¹⁷⁸ For a detailed account on Turkey-Bulgaria bilateral relations during 1990s, see İlhan Uzgel, "Balkanlarla İlişkiler", in Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası, Cilt 2: 1980-2001*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001, pp. 484-490.

the people belonging to Turkish minority filed petitions to the relevant state authorities to receive back their Turkish names, as a result of which the number of Turks applied to the state reached 600,000 in March 1991.¹⁷⁹ The 1991 constitution envisioned certain rights for non-ethnic Bulgarian citizens to study in their native language as well. Accordingly, these minority groups were recognized to establish private schools (article 53), and the subsequent article (54) recognized the right of every citizen “to avail himself of the national and universal cultural values and to develop his own culture in accordance with his ethnic self-identification.”

The constitutional changes were by no means negligible for improvement in the situation of Turkish minority in Bulgaria because they constituted a clear policy change toward Turks in comparison to the suppression policies pursued by Zhivkov. As Eminov succinctly states, “After a hiatus of more than 20 years, Turkish children once again would be provided instruction in their mother tongue.”¹⁸⁰ The changes on paper, however, did not mean an automatic spill over in practice. The nationalist segments of Bulgarian political parties pushed hard to postpone the implementation of these rights especially during BSP governments. For example, in December 1994, after the rise of BSP as the governing party, Ilcho Dimitrov was appointed as the Minister of Education. Dimitrov was one of the staunch supporters of Zhivkov’s assimilationist policies and he appointed officials as inspectors with anti-Turkish sentiments to the areas where Turkish

¹⁷⁹ Dayıoğlu, *op. cit.*, 2006, p. 381.

¹⁸⁰ Eminov, *op. cit.*, 1999, p. 48.

minority was composing the overwhelming majority of the population. These officials' duties were to change the curricula of Turkish classes and disrupt the appropriate implementations of the linguistic rights at the schools. In this context, they made Turkish classes optional and they offered them before and after the normal school hours even in the villages where Turkish minority was overwhelming. Since Turkish classes were not compulsory anymore, it significantly decreased the number of children attending to these courses.¹⁸¹ For example, in the 1992/1993 school years the number of students studying their mother tongue was 114,000 approximately. This number significantly decreased to about 7,000 in the 2010/2011 school years.¹⁸² The linguistic rights of Turkish minority remained problematic in other realms as well. The broadcasting in Turkish language was another contentious issue. Although the 1991 constitution enabled the Turkish minority to broadcast in their native language, the actual means of conducting this right was not provided by the Bulgarian state. Similar practical obstacles remained in the printing, religion-related, and cultural areas.

In short, the state of Turkish minority during 1990s was squeezed between law and politics. On the legal side, the improvements were spectacular and most of the rights of Turkish minority, along with others, were recognized. On the

¹⁸¹ (Author's interview with Prof. Dr. İsmail Cambazov, on 14 May 2010).

¹⁸² Antonina Zhelyazkova *et al*, Educational Problems of Turkish Children in Bulgarian Schools, International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations, IMIR, October 2012, p. 19, available at: http://www.imir-bg.org/imir/reports/Educational_Problems_of_Turkish_Children_in_Bulgarian_Schools.pdf (accessed on: 17 July 2013).

practical side, however, the implementation of the rights faced insurmountable challenges due to the political concerns and ultra-nationalist reactions.¹⁸³ It was recognized that improvement in these areas necessitate further democratization in Bulgaria, which were not very likely at that time without a strong external anchor. This anchor was in fact the rising influence of the EU. Especially after the mid-1990s, the importance of the EU has become more and more visible in Bulgarian political economy and foreign policy that inevitably put its mark on Bulgaria's minority rights regime as well. The next part deals with the emergence of the EU as an anchor for Bulgaria.

4.2. Intense Europeanization: 1999-2007

This part deals with the Europeanization of Bulgaria with special reference to minority rights protection. The period between 1999 and 2007 needs to be analysed separately because of the depth and scope of EU related reforms on the economic and political system of the country. The period in question, therefore, refers to intense Europeanization process. This study investigates this period in three sub-titles. In the first part, the basic turning points of Bulgaria's EU membership process will be highlighted. In the second part, the major reforms regarding the minority rights protection in Bulgaria between 1999 and 2007 will be revealed in detail. In the third part, the rise of nationalist backlash against Europeanization and the rise of ATAKA party will be discussed. The final part

¹⁸³ For a detailed overview of the *law vs. politics* problematique, see Bernd Rechel, "State Control of Minorities in Bulgaria", *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 23, No. 3, 2007, p. 352-370.

will provide an evaluation in terms of the Europeanization framework laid out in chapter one.

4.2.1. Road to Membership: Key Turning Points

The first diplomatic relations between the European Economic Community and Bulgaria were established in November 1989. Chronologically, a Trade and Cooperation Agreement was signed in May 1990. In the same year, Bulgaria (along with Romania) was also included in the Phare programmes.¹⁸⁴

Accordingly, Bulgaria developed a close relationship with and was assisted by the European Commission regarding more authority on the management and implementation of Phare programmes during the pre-accession period. Europe Agreement was signed on 8 March 1993 between the parties that entered into force on 1 February 1995. Europe Agreement, which aimed at establishing a free trade area between the Union and Bulgaria, provided a framework for the political dialogue. Right from the very beginning, similar to other CEE countries, the EU promoted democracy-related conditionality principles in its relations with

¹⁸⁴ Phare program, which refers to “the Programme of Community aid to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe”, is the main financial instrument of the pre-accession strategy for the Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) which have applied for membership of the EU. Since 1994, Phare's tasks have been adapted to the priorities and needs of each CEEC. The revamped Phare programme, with a budget of over EUR 10 billion for the period 2000-2006 (about 1.5 billion per year), has two main priorities, namely institutional and capacity-building and investment financing. Although the Phare programme was originally reserved for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, it is set to be extended to the applicant countries of the western Balkans. The Phare program in Bulgaria was firstly established in 1990 and re-oriented in 1998 towards preparation for accession. The Phare programme committed a total of €1.35 billion to Bulgaria during the 1992-2002 period. See European Union official web-site, “Phare Program”, http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/enlargement/2004_and_2007_enlargement/e50004_en.htm, (accessed on: 6 January 2013).

Bulgaria. As Karen Smith¹⁸⁵ underlines Europe Agreement introduced a special clause regarding the human rights and democratic principles (Article 6); foresaw the liberalization of trade over a period of ten years, technical and financial assistance during the reform process.

In December 1993, the Copenhagen European Council specified the conditions under which the EU would accept new members. In this regard, there were three criteria: political criteria, economic criteria and the adoption of the Community *acquis*.¹⁸⁶ Concerning the CEE countries, it was clearly stated in the Presidency Conclusions that “associated countries in Central and Eastern Europe that so desire shall become members of the European Union.”¹⁸⁷ By then, all countries of the region officially submitted their membership applications, including Bulgaria in December 1995. In the following process, the Commission published its opinion on Bulgaria’s membership bid and presented regular reports regarding the progress of the country towards accession. Finally, the formal negotiations with Bulgaria were opened at the Helsinki Summit in December 1999. It is stated that;

¹⁸⁵ Karen Smith, *The Making of EU Foreign Policy*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p. 98-102.

¹⁸⁶ The political criteria are about the stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities; the economic criteria deals with the existence of a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union; and the acceptance of the Community *acquis* refers to the ability of taking on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union. See European Union official web-site, “Accession Criteria”, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/enlargement_process/accession_process/criteria/index_en.htm, (accessed on: 22 December 2009).

¹⁸⁷ Copenhagen European Council, *Conclusion of the Presidency*, SN 180/1/93 REV 1, 21-22 June 1993, p. 13.

Determined to lend a positive contribution to security and stability on the European continent and in the light of recent developments as well as the Commission's reports, the European Council has decided to convene bilateral intergovernmental conferences in February 2000 to begin negotiations with Romania, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Malta on the conditions for their entry into the Union and the ensuing Treaty adjustments.¹⁸⁸

The accession negotiations was kicked off on 15 February 2000 and concluded on 15 June 2004. Following the support of the European Parliament to Bulgaria's EU membership on 13 April 2005¹⁸⁹ Bulgaria signed the Accession Treaty on 25 April 2005 with the European Commission and ratified by the Bulgarian National Parliament on 11 May 2005. Eventually, Bulgaria joined the EU on 1 January 2007 along with Romania.

4.2.2. Adoption vs. Implementation: Europeanization of Minority Rights

In regards to minority protection, the EU has three main regulations, and the candidate countries were required to transpose these regulations into their domestic legal structures so as to become eligible for membership. These three regulations were the Framework Convention, Council Directive 2000/43 (known as Race Equality Directive), and adoption of official programs in countries that have large Roma minority. After 2000, all these three regulations became compulsory for Bulgaria as part of the “conditionality principle” since it became a candidate country in 1999.

¹⁸⁸ Helsinki European Council, *Conclusion of the Presidency*, 10-11 December 1999, paragraph 10.

¹⁸⁹ The voting results were 534 in favour and 88 against with 69 abstentions.

As the details were discussed in the second chapter, Framework Convention has become the most important tool for improving the minority regime in Bulgaria. Following the ratification of Framework Convention on 7 May 1999, the implementation of Framework Convention has become the major issue regarding minority protection regime during Bulgaria's candidacy. The ratification process was painful because the nationalist groups appealed to Constitutional Court due to the contested term of *national minorities*. The Constitutional Court, most probably having taken Bulgaria's candidacy status into consideration, rejected the application and Framework Convention was put into implementation. The phase of reforms in the post-ratification process, however, was not encouraging. For example, it took almost five years for the Bulgarian government to develop an action plan for the implementation of the Convention. The report prepared by Bulgarian state and submitted to the Council of Europe was a clear illustration of the lacks in its implementation: "No specific measures were taken in the first years after the adoption of the Framework Programme for its implementation."¹⁹⁰

In fact, as different scholars argue, Bulgaria's weak implementation performance was partially stemmed from the non-coherent EU level supervision on the issue. The EU institutions, first and foremost the European Commission, did not develop tight surveillance mechanisms. A close investigation of Progress

¹⁹⁰ Republic of Bulgaria, *Report Submitted by Bulgaria Pursuant to Article 25, Paragraph 1 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, 9 April 2003, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, p. 37.

Reports, prepared by the European Commission to assess the political and economic situation in Bulgaria, reveals that concerns about Bulgaria's economic performance had always preceded the state of minorities in the country during its membership process.¹⁹¹ Moreover, the implementation of the Framework Convention was not standardized among candidate countries. It is striking in this context that Latvia did not sign the Framework Convention by the time it became a member of the EU in 2004.¹⁹²

Second instrument that was used by the EU for improving minority rights regime in Bulgaria was the Race Equality Directive (Council Directive 2000/43). Race Equality Directive has become part of EU *acquis* in 2000 to “lay down a framework for combating discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, with a view to putting into effect in the Member States the principle of equal treatment” (Article 1).¹⁹³ The Directive prohibits direct and indirect discrimination in employment, labour market, social protection, education, and access to public goods. Along with other candidate countries, European Commission asked Bulgaria in its progress reports to comply with the Race Equality Directive. The Regular Progress Report in 2002, for example notes, “the principle of anti-

¹⁹¹ Bernd Rechel, “What Has Limited the EU’s Impact on Minority Rights in Accession Countries”, *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 2008, p. 175.

¹⁹² Republic of Latvia signed the document in 2005 with reservations on the definition of “national minority.” See the official declaration of the Republic of Latvia, “Ratification of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities”, available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/policy/4641/4642/4649/framework/> (accessed on: 4 January 2013).

¹⁹³ Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, *Official Journal L 180*, 19/07/2000 P. 0022-0026, available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32000L0043:EN:HTML> (accessed on: 5 January 2013).

discrimination is enshrined in the Bulgarian Constitution (Article 6). So far, however, comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation has still not been adopted and the EC anti-discrimination acquis has still not been transposed.”¹⁹⁴ In September 2003, eventually, Bulgaria adopted Law on Protection against Discrimination, which entered into force at the beginning of 2004. Race Equality Directive was quite important for the Turkish minority in Bulgaria because they suffered from the implicit discrimination in their attempts to participate into the economic and political life in Bulgaria.¹⁹⁵ Since the general socio-economic situation of Turkish minority all around the country is worse than the average ethnic Bulgarians, the discrimination further exacerbated their situations.¹⁹⁶ One of the interviewees, Antonina Zhelyazkova, well-known Bulgarian professor of sociology, puts the issue with a striking anecdote:

*“I know a very capable and intellectual Turkish colleague holding a PhD. Degree since 2004. Yet, just because he is a Turk, he cannot present his papers at the conferences with me. Rather he has to work as repairman to earn his living.”*¹⁹⁷

Similar to the situation on Framework Convention, the implementation performance of Bulgarian governments regarding Race Equality Directive remained weak during candidacy period. The Regular Progress Report in 2004

¹⁹⁴ Commission of the European Communities, *2002 Regular Report on Bulgaria's Progress towards Accession*, 9 October 2002, Brussels: European Commission, 2002, SEC(2002) 1400, p. 28.

¹⁹⁵ (Author's interview with Ahmet Hüseyin, on 10 May 2010).

¹⁹⁶ Tahir, *op. cit.*, 2003.

¹⁹⁷ (Author's interview with Antonina Zhelyazkova, Chairperson of International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (IMIR), on 1 November 2012).

continue to underline the necessity to improve the socio-economic situations of Turkish and Roma minority in the country.¹⁹⁸ Despite the adoption of the Framework Convention and Race Equality Directive and the unequivocal rights that these legal documents propose, the state of Turkish minority did not change significantly between 1999 and 2007 in the realms of education, and socio-economic developments.

In the realm of education, during the period in question, Turkish minority's demands to be instructed in Turkish have not been materialized and Turkish minority does not have "any single school where Turkish language is offered."¹⁹⁹ The Turkish courses are offered on voluntary basis for limited hours per week and the number of qualified teachers for these courses remains well below the required levels.²⁰⁰ The following table illustrates the low educational level of Turkish minority in comparison to ethnic Bulgarians. Only two per cent of Turkish minority has higher education in Bulgaria, majority of them (55 per cent) have primary education and about one-fifth has education below primary level (see table 5).

¹⁹⁸ Commission of the European Communities, *2004 Regular Report on Bulgaria's Progress towards Accession*, 6 October 2002, Brussels: European Commission, 2004, SEC(2004) 1199, p. 25-26.

¹⁹⁹ Ali Dayıođlu, "Changing Aspects of Minority Policy in Bulgaria after 1989: The Case of the Muslim-Turkish Minority" in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Minority Issues in the Balkans and the EU*, Mehmet Hacısalihođlu and Fuat Aksu (eds.), İstanbul: OBIV, 2007, p. 99.

²⁰⁰ (Author's interview with Dr. İsmail Cambazov, on 14 May 201); (Author's interview with Bilal Şimşir, on 15 September 2010).

Table 6. Education Distribution according to Ethnic Groups and Education Levels (in percentage)²⁰¹

	Ethnic Bulgarians	Turks
Higher	20.2	2
Secondary	54	24.6
Primary	22.6	55
Elementary	3	16
Illiterate	0.2	2.3

In summary, the current situation of Turkish minority requires proactive policies and positive enforcement to improve their position in the educational realm. The policies conducted by Bulgarian government between 1999 and 2007, however, fall short of providing positive incentives to Turkish minority in putting the rights entitled at the Framework Convention and Race Equality Directive into implementation.²⁰² On the other side of the coin, some progress has been achieved regarding the publication of newspapers and books in the same period. In June 2004, a Turkish Books Room was opened in Sofia City Library.²⁰³ Some modest improvements also been realized in Turkish broadcasting as well. Starting from 2000, news bulletin was introduced in Turkish at official state television.

²⁰¹ Maria Iliycheva, "Education and Turkish Communities in Bulgaria in the Years of Transformation (1989-2007): A Negotiated Formal Balance of Educational Outcomes", *Comparative Education*, Vol. 46, No. 1, 2010, p. 32.

²⁰² (Author's interview with Krassimir Kanev, on 4 May 2010).

²⁰³ Dayioğlu, *op. cit.*, 2007, p. 105.

However, it was just eight minutes per day, which was extended to ten minutes in 2001.²⁰⁴

4.2.3. The Rise of Nationalism and ATAKA Phenomenon

The Europeanization of minority rights in Bulgaria in general and the improvement of the rights of Turkish minority in particular were not linear and straightforward. On the contrary, Europeanization process triggered the nationalist backlash in early 2000s. In fact, racism and xenophobia appeared in Bulgarian politics in the immediate aftermath of communist era. Yet, the racist parties could not consolidate their electoral power at this time. As Bell notes “all of the far right parties combined were supported by less than 2 per cent of the electorate...[and] right-wing extremism did not rank on the list of the problems that Bulgaria has faced since the fall of communism.”²⁰⁵ The intense Europeanization period between 1999 and 2007, however, paved the way for the rise of xenophobic political movements in Bulgaria,²⁰⁶ the most striking of which was ATAKA party,

²⁰⁴ (Author's interview with İzzet İsmailov, Editor in Chief, News Department, Turkish Language Broadcasting Section, Bulgarian National Television on 22 April 2010). İsmailov also stated that ATAKA leader Volen Siderov and its supporters gathered in front of the BNT Building several times to protest the Turkish broadcasting. Furthermore, one of the Bulgarian extremists opened hatred posters and burn himself in front of the BNT on 11 November 2009.

²⁰⁵ John D. Bell, “The Radical Right in Bulgaria”, in Sabrina Ramet and Roger Griffin (eds.), *The Radical Right in Central and Eastern Europe*, (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), pp. 233-257.

²⁰⁶ The rise of nationalism as a result of Europeanization processes is not specific to Bulgaria. In fact, it is a common phenomenon in the EU. For a discussion on this issue, see: Stefan Auer, “‘New Europe’: Between Cosmopolitan Dreams and Nationalist Nightmares”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 48, Issue: 5, November 2010, p. 1163-1184.

meaning attack in Bulgarian. ATAKA party was established in 2005 and attended the Bulgarian national elections in the same year. The party won an unexpected 8.1 per cent of the votes and 21 seats in national parliament. Volen Siderov, the founder of the party, gathered the second highest vote in 2006 presidential elections. The party also received the 14.2 per cent of the votes in 2007 European parliament elections with three seats. In the 2009 elections, ATAKA received the 9.3 per cent of votes. All these scores indicate that ATAKA's rise is not a random phenomenon. Rather it has a consolidated electoral base, which makes the party a worthy case to examine.

The ATAKA's twenty principles are quite illuminating in terms of the political orientation of the party. The party has very strong anti-EU and anti-USA sentiments, insists on "leaving NATO", and asks for "total foreign policy neutrality." Regarding minority rights, ATAKA depicts all characteristics of a xenophobic party. Siderov speaks about "Gypsy terror" and "new Turkish yoke" in almost all of his speeches about minority questions.²⁰⁷ The European Parliament, however, does not strongly and clearly condemns the party leaders for their intimidation and hate speeches during rallies.²⁰⁸ ATAKA positions itself

²⁰⁷ Yüksel Taşkın, "Europeanization and the extreme right in Bulgaria and Turkey: Unveiling Similarities between Ataka Party and Red Apple Coalition", *Southeastern Europe*, Vol. 35, No. 1, 2011, p. 95-119.

²⁰⁸ In one of the rare documents in the European Parliament, an MP raised the question on hate speeches of ATAKA party to be discussed in the Parliament. The page of the application is available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=WQ&reference=P-2008-0091&format=XML&language=EN> (accessed on: 17 July 2013). The European Commission, however, defines ATAKA as an "anti-Turkish" and "xenophobic party" in relevant documents. For example, see: *European Commission, Racial and Ethnic Minorities, Immigration and the Role of Trade Unions in Combating Discrimination and Xenophobia, in Encouraging Participation and*

against the MRF at the political spectrum and opposes all kinds of rights extended to Turks. Even the name of the party is illuminative in this regard. In one of his speeches, Siderov explains the meaning of ATAKA.²⁰⁹

“It comes from the Bulgarian attack on Edirne (Adrianople) on March 13, 1913, when the Bulgarian troops captured the most impregnable fortress of that time, the pride of the German military machine... This is when the Bulgarian soldier, fighting for the unification of his country, showed incredible heroism... This [attack] is the idea of the name because I believe that today we need such uplifting in defence of the Bulgarian nation.”

ATAKA’s antagonism of Turkish minority in the country resembles the Zhivkov’s efforts to homogenize the people into a single nation devoid of different ethnic and religious backgrounds. In that sense, ATAKA keeps the fears of sceptical Bulgarian people alive which impedes the healthy consolidation of multiculturalism and Europeanization of Bulgaria. The rise of ATAKA also emerges as an existential threat to Turkish minority. As Kanev states:

“Promoting minority rights is not easy. They are given very carefully because the majority of Bulgarian public does not accept this. In the last five years, emerging of some hate groups including political parties, such as ATAKA feeds ethnic hatred and discrimination in the public. So, Turks are exposed to discrimination along with other ethnic groups... The EU is not active regarding the process that came into existence in Bulgaria, after 2005 with the rise of ATAKA.”²¹⁰

in *Securing Social Inclusion and Citizenship*, RITU, Final Report, March 2006, p. 75-76, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/ritu-final-report_en.pdf (accessed on: 21 July 2013).

²⁰⁹ Eleonora Naxidou, “Nationalism versus Multiculturalism: The Minority Issue in Twenty-first Century Bulgaria”, *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 40, No. 1, 2012, p. 101.

²¹⁰ (Author’s interview with Krassimir Kanev, on 4 May 2010).

In summary, the intense Europeanization period in Bulgaria not only created conditions for deepening the rights of Turkish minority but also paved the way for the emergence of anti-European and anti-minority sentiments in the country. The irresponsible populism pursued by ATAKA leaders address the concerns of the people of a country, which passes through intense transformation in relatively short period of time. The rising unemployment in Bulgaria, the widespread infrastructure problems of the country, and the bumpy road of political and economic integration into European structures create new anxieties in Bulgarian society that provide a fertile ground to be exploited by the extremist political movements. This backlash, unsurprisingly, makes the political arena very difficult for Turkish minority to further their rights and freedoms.

4.3. Stagnation: 2007-2012

This part briefly deals with the state of minority rights in Bulgaria during post-membership process with special reference to the Turkish minority. In fact, post-accession period is illuminating in terms of testing different accounts of Europeanization literature. Interest-based approaches hypothesize to observe a slow-down in the phase of reform process because of the weakening transformative power of the EU.²¹¹ The literature suggests that the EU tends to lose its transformative power after a candidate country steps in the EU because the carrot-stick policy, which ties the membership reward to the reform capacity of

²¹¹ Ece Ozlem Atikcan, "European Union and Minorities: Different Paths of Europeanization?", *Journal of European Integration*, Vol. 32, No. 4, 2010, p. 375-392.

the candidate, tend to become dysfunctional.²¹² The changing power balance in favour of the member state may pave the way for the member state to decelerate the reform process, if the policy makers and public have not already internalized the European norms in the field in question. The persistence of Bulgaria's security-obsessed minority regime despite certain progress of the state of Turks provides evidence to the argument developed above.²¹³ For example in Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012, published by the U.S. Department of the State, reveal that "discrimination against members of the Romani and Turkish ethnic minorities" continues.²¹⁴

Since Bulgaria does not comply with the European *acquis* completely, a special mechanism was developed to assess Bulgaria's post-membership performance. The post-accession monitoring process, which is called as "cooperation and verification mechanism," set a series of benchmarks for Bulgaria (and Romania) to be regularly monitored by the European Commission. The process towards the post-accession monitoring ranges from the "postponements clause" (Treaty of Accession, Article 39) to the "specific

²¹² Tanja A. Börzel, "The Transformative Power of Europe Reloaded: The Limits of External Europeanization", *KFG Working Paper*, KFG Working Paper Series, No. 11, 2010.

²¹³ Another illuminating case is Greece. Greece became a member of the EU in 1981. However, no significant change has taken place over the 30 years regarding Greece's official approach to the minority groups in the country, especially towards approximately 120,000 Muslim Turks living in the country's Western Thrace region. See, *inter alia*, Didem Ekinçi, "Internalization of European Minority Norms: The Case of Greece in the European Union", Unpublished MA Thesis, the Institute of Economic and Social Sciences of Bilkent University, 2002.

²¹⁴ U.S. Department of the State, "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012", available at: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/204480.pdf> (accessed on: 15 June 2013).

safeguard clauses” (Treaty of Accession, Article 36-37-38). In September 2006, the European Commission recommended accession on 1st of January in 2007 in return for protecting its monitoring rights after accession. In the report, the Commission specifically highlighted four areas: judicial reform and fight against corruption, management of agricultural funds, food safety and aviation safety.²¹⁵ In the case of failure to comply with these requirements, alternative mechanisms like major sanctions including withdrawal of EU funding and unilateral suspension of cooperation with the other EU members on critical issues was determined.²¹⁶ The post-accession monitoring process, however, had no impact on Bulgaria’s minority rights regime. Not surprisingly, therefore, the state of Turkish minority in Bulgaria has not been improved in a substantial way. In fact, the Bulgarian Turks still asks for the same ethno-linguistic and socio-economic rights that they demand between 1999 and 2007. Furthermore, the rise of extreme nationalism in Bulgaria created new security concerns. For example, it is reported that after the establishment of ATAKA, more than 100 attacks took place against Muslim buildings in Bulgaria.²¹⁷ Amnesty International also condemned the

²¹⁵ European Commission, *Monitoring Report on the State Preparedness for EU Membership of Bulgaria and Romania*, 549 final, Brussels, 26 September 2006, section 3.3.

²¹⁶ For details of this sanction mechanism especially within the context of “fight against corruption”, see a newspaper piece available at: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/bulgaria-loses-220-euro-eu-funding/article-177496#> (accessed on: 22 October 2012).

²¹⁷ Birgül Demirtaş-Coşkun, “An Anatomy of Turkish-Bulgarian Relations (1990-2009): Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects”, in Mustafa Türkeş (ed.), *Turkish-Bulgarian Relations: Past and Present*, İstanbul: TASAM Publications, 2010, p. 123.

attacks in its 2012 report on Bulgaria.²¹⁸ The post-membership process, in this context, does refer to stagnation rather than deepening of the Europeanization of minority rights in Bulgaria. Nevertheless, some improvements in relation to Turkish minority's representation in Bulgarian political life have been achieved. For example, the MRF, the political party the majority of which is composed by the Turks, has successfully received the 14 per cent of the votes in July 2009 elections. Moreover, the party succeeded to have 3 out of 18 Bulgarian parliamentarians that represent Bulgaria in European Parliament in 2009.²¹⁹

4.4. A Critical Analysis: What Kind of Europeanization?

The evidence so far indicates that Europeanization of minority rights in Bulgaria, especially regarding the state of Turkish minority, does make partial progress apart from the reversal of the extremist policies pursued during the final years of the communist era. How can we interpret this situation within the context of Europeanization literature discussed in the first chapter of this thesis? One can argue that state degree and phases of Europeanization in minority rights in Bulgaria may primarily be explained by interest-based Europeanization accounts discussed in the first chapter, with reference to the key concept of “logic of consequences”. Logic of consequences refers to the rational actors' political

²¹⁸ Amnesty International, Bulgaria: Annual Report 2012, available at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/bulgaria/report-2012> (accessed on: 15 June 2013).

²¹⁹ İlhan Uzgel, “Balkanlarla İlişkiler”, in Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası, Cilt 3: 2001-2012*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2013, pp. 695-696.

actions derived from rational calculation to maximize their preferences.²²⁰ Consequently, the ultimate benefit expected to derive from an action determines the characteristics of the action itself. The changing policies of Bulgarian ruling elite toward Turkish minority in the first sub-period of Europeanization in Bulgaria, namely 1989-1999 era, may primarily be explained with reference to their changing interest functions of domestic actors. As discussed in part 4.1, the new ruling elite in Bulgaria after the collapse of communism made a strategic choice to integrate with the Western liberal order and embrace capitalist market economy. The dissociation of socialist block provided no opportunity but to liberalize the political and economic fundamentals of Bulgarian regime. On the other side of the coin, the country also came to the brink of civil conflict because of the rising alienation of the Turkish minority during Zhivkov regime. The deteriorating relations with Turkey, an active member of NATO and founding member of Council of Europe, due to the Turkish minority questions further forced the Bulgarian ruling elite to change their preferences. As the logic of consequences predict, the costs of deteriorated relations with Europe and Turkey was more than the benefits expected from challenging these actors. Therefore, they changed their attitudes towards Turkish minority, which contributed to a peaceful transformation.

One also needs to approach the issue from Turkish minority's point of view to better understand the process. The interest-based logic of consequences

²²⁰ Kjell Goldmann, *op. cit.*, 2005.

seems capable of explaining Turkish minority's policy behaviour during transition period. The Turkish minority in Bulgaria recognized right from the beginning that armed conflict is not in their interest to recover their rights. In the opposite scenario they would have lost the support of the international community in general and EU in particular. Furthermore, Turkey also supported a peaceful transformation in Bulgaria. Therefore, both the Bulgarian and Turkish political elite realized that their interests relied on non-violent interaction. One may question whether the transformation in Bulgaria between 1989 and 1999 may also be interpreted as a consequence of the internalization of European norms and values about minority rights. There are two main reasons to be sceptical about this argumentation. First, the EU's role in Bulgarian politics was not decisive in the early 1990s. Rather the EU acted as an indirect actor in terms of democratic consolidation in Bulgaria. Therefore, it would be an identification problem if one attributes much role to the EU than it had on Bulgarian politics. The peaceful transformation and recovery of the rights of Turkish minority was in fact the result of changing domestic power relations in Bulgaria. Second, independent from the EU's impact, one should underline that the EU's minority rights regulations were not very sophisticated in the early years of 1990s, which means that an EU-level regulation could not be the main motivation of Bulgarian political elites at that time. All these indicate that the changing position of Turkish minority in the 1989-1999 period may be explained by the interest-based logic of consequences, probably more than the logic of appropriateness.

The motivations of Europeanization of minority rights in Bulgaria in 1999-2007 (intense Europeanization) and in 2007-2012 (stagnation) also need to be analysed from conceptual framework developed in this study as well. The periods in question indicate that logic of consequences seem to have more explanatory capacity than logic of appropriateness. However, this does not mean that logic of appropriateness had no explanatory capacity in the Bulgarian context. In fact, both of these approaches, at different episodes, may be used as useful frameworks of analysis. From logic of consequences perspective's point of view, it is understandable for a candidate country to be more eager to launch major reforms on minority rights because the candidate country perceives it as part of a broader rationalist cost-benefit analysis. It makes necessary reforms (which are perceived as "costs") in return for membership (which is perceived as "benefits"). However, after becoming a member of the EU, the logic of consequences may wane because the hands of the member country untied so that it may slow down the reform process.²²¹ During Bulgaria's candidacy process (intense Europeanization), the regular progress reports have become the major benchmarks for the Bulgarian political elite to move towards EU membership. In this context, Bulgaria ratified the Framework Convention and other related documents on the minority rights issues. Yet, the implementation of these documents kept at minimum. The international organizations' reports regularly underlined the lack of implementation during the candidacy period in Bulgaria. For example, the Action Plan on the implementation of the Framework Programme of 6 October 2003

²²¹ Ece Özlem Atıkcın, *op. cit.*, 2010.

mentioned that the integration of minorities into Bulgarian community has not found a permanent solution.²²² The improvements in the rights of Turkish minority almost stalled after Bulgaria became a member of the EU in 2007.

*“After Bulgaria became a member of the EU, a period of stagnation occurred in terms of the extension and proper implementation of the rights of Turkish minority. The problems on education in Turkish language and religious affairs are a clear illustration of this trend.”*²²³

Turkish minority still struggles for education in their own language, broadcasting in the media, and freedom in their religious affairs. Yet, no substantial progress has been made on these issues after the membership. As predicted by logic of consequences, the minority rights issue dropped from the agenda since Bulgaria has become a member of the EU. Similar yet a more problematic trend is also visible in the integration of Roma minority into Bulgarian society.²²⁴ Roma, composing 4.7 per cent of the population according to official figures, which is claimed to be almost half of the actual numbers,²²⁵ composes the poorest and socially excluded minority group in Bulgaria. According to a World Bank survey Roma are ten times more likely to be poor

²²² National Council on Ethnic and Demographic Issues, “Framework Programme for Equal Integration of Roma in Bulgarian Society”, in *Bulletin of the National Council on Ethnic and Demographic Issues*, Sofia, 2003.

²²³ (Author’s interview with Prof. İsmail Cambazov, on 14 May 2010).

²²⁴ For a comparison on the EU’s approach to Roma and Turkish minorities in Bulgaria, see İnan Rüma, “Kalanlara Ne Oldu? Bulgaristan’da Azınlık Haklarının Gelişiminde AB Genişlemesinin Etkisi”, in Mehmet Hacısalıhoğlu and Neriman Ersoy Hacısalıhoğlu, (eds.), *89 Göçü, Bulgaristan’da 1984-89 Azınlık Politikaları ve Türkiye’ye Zorunlu Göç*, İstanbul: Balkar&Balmed, 2012, p. 343-372.

²²⁵ Bernd Rechel, “The ‘Bulgarian Ethnic Model’: Reality or Ideology”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 59, No. 7, 2007, p. 1204.

than ethnic Bulgarians²²⁶ and according to UNDP 65 per cent of the prisoners in Bulgaria in 2003 were Roma.²²⁷ During its candidacy period, Bulgaria adopted a comprehensive programme to integrate Roma minority in 1999 and developed National Action Plan for the “Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015”. Despite the ambitious rhetoric adopted in the initial phases, no major achievement had been realized. European Commission acknowledged, “For minorities the situation on the ground has not evolved much.”²²⁸

As an overall assessment, the Bulgarian policy-making elite has defined EU membership as a strategic goal and tried to transform their economic and political system accordingly. Yet, this goal did not lead to a full-fledged paradigmatic change in Bulgaria’s minority policies. Rather, the policy-making in this realm was kept at minimum and mainly cosmetic reforms were realized to open Bulgaria’s way toward full membership. Bulgarian governments seem to suffice with satisfying the “minimum standards” instead of developing a proactive strategy to alleviate the problems that disable Turkish minority’s participation in the political and economic life of the country along with other minorities, Pomaks and Roma.

One should also approach the issue from logic of appropriateness point of view. The performance of Bulgarian governments during 1999-2007 and the

²²⁶ World Bank, *Bulgaria: A Changing Poverty Profile, Poverty Assessment*, (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2002).

²²⁷ UNDP, *HIV/AIDS and the Roma in Central East Europe*, (New York: UNDP, 2003).

²²⁸ European Commission, *Third Report on Bulgaria*, European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, Strasbourg: ECRI, Council of Europe, 2004, p. 27.

Bulgarian public's attitudes towards Turkish minority suggest that internalization of European norms still remains incomplete. As discussed in the first chapter, the "logic of appropriateness", which is the key concept in norm-based Europeanization accounts, refers to the internalization of certain European norms, values, and preferences as the take-off point in Europeanization studies. In other words, this logic is in contrast with the rationalist "logic of consequences" that argue actors act in accordance to their strategic behaviour to optimize their given interests. In this context, the existing public surveys do not imply a cognitive shift of Bulgarians toward European norms regarding Turkish minority. On the contrary, evidence suggests that an overwhelming majority of Bulgarians perceive Turkish minority still a "threat" rather than appreciating multiculturalism, despite an intense Europeanization period between 1999 and 2007.

The public surveys conducted by Krasimir Kanev and his team are illuminating in this regard.²²⁹ Accordingly, 69 per cent of Bulgarian citizens perceive Turks as "religious fanatics" and 69 per cent think, "Turks have occupied too many positions in the government." The same ratios were 84 and 62 per cent, respectively, in 1992 survey. It refers to continuity in the cognitive paradigm of ethnic Bulgarians regarding Turkish minority, rather than normative shift toward Europeanization. The trend between 1997 and 2005 surveys, similarly, does not

²²⁹ Krasimir Kanev, "Muslim Minorities and the Democratisation Process in Bulgaria", in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Minority Issues in the Balkans and the EU*, Mehmet Hacisalihoğlu and Fuat Aksu (eds.), İstanbul: OBIV, 2007, p. 79-88.

refer to a positive change in the perception of Bulgarians toward Turkish minority in the country (see figure 1).

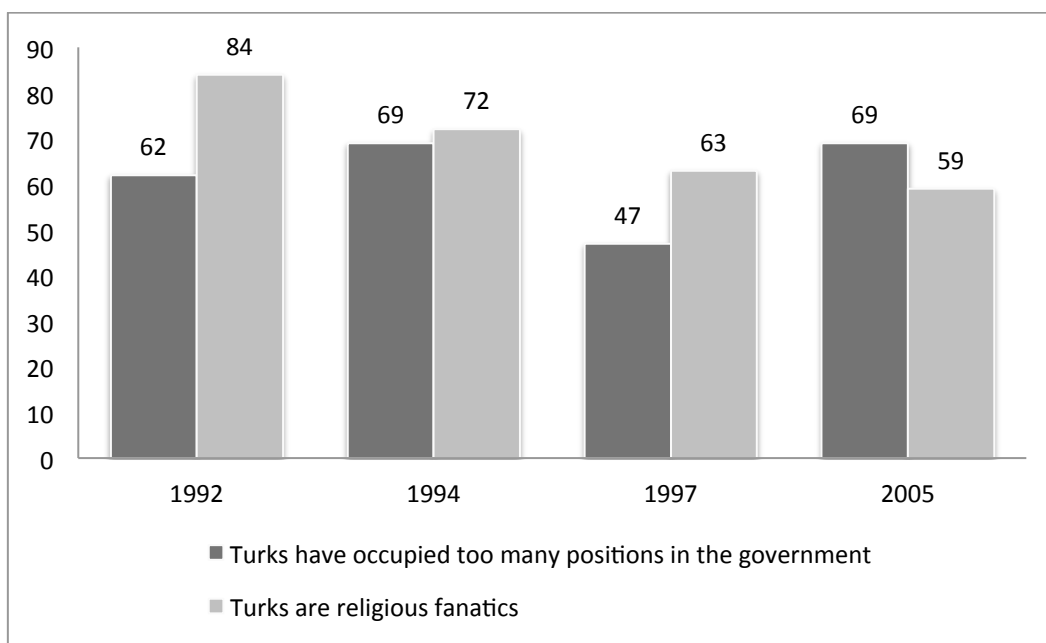


Figure 1. Negative Ethnic Prejudices towards the Turks²³⁰

The social relations between Turkish minority and ethnic Bulgarians also seem problematic. Bulgaria's Europeanization experience is troublesome in terms of establishing "unity in diversity" as the multiculturalist approaches of Europeanization hypothesize. The available data hint that the inter-communal relations between Bulgarian Turks and ethnic Bulgarians still remain preoccupied by historical prejudices and doubts. The rights that Turks gained during Europeanization process seem to disturb non-negligible amount of Bulgarians and contributed to the rise of a nationalist backlash as represented by the rise of

²³⁰ For the data source of the figure, see *ibid*. The figure is produced by the author.

xenophobic ATAKA party.²³¹ According to Kanev’s study, 38 per cent of Bulgarians think that “maintaining friendship with Turks” is a “bad thing.” It is striking that this ratio was almost 40 per cent in 1992. It demonstrates that the Bulgarian public’s attitudes toward Turks remain more or less the same over the last two decades, a period known as Europeanization in Bulgaria (see figure 2).

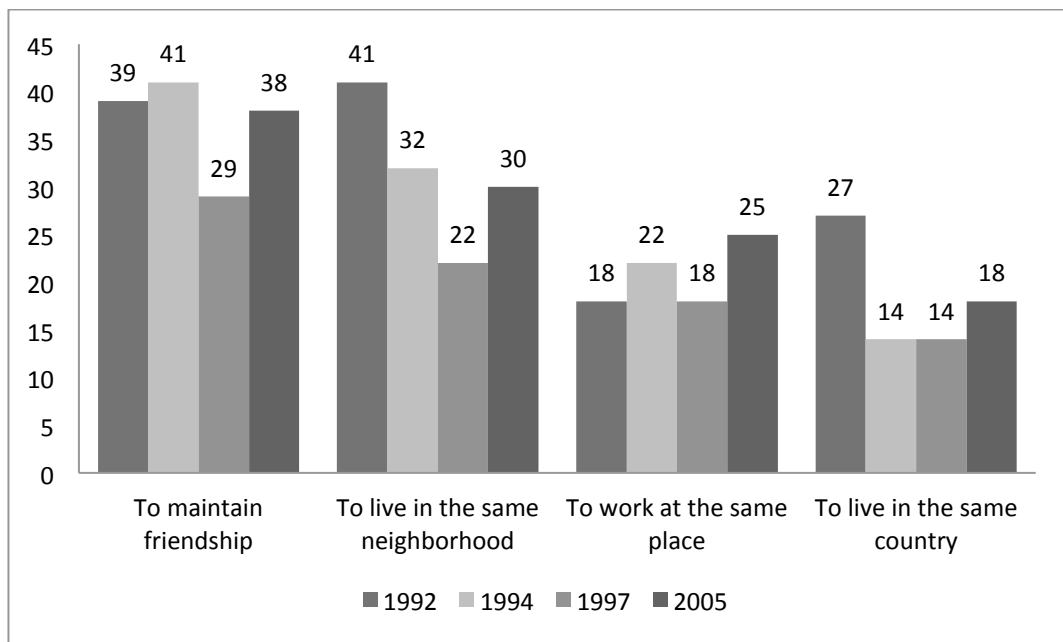


Figure 2. Attitudes to Social Distance towards the Turks²³²

Other available data indicate similar trends. In another survey in 1997, for example, 59 per cent of the participating ethnic Bulgarians were opposed to the rights of minorities to have their own parties and 33 per cent opposed to the right

²³¹ Yüksel Taşkın, “Europeanization and the extreme right in Bulgaria and Turkey: unveiling similarities between Ataka Party and Red Apple Coalition“, *Southeastern Europe*, Vol. 35, No. 1, 2011, p. 95-119.

²³² For the data source of the figure, see Kanev, *op.cit.*, 2007. The figure is produced by the author.

of minorities to have representatives at the Grand National Assembly.²³³ The results of the same public survey in 2005 do not indicate to a substantial change:

*29 per cent of ethnic Bulgarian respondents disagreed with minorities having representation in parliament: 76 per cent of ethnic Bulgarians said they would not vote for their preferred party if it nominated a qualified Roma candidate; 64 per cent would not vote for a party with Turkish candidates...*²³⁴

In summary, the empirical evidence and the situation on the ground suggest that the Europeanization of minority rights in Bulgaria between the dates 1999-2007 is rather limited and interest-based.²³⁵ The bottom-up cognitive reformulation of minority regime and the consolidation of a “pluralistic coexistence culture” in Bulgaria could not be materialized as the norm-based Europeanization accounts had foreseen. On the contrary, the Europeanization process in Bulgaria revitalized the anti-minority sentiments and added fuel to the nationalist fire, as it is the case in the triumphant rise of xenophobic ATAKA party.

²³³ Quoted from Rechel, *op. cit.*, 2007, p. 357-358.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ For a similar argument, see Nurcan Özgür-Baklacioğlu, “AB Üyesi Bulgaristan’da Süreklilik ve Değişim”, *Avrasya Dosyası*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 2008, p. 193-228.

CHAPTER 5:

CONCLUSION: THE LIMITS OF THE EUROPEANIZATION OF MINORITY RIGHTS IN BULGARIA

This thesis investigated the Europeanization of minority rights in Bulgaria with special reference to Turkish minority. The Turks constitute the largest minority group in the country and the long shadow of Zhivkov regime's policies towards Turks makes the Turkish minority important case for evaluating the Europeanization of minority rights in Bulgaria. It seems that both rationalist and constructivist accounts of Europeanization have the capacity to explain the dynamics of Europeanization of minority rights in general and the rights of Turkish minority in particular. However, the evidence suggests that rationalist accounts, namely "logic of consequences" has more explanatory capacity in comparison to "logic of appropriateness." This observation opens new avenues for further discussion: Why norm internalization, as hypothesized by the constructivist accounts, was not fully realized in the Bulgarian case?

This study, based on the interviews and scholarly literature, argues that there are at least three main reasons. First one is the cognitive trap that determines the basic paradigm in minority debates in contemporary Bulgaria. From the very establishment of MRF in 1990, the minority perception in Bulgaria has been shadowed by securitization concerns. At the beginning of 1990s, minorities, including the Turkish one, have been seen as a threat to "unity of the nation" in

Bulgaria and tried to keep them under control.²³⁶ The initial attempts to ban the MRF were a clear illustration of this situation. The politically contested and sensitive nature of the issue was even visible in the decision of the Supreme Court on April 21, 1992. The decision, according to many political analysts, was politically motivated because the voting preference of the judges was showing a very strong party affiliation.²³⁷ Of the 12 judges in the Supreme Court at the time, one was absent due to his illness, six were supporting the ban of MRF and five were against the petition. The judges who were known with their close affiliation with BSP, the party lobbied hard for the banning of the MRF, voted for the petition. On the other side of the coin, five judges who had close connections with the anti-communist UDF rejected the petition. Since an absolute majority was necessary to ban a party (i.e., seven of the Supreme Court judges) the petition on banning the MRF was rejected. Yet, it clearly demonstrated the politically divided and ideologically driven nature of minority issues in Bulgaria. A significant number of the Bulgarian policy-makers and citizens perceived the demands of MRF on the grounds of “national unity and security” rather than conceiving it as “human rights” issue.

On the other hand, mainly due to the cognitive trap shaped the course of public debates, the MRF ruling-elite has always tried to be “modest” in their

²³⁶ (Author’s interview with Prof. Dr. Cengiz Hakov, from Bulgarian Academy of Science, Institute for Balkan Studies, on 4 May 2010). (Author’s interview with Mehmet Dikme, ex-Mayor of Egridere District in Kardzhali, on 18 April 2010).

²³⁷ Romyana Kolarova, “Tacit Agreements in the Bulgarian Transition to Democracy: Minority Rights and Constitutionalism”, *The University of Chicago Law School Roundtable*, 1993, p. 23-51.

demands regarding the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. As one of the interviewees mentioned, MRF officials even did not pursue an intense lobby strategy for the recognition of Turks as “national minority.”²³⁸ Therefore, MRF officials have not used the European institutions like European Parliament, Council of Europe and European Commission, which are pointed as necessary platforms by the constructivist and institutionalist accounts of Europeanization, effectively to further the rights of Turkish minority in Bulgaria.²³⁹ The MRF representatives even hesitated to utter the Bulgarian state’s violations regarding the Framework Convention.²⁴⁰ The two-sided cognitive trap, in short, determined the shape of minority discussions in Bulgaria, which in turn significantly created mental and physical barriers before the Europeanization of minority rights in Bulgaria.

Second one is the lack of coherent EU norms on the definition and protection of minority rights in Europe. This thesis argues that it is not possible to reveal the full-dynamics of the lack of Europeanization in Bulgaria’s minority rights regime by just relying of domestic factors. The very lack of coherent norms on the issue at the European level also provide plenty of room for member states’ decision-makers to pay a lip-service at European platforms but keep them at the

²³⁸ (Author’s interview with Sezgin Mümin, on 18 May 2010).

²³⁹ This point is also acknowledged by the representatives of Turkish community in Bulgaria. (Author’s interview with Sevinç Deliahmed, one of the members of Turkish minority in Bulgaria, on 22 April 2010). (Author’s interview with Sezgin Mümin, one of the members of Turkish minority in Bulgaria and Chairman of Bulgarian Justice Federation, on 18 May 2010).

²⁴⁰ Kemal Eyüp states that “Turks in Bulgaria do not have strong civil society organizations. They just rely on MRF, as a political organization. Since they can not take the advantage of the civil society, they can not put pressure on the Bulgarian government to implement the requirements of the Framework Convention.” (Author’s interview with Kemal Eyüp, Chairman of Commission for Protection against Discrimination, Republic of Bulgaria on 12 May 2010).

declaratory level. Hughes, Sasse, and Gordon argue that EU suffers from “conditionality gap”²⁴¹ especially regarding the minority rights standards. There are two main problems associated with conditionality gap in the EU. First, the minority rights practices diverge from each other significantly among the member countries. As it is highlighted in the first part of the thesis, the current legal documents framing the minority rights standards in the EU are too general to provide a standard definition and implementation of the term. Despite the Framework Convention and other related documents, some member states, like Greece and France, even do not recognize the existence of minorities within their territories.²⁴² Second, minority rights concerns did not occupy a center-stage in the EU’s enlargement toward CEE countries including Bulgaria, which resulted in the overlook of the state of minorities in these countries. Particularly, the EU conditionality in this realm remained “declaratory.”²⁴³

The trend mentioned above is clearly decipherable in the dynamics of Bulgaria’s membership process. The literature suggests that geopolitical dynamics and other related reasons overshadowed the minority rights concerns. One of the basic motives of the EU’s enlargement is related to symbolic meaning. During the

²⁴¹ James Hughes, Gwendolyn Sasse, and Clarie Gordon, *Europeanization and Regionalization in the EU’s Enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe: The Myth of Conditionality*, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

²⁴² For the evolution of minority rights regime in Greece in a comparative perspective, see Ioannis Grigoriadis, “On the Europeanization of Minority Rights Protection: Comparing the Cases of Greece and Turkey”, *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2008, p. 23-41. For a comparison and significant differences in minority rights regime in France and Britain, see Eric Bleich, *Race Politics in Britain and France*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

²⁴³ Rechel, *op. cit.*, 2008, p. 182.

Eastern enlargement period, the EU frequently used the popular slogan of “returning to Europe.” This refers to the ideological base of Eastern enlargement including Bulgaria. As Sjursen quotes from Andriessen, “East and West Europe are [regarded] as two parts of the same entity.”²⁴⁴ The policies towards Eastern Europe -in particular towards Bulgaria- were designed to cover the tracks of Cold War division between Eastern and Western Europe. The end of Cold War, in this regard, provided a unique opportunity space for the unification of European continent and the EU utilized this opportunity by constantly underscoring the “Europeanness” of CEE countries.²⁴⁵ The second basic motivation of the EU’s enlargement towards Bulgaria seems to be related to geopolitical reasons. With the enlargement towards Bulgaria, the EU extended its territories up to the Black Sea shores. Besides, the EU strengthened its borders more firmly in the Balkans by plugging Bulgarian piece in the geopolitical puzzle.²⁴⁶

After the bloody civil wars experienced in the Balkans during 1990s, the stability of the region has become one of the most important geopolitical imperatives for the EU. In this context, Bulgaria is regarded as an integral part of the stability in the Balkans. In this regard, EU’s enlargement to Bulgaria can be considered as a consequence of the EU’s political economy priorities both in the

²⁴⁴ Helene Sjursen, *Questioning EU Enlargement: Europe in Search of Identity*, 2006, New York: Routledge.

²⁴⁵ Helene Sjursen, “Why Expand? The Question of Legitimacy and Justification in the EU’s Enlargement Policy”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 3, 2002, p. 491-513.

²⁴⁶ David Phinnemore, “From Negotiations to Accession: Lessons from the 2007 Enlargement”, *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 2009, p. 241.

Balkans and Black Sea regions. Mainly thanks to the similar imperative logic of regional integration after the Cold War, the Eastern European countries first became the members of the NATO and then they were included into the European sphere of influence as member states. As a matter of fact, the European policy makers also appreciated Bulgaria's important contributions to NATO forces during the Kosovo war.²⁴⁷

The third reason lies in the non-linear and stop-go nature of Europeanization of the minority rights in Bulgaria. Rather than being a smooth process, Europeanization of minority rights in Bulgaria created its own "others", namely ultra-nationalist far right political parties. ATAKA has emerged in this context, during Bulgaria's intense Europeanization period. In a rapidly changing domestic political economy environment, ATAKA successfully exploited the disillusioned segments of the society by addressing their economy, security, and identity related concerns. The rapid rise of ATAKA in 2005 elections and the consolidation of party's electoral base radicalized Bulgarian politics. Other centre-right parties also veered to extremist rhetoric not to lag behind in the emerging "catch all type of populism." Boyko Borisov, the leader of the biggest political party in Bulgaria, GERB, for example declared the aims and objectives of the so-called "National Revival Process" had been correct, however it had been

²⁴⁷ Dimitris Papadimitriou and Eli Gateva, "Between Enlargement-Led Europeanization and Balkan Exceptionalism: An Appraisal of Bulgaria's and Romania's Entry into the European Union", *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 2009, p. 161.

implemented in the wrong way.²⁴⁸ The rise of far right rhetoric in Bulgarian politics created the most devastated impacts probably on the minority groups because dominant discourse constantly stigmatizes minority groups and holds them responsible for the bad economic conditions and increasing crime rates. According to a recent survey, for example, 86 per cent of the participants characterize Roma minority as lazy and irresponsible, while 92 per cent ascribed criminal tendencies to them.²⁴⁹ The Turkish minority in Bulgaria also suffered from the rising extremist political environment. In October 2007, for example, ATAKA party candidate for mayor, Slavi Binev, even promised to prohibit the Muslims' public call to prayer if he were elected.²⁵⁰ The developments in the post-membership Bulgaria demonstrate that Europeanization triggered a new wave of ultra-nationalism especially against Turks and Roma that attracted large segments of society.

The worsening economic conditions also provided a fertile ground for euro-scepticism in Bulgaria similar to other EU member countries after 2008 economic crisis. Bulgaria is the poorest country in the EU with 46 per cent GDP per capita level of the EU average. The economy contracted 5.5 per cent in 2009 and unemployment soared to about 12.5 per cent.²⁵¹ It is assumed that due to bad economic conditions in Bulgaria around one million Bulgarians working in other

²⁴⁸ Naxidou, *op. cit.*, 2012, p. 98.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

²⁵⁰ "Nationalist Sofia Nominee Vows to Ban Muslim Prayer Calls", *Novinite*, October 10, 2007.

²⁵¹ World Bank, *Bulgaria: Household Welfare during the 2010 Recession and Recovery*, Report No. 63457-BG, January 2012.

EU countries, 600,000 of whom working in Spain.²⁵² The pension system of the country came close to collapse and even Prime Minister Boyko Borisov complains about “bad human capital” in the country. The deteriorating economic conditions after 2009 crisis and the EU’s incompetence in tackling with the crisis added fuel to the already blazing euro-sceptic fire in Bulgaria. Having combined with nationalist reflexes, the economic crisis also strengthened the anti-minority rhetoric in the country.

In conclusion, Europeanization of minority rights in Bulgaria has remained fragmented, restricted and limited. The findings of this study confirm other studies in the relevant literature in the sense that EU’s leverage on minority rights regime is rather limited and non-linear especially in comparison to other standardized policy areas. Similarly, member states are less willing to “internalize” the European norms on the issue and have a strong tendency to put emphasis on “the unique situation” of their nation, which further impedes European-level norm standardization and cross-country implementation.

²⁵² The Economist, *Balkan Economies: Mostly Miserable*, June 19th, 2012.

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INTERVIEWS

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Dikme, Mehmet, ex-Mayor of Eğridere District in Kardzhali, on 18 April 2010.

Eyüp, Kemal, Chairman of Commission for Protection against Discrimination, Republic of Bulgaria on 12 May 2010.

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Hakov, Cengiz, Bulgarian Academy of Science, Institute for Balkan Studies, on 4 May 2010.

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Kanev, Krassimir, Chairman of Bulgarian Helsinki Committe, on 4 May 2010.

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Mümin, Sezgin, one of the member of Turkish minority in Bulgaria and Chairman of Bulgarian Justice Federation, on 18 May 2010.

Ralchev, Plamen, a Bulgarian scholar, University of National and World Economy, on 12 May 2010.

Rıza, Ruşen, Vice-Director of MRF, on 26 May 2010.

Şimşir, Bilal, researcher and former Ambassador, on 15 September 2010.

Theodossiev, Nikola, researcher at American Research Center in Sofia, on 10 May 2010.

Tsvetanov, Tsvetan, Minister of Interior, on 28 May 2010.

Yalımov, İbrahim, Rector of Sofia High Institute of Islam, on 27 April 2010

Zhelev, Zhelyu, President of the Republic of Bulgaria, on 21 May 2010.

Zhelyazkova, Antonina, Chairperson of International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (IMIR), on 1 November 2012.

APPENDIX

TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enformatik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>

YAZARIN

Soyadı: VATANSEVER KUTLAY
Adı: MUZAFFER
Bölümü: ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce):

EUROPEANIZATION OF MINORITY RIGHTS IN BULGARIA: TURKS OF BULGARIA AS A CASE STUDY

TEZİN TÜRÜ: Yüksek Lisans Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
3. Tezimden bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: