



EUROPEAN
NETWORK
of POLICY
INCUBATORS

Aiming to provide an exhaustive account of the policy the research creates a literature framework of studies with relevance to the European Neighbourhood Policy and defines the policy-stalemate. It addresses a sequence of questions that define the context of togetherness between Bulgaria and the Eastern Partnership and then discusses the results given by the respondents. The testing mechanism in this case was a poll. Having created a profile of the country in terms of party politics, post-communistic administration and policy-making the research comes up with two model cases that reveal practices of implementing an agenda for a Council of EU Presidency. The subsequent analysis processes this input and proposes an agenda consisting of four topical issues. They have been prioritized according to the respondents' answers and exemplify existing trends between Bulgaria and the Eastern Partnership space. At its end the study presents a roadmap to the Bulgarian Council Presidency in 2018.

Can Bulgaria Help Overcome the Stalemate in the European Neighbourhood Policy?

*An Agenda for the Bulgarian Council of
EU Presidency.*

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Abstract

Aiming to provide an exhaustive account of the policy the research creates a literature framework of studies with relevance to the European Neighbourhood Policy and defines the policy-stalemate. It addresses a sequence of questions that define the context of togetherness between Bulgaria and the Eastern Partnership and then discusses the results given by the respondents. The testing mechanism in this case was a poll. Having created a profile of the country in terms of party politics, post-communistic administration and policy-making the research comes up with two model cases that reveal practices of implementing an agenda for a Council of EU Presidency. The subsequent analysis processes this input and proposes an agenda consisting of four topical issues. They have been prioritized according to the respondents' answers and exemplify existing trends between Bulgaria and the Eastern Partnership space. At its end the study presents a roadmap to the Bulgarian Council Presidency in 2018.

Mit dem Ziel eine exhaustive Darstellung bereitzustellen erschafft die Forschung einen Literaturrahmen von Studien mit Relevanz zu der Europäische Nachbarschaftspolitik und definiert

den Policy-Stillstand. Sie adressiert eine Reihenfolge von Fragen, die das Zusammensein zwischen Bulgarien und die Europäische Nachbarschafts definieren und dann diskutiert die Antworten der Befragten. Der Testmechanismus in dem Fall ist eine Umfragung. Nachdem sie ein Profil des Landes bezüglich der Parteipolitik, post-komunistische Verwaltungswesens und der Politikgestaltung erschafft hat, entwickelt die Forschung zwei Fallbeispiele, die Vorgehensweise zur Umsetzung einer Tagesordnung für die Rat der EU Presidentschaft aufdecken. Die nachfolgende Analyse verarbeitet die Eingaben and schlägt eine Tagesordnung vor, die aus vier Politikfeldern besteht. Diese sind nach der Antworten der Befragten prioritiert und veranschaulichen heutigen Trends zwischen Bulgarien und dem Raum der Östlichen Partnerschaft. Zum Schluss die Studie liegt einen Fahrplan zur Bulgarischen Ratspresidentschaft in 2018.

Keywords: Bulgaria, Eastern Partnership, Ukraine, Council of EU, Presidency

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Introduction

„Die Wende ist da, der Friede ist zum bestimmenden Faktor politischen Handels geworden. In Camp David haben die Kräfte der Vernunft und Der Menschlichkeit gesiegt. Die sie schwächen,

stehen auf verlorenem Posten. Die sie stärken, haben das Mandat der Geschichte, handeln im Auftrag der Zukunft.“

Stefan Aust – Der Baaden Meinhof Komplex

After the student protests in the early 90s that aimed to constitute a legitimate opposition in Bulgaria, it lost almost a decade that resulted in a revision and strengthening of the banking system, the currency and belated state-building. It changed its geopolitical course towards the EU and undertook many reforms, remaining at the bottom of EU integration. Its accession was premature and was marked by strong conditionality, which also could not nurture its institutional reform towards policy-making instead of making politics.

In 2013-2014 Bulgaria went through yet another catharsis. Disillusioned by the long list of pending reforms, the state capture and the political scandals, Bulgarians went on the streets to coup the government. However, it had other priorities – to spread political cadres in the administration, to initiate new energy projects and nominate its own candidates for high European posts. Throughout this turmoil a regional divide found its new axis in Ukraine, whose failure to sign the Association Agreement at the third Eastern Partnership Summit triggered similar protests, but on a larger scale.

The idea of this study is to provide an interconnection between these events and diffuse it into a possible agenda that should be pursued on EU-level. Bulgaria's similar instructional and political setting and exposure to the Black Sea could be a source for creating strong ties with the countries of the Eastern Partnership. By reviewing and coping with its own problems, Bulgaria might be able to contribute to the stalemate in the policy, channeling its own impetuses for reform into inputs for a the countries sharing similar concerns.

Research questions:

- ∞ Which are the theories of relevance that frame the European Neighbourhood Policy dynamics?
- ∞ Is there any literature that can explain the insufficient rule adoption in Bulgaria?
- ∞ What are the main issues Bulgaria is facing?
- ∞ Is there any connection between domestic issues and the problems in the European Neighbourhood Policy?
- ∞ What are the possible strategies for a country to become influential in the EU?
- ∞ Are there any cases of such countries and how did it happen?
- ∞ Can we learn from them and are there any alternatives?
- ∞ What should be done in the next MFF of the EU from the next stable government of Bulgaria?
- ∞ Is targeting the ENP a plausible idea and can the country contribute to the policy?

These questions will serve for guidance throughout this study which sets the main hypothesis:

Bulgaria can contribute to the overcoming of the stalemate in the European Neighbourhood Policy.

The sub-hypothesis is the following:

Bulgaria can solve some of its domestic issues by proactively ‘uploading them’ during the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2018.

Significance of the research:

The significance of the research is first of all as a contribution to the field of European Studies, where Bulgaria, as a new member state, has been addressed relatively seldom. Research usually focuses on its role in the eastern enlargement round, but has not attempted to create a study of the issues it is facing after this period. The novelty of the study consists of the attempt to marry a prospective focus of the agenda for the Presidency of the European Council in 2018 with some of these problems. It is thus seeking an answer whether in any way the country by solving its own problems in a post-communist reality, to which the Eastern Partnership members belong, can contribute to the problematic in the European Neighbourhood Policy. From a public policy perspective this study, albeit limited through subjectivity, might provide decision-makers with some ideas.

Literature Review

Instead of choosing a single international relations theory through the literature review, this study will intend to provide an interdisciplinary framework that premises analytical observations on the proposed hypothesis, which then would be positioned within that framework and complemented by a synthesis of factors that could influence the outcome of the hypothesis.

The review will focus successively on classical integration theories that provide the foundations for the emergence of former second pillar of policies within the EU, gives an overview of the international relations perspective that will help us explain recent developments and patterns, arches the study of Enlargement to the Neighbourhood and finally provides model cases of small member states who successfully implemented their agendas within the EU.

From Federalism to Preference Formulation

The federalist sentiments were the unarguably the founding vision of the European Union and have been ever since shaping the developments within it. Jean Monnet, the French political economist and diplomat had motives, moved by considerations of harnessing ages of enmity. By accommodating the German military industry and attempting to build “the first concrete foundation of a European federation” (Pinder, 1985, p. 42), as well as establishing a system of federal supranational institutions that will control its engine – the coal and steel production, he hoped to provide a drive for ever-lasting interdependence.¹ By reviewing formulations in his notorious Schuman Declaration, we can describe Schuman’s federalism as a continual (“step-by-step”), cumulative (“concrete achievements”), self-transforming process (“grow a wider and deeper community”). Inarguably these categorizations are still shaping the way the Union evolves, as desired attainments continue to be designed regularly, sought for and reviewed regularly.

However, it was namely this automated, teleological nature of the process that the Italian activist and political prisoner Altiero Spinelli² disapproved of. He shared the view that Monnet’s federalism lacked the “*sustaining dynamics*” to translate the functionalist shift from “*quantity to quality*” that was to turn the economic interdependence of the members states into a political union (Burgess, 1996, p. 4). Instead, he believed that these developments depend on the solidity of the

¹ These included the High Authority – the archetype of today’s EC, an European Court of Justice, Parliamentary Assembly and a Council of Ministers as constitutive parts of the European Coal and Steel Community . Other formats of these institutions were later devised for the European Economic Community and European Atomic Energy Community. The “duplicates” of the Council and the Commission were partially consolidated by the Merger Treaty (1965), while the Parliamentary Assembly and the Court in reality sat in different formats.

² Altiero Spinelli (1907-1986) was a proponent of the federal idea of Italian background. Born in Rome he was a member of the Italian Communist Party, the main opponent of Mussolini’s National Fascist Party. Due to his radical journalistic activities he spent 16 years in confinement, before resuming his activity as a definite critic of intergovernmental and functionalist attempts for integration. Throughout his political career in the European institutions he played a major role of rethinking their design, through the ‘Crocodile Club’ and the Draft Treaty Establishing the EU (1984), which was however not ratified. Interestingly he wrote his famous manifesto on cigarette papers.

institutional foundations – which was his main concern as president of the EP, trying to conjure a readjustment of the institutional imbalance in favour of the EP.

Spinelli realized that the “*absolute sovereignty of national states has given each of them the desire to dominate*” (Spinelli, 1944) and that solely the fusion of their interests was the only way to overcome this tendency. Entangled in supranational machinery, the states will no longer be able to conform to arms. The continuous assurance of peace maintained the zealous support for communitarization of different policy aspects. The imperative development of the common market, for example, was seen as a twin-pronged strategy aimed at building the strong market construction that will precede state-building. This higher degree of construction, categorized as constitutionalism (Burgess, 1996), however, did not find the necessary foundations. Later on, but already prior to the enactment of Union, it can be observed that Commission become a fervent guardian of a supranational construction, fighting for its vision that included the strengthening of typically federal features, such as subsidiarity, revision of decision-making imbalances and increase of community competence. Namely these would ultimately enable the federal-type of organization to create a common foreign and security policy, as well as defence (Burgess, 2000, pp. 195-203). Federalism is thus a quintessential foundation for our study, as it led the necessary developments needed to enable the blending of a Foreign Policy.

Another proponent of constitutionalization was Ernst Haas – one of the creators of neo-functionalism, whose ideas were later developed by Nye. He believed that it will result from the previous steps attempted in lower-level policies providing social welfare. This is the main notion behind “spill-over” – that enterprise in one policy would generate a functionalist cascade of similar phenomena in other areas, followed then by a technical one. Revising the academic scholarship

one can easily follow that indeed, the Neighbourhood Policy of the EU is a mixture of technicalities, immanent to the Enlargement policy of the European Union, encased in a Foreign Policy framework. More specifically, the policy can be characterized as being a “spill around” (Schmitter, 1970) as it has still not led to the creation of new institutions and had happened in a wider policy area in contradiction to “build-up” involving an institutional deepening that cannot be witnessed in our case. At most, it has led to a restructuring within the Commission – while initially staffed from DG Enlargement, gradually the policy was reinforced by the DG for External Relations (Emerson & Noutcheva, 2005).

To understand best the premises of federalism we need simply to look at the historical irrelevance, which it represented to some countries. In fact most of the times, when an European Federalist was setting the pace he did it on the long-term. The grounding fathers gave the spirit, Altiero Spinelli built the idea of a strong parliament and many of the Commission Heads were propagating the idea. However, the German-French motor of the integration has shown incompatibility between Federalism and further enlargement of the Union. On one hand, already in EU-12 German thinkers around the Kohl cabinet introduced the idea of “Europe of concentric circles” around a federal core that does need to hinder the “deepening” (Mertes & Prill:, 1989) and one the other later Sarkozy remarked that

You cannot make a single currency without economic convergence and economic integration. It's impossible. But on the contrary, one cannot plead for federalism and at the same time for the enlargement of Europe. It's impossible. There's a contradiction. (Charlemagne, 2011)

The political impetus has created a multi-speed Europe, revolving around the Enhanced Cooperation Procedure³ that makes it possible “ensure flexibility and accommodate asymmetry” (Fabbrini, 2012, p. 4) in EU’s exclusive competences. In the Foreign Policy Field it can be seen in the variable coalitions supporting dimensions of the European Neighbourhood Policy or approaches towards it.

Neo-functionalism also acclaimed the already existing trend discussed above – that the supranational institutions (mainly the Commission and the European Court of Justice), while engaging in a struggle to maintain policy transfers and augmentation of economic deregulation, would inevitably become political actors. Thus, although being able to account for the externalisation of trade enterprises, it could never explain why they were pointed towards certain geographical areas, where interests were not fully indisputable, or why multiplication of negative integration in the realms of trade took place. (Smith, 2004)

Even if, as described by a revisionary attempt of neo-functionalism by (Rosamond, 2006), the genuine teleological automaticity in neo-functionalism is dependent on background variables and can be accountable only for a range of policies, which is why to engage in testing on its validity for our study would be time-consuming and might not bring up any results. But importantly, neo-functionalists agreed to a large extent with the main critique towards federalism, raised by the functionalists themselves – that by generating a viewpoint that is explicitly state-theory based and that deals mostly divisions of power within an establishment it forgoes the “low politics”. To rephrase, that would be issues that appertain to the “welfare of citizens and economic growth” -

³ Introduced by Amsterdam treaty, currently under Art. 20 TEU it allows 9 member states to initiate further integration among themselves.

issues derived from the inability of nation states to provide essential services to their citizens” (Andreatta, 2011, p. 24).

The International Relations Perspective

But since classical integration theory has concentrated too much on ‘local’ western politics and was not able to explain the relations in international politics (Andreatta, 2011, p. 26). It is only the broader international relations perspective that can provide an utilizable account for explaining exogenous cause for integration and define the role of a state on the external border, which is inextricably interrelated with those outside the Union due to shared geographical polities such as the Black Sea or the wider Eastern European context. This viewpoint can also help us illustrate what are the impulses and drives behind the rhetoric, alias the decisions taken by certain countries. The analysis in this study will be curbed by reasoning derived from some of international relations’ leading mindsets.

The *Realism* (Dunne, Kurki, & Smith, 2013) theory stipulates that the state is dominant actor, acting as a coherent, unitary and rational unit; recognizes no authority above it, thus putting in a state of anarchy; for the state military considerations are predominant. Realism can thus be defined as hardly applicable to our study due to its second assumption on the unilateral dominance of the state. It could be applicable in a more general geopolitical framework of fighting for dominance on the trade, economical, identity and sea security hub between both continents. Still, considering the latest crisis response advancements towards the Ukrainian crisis, the growing interconnectedness and awareness of the international community, the overall anti-war sentiment on the continent and the fact that current mobilization of forces in Ukraine is deemed to protect only the integrity of its borders, while the insurgency in the East is intended only to enforce

instability in the region, exclusion of realism realms is an apparent choice. The rationale could be found in (Gowa, 1989)'s analysis of the bipolarity of international trade, which designates that such agreements have security externalities, or in other words could lead to security cooperation. The EU and its CSDP, however, are built on a 'balanced multipolarism', which albeit less effective, leads to the conclusion that the latter could serve the Member States to balance the unipolar warfare established by USA through welfare or 'cultivating close relations with Russia' (Hyde-Price, 2006, p. 224). Moreover, such closer economic cooperation is a limitation to the normative conceptualization of EU, which rather

"serves as an instrument of collective hegemony, shaping its external milieu through using power in a variety of forms: political partnership or ostracism; economic carrots and sticks; the promise of membership or the threat of exclusion. The EU acts as a 'civilizing power' only in the sense that it is used by its most powerful member states to impose their common values and norms on the post-communist East".⁴

The *Liberalism* Theory (Slaughter, 2011) further develops such assumptions and infers that the existence of actors positioned on a domain beyond the nation state as supranational, transnational or subnational; that a network of actors can tame the anarchy; that issues of economic nature can be of crucial importance and that war is not the sole instrument for exposure of influence. This notion has been evidently employed by the economic instrumentarium behind the European Common Foreign and Security Policy. The trade flows restructuring and disrupting economic relations has turned the geopolitical struggle over the Eastern Partnership pivotal region into liberal

⁴ Ibid. p.227

dogma. Strong and akin networks could be able to exert influence on the higher realms of politics, but only in a society founded on the very idea that such will act as a corrective.

Transactionalism, a sub-division of liberalism might give another answer. It appeared right after Jean Monnet's instating vision and indoctrinated the dynamics beyond the nation state in its different forms. Karl (Deutsch & al., 1957) merged the study of nationalism and the provision of a security equilibrium within a region with the binding of the states through a higher authority. He presented two types of security communities as a form of international integration - the amalgated, where institutional fusion into a larger unit took place and the pluralistic security communities "where integration occurs without institutional merger or the creation of supreme overarching authority". The emphasis fell on compatibility of values, which are to be shared, the mutual responsiveness to needs and the predictability of behaviour.

Since separatism is a major concern in the European Neighbourhood Policy the membership in an international organization or a 'sui generis' one such as EU is a road to congruity, albeit obstructed by a growing divide and massive intrusion into the corporeity of the partner countries. The creation of a secure polity by means of rapprochement is one of the aspirations of the policy, also vis-à-vis the enlargement necessities, but to dismount EU's pluralistic security community further to the east the obstacles of heterogeneity and counterclaims on behalf of Russia. Still it cannot remain unnoticed that transactions on behalf of elites, non-state actors and citizens through certain messages are delineating the possible borders of the security community. We can observe that the predictability factor remains contentious, as its disproportions in terms of expectations are evident – on one hand the European elite quite slumps from its actions being foreseeable, as well as due to instrumentalized constraints, whilst its counterpart's transactions superimpose clashing actions.

In comparison with other theories Liberalism adopts a more flexible approach while discussing the dualistic nature of foreign policy formulation and specifies that it is predominantly influenced by priorities stemming from the domestic arena because of re-election considerations, as well as the potential of domestic cleavages and uncertainty about domestic politics⁵ (Putnam, 1988). Moreover, main negotiators do not simply act in interest of the strongest societal groups, but might pursue preferences of their own even against societal pressure, as they have their own preferences. While a fusion of the negotiator's preferences is hardly possible, we will argue that indeed the domestic agenda is crucial and will provide the necessary inputs for a second-level one.

Constructivism focuses on social construction of reality, which is mainly defined by beliefs and ideological tenets, as military strength, trade independence or the formulation of domestic preferences are subjected to their social meanings (Wendt, 1999). In comparison to a traditional exogenous view on the behaviour, constructivist realize that objectivity about factors such as time and information constraints is needed, which transliterates into a subjective, endogenous explanations of actions. States are situated in a system of actors and their behaviour is defined by the shared perceptions they dwell in. They operate in accordance to a 'logic of appropriateness', intermediating their behaviour through social norms and conformity to institutional rules. The Enlargement Policy of the EU can be explained to a significant extent by this logic, as the countries 'wanted to conform to the values and identity of the international community', which is fortified by a rhetorical entrapment through support for reforms (Casier, 2008, p. 28)

Thus institutions can penetrate into foreign policies, fostering common platforms and leading to Europeanization as a reflex to a lack of alternatives (Andreatta, 2011). Furthermore policy

⁵ For example a perception of uncertainty on the outcomes might aid manipulation of public perceptions.

networks and epistemic communities⁶ can influence the decision-making and utilize a ‘logic of consequences’, according to which interest maximization and utilization play the most significant role in their actions. They assume a greater role for non-state actors in their formulation of state preferences and perceive them as ‘norm entrepreneurs’, who can influence the government’s actions through naming, shaming, lobbying, awareness-raising etc, as for international organizations constructivists also deem that seeking individual interests is possible (Slaughter, 2011).

When it comes specifically to the connection with European Studies (Moravcsik, 1999) waives out any possible contribution of the theory to European integration with a claim that constructivists are idiosyncratically unwilling to position themselves in the field out of fear of theoretical nonconformity. Nevertheless, constructivism continues to play a role, especially in the study of EU’ defense and security policies. In their critical discourse analysis and perceptions study (Kratochvil & Tulmets, 2010) employ another definition of constructivism, namely that the ‘basic behavioural mode of social actors is rule-following’ and that their ‘identities require compliance with internalized norms, irrespective of whether these norms bring these actors additional benefits or not’.

Described as the counterpart of constructivism *rationalism* assume the role of international organizations in the world order, but “do not accord international organizations the status of *purposive and autonomous actor*” (Sedelmeier F. S., 2002, p. 509). They believe that it can be improved by law-making and law order, which are the means that can reduce the danger of conflict.

⁶ “An epistemic community, viewed through a negotiation-analytic lens, can be interpreted as a distinctive de facto natural coalition of “believers” whose main interest lies not in the material sphere but, rather, in fostering the adoption of its policy project.” (Sebenius, 2009)

In the international relations context rationalism refers to the application of rational choice theory to various questions (Fearon & Wendt, 2002). In effect *“social actors try to maximize their self-interest and they rationally manipulate their environment to reach their ends”* (Kratochvil & Tulmets, 2010, p. 26). Through contemplations over the use of instruments we can reveal actors’ foreign policy goals. To understand whether an expanded law order can be sufficient to reach goals devised for neighbourhood realm, we must however first understand the formal expansion of EU’s normative borders.

The Constraints of the Enlargement⁷

The definition of Enlargement as *a “a process of gradual and formal horizontal institutionalization of organizational rules and norms”* (Sedelmeier F. S., 2002, p. 503) has been employed by a number of researchers of the policy. Norms appertain to the notion of full legalization (Kenneth W. Abbott, 2000, S. 405) that through the principle of *pacta sunt servanda* creates an obligatory regime that is straightforwardly defined and to be implemented by the member states. The definition can be translated into the notions of ‘deepening’ and ‘widening’. Deepening results in member states through ‘downloading’ the policy and law order of the EU as well as through Europeanization of party politics, administrative order and foreign policy; in the older member states through facing and overcoming challenges resulting from the widening of the polity.

The Enlargement is a multifold instrument, an ambitious attempt at democratization and leverage of the Europeanization process that follows it, such as party pluralism and establishment of a

cooperative culture in party politics that are aimed to “initiate the reversal, if not the total elimination, of the democratic deficits or illiberal traits that have traditionally troubled acceding countries” (Cohen, 2008) However, bottom-up effects on the European polity remain theoretically unversed (Faber, 2006).

The international relations perspective has accounted for a great deal of the choices of the integration community. To Moravcsik the “*exogenous increase in opportunities for cross-border trade and capital movements*” determined the degree of support for Enlargement (Moravcsik, 1998, p. 26). The mere proximity of neighbouring states means higher economic outputs, as well as “*opportunities for economic gains from trade and investment, for instance, by reducing the costs of transport and communication*” (Schimmelfennig F. , 2005, p. 50). By removing trade barriers static welfare gains take place, due to exploitation of the economies of scale and consequently higher competition. Moreover, incumbent member states can use the new member states to maintain profitability through the low-cost labour productivity in the new member states (Grabbe, 2001, p. 4)

But the adjacency of economic deterioration or political instability increases the exposure to other member states. Thus Enlargement has been a way to deal with the “*negative externalities of political and economic transformation*” (Sedelmeier F. S., 2002), as had been the case with the authoritative regimes in the southern⁸ or the transition towards market economy in the eastern rounds of the Enlargement. It will also “*force the Union to reconsider the institutions and decision making procedures in a way that makes the EU more flexible and better suited to meet future*

⁸ The impetuses behind enlargement rounds range from economical, such as access to the Mediterranean to the need for inclusivity as coup of Franco in Spain, the collapse of the military junta of Papandreou in Greece and the Carnation Revolution in Portugal.

challenges” (Keuschnigg, 1999). The binding of the new states means including them in a stable political community that can manage the deficiencies of state mismanagement. From a rationalist perspective institutions provide “*constraints and incentives, not reasons, for action; they alter cost/benefit calculations, not identities and interests*”, while from a constructivist one they “*shape actors’ identities and interests*”. (Sedelmeier F. S., 2002, p. 509)

To foster this aim the commission has adopted the use of conditionality, or subjecting the gradual opening of negotiation chapters to specific advancements and to direct policy-making by conferring rewards in exchange for compliance turning into an “increasingly attractive tool in the pragmatic political management of European Integration” (Sepos, 2010, p. 8). They are framed firstly by the primary law of the treaties and secondly by the Copenhagen criteria for accession, adopted in 1993 and consisting of political, economic and legislative requirements. Namely they constitute the attractiveness of the EU as a polity of stability and prosperity, democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights and wealth. Their externalization as founding principles creates a status quo in which EU aims to

“influence the world order towards its own preferred model of civil power, dialogue, respect for different interests within an interregional, pluralist framework built on democracy, social justice and equality, multilateralism and international law” (Hette & Söderbaum, 2005, S. 539).

The direct result of this has been the expansion of the area of prosperity and stability that makes the Enlargement one of the most successful policies of the EU. But often it comes at high costs for the applicants themselves, which is why it is important to draw on their demand side and the motivation of the applicants. In regimes already democratized or prone to democracy the incentives to conduct reforms beyond price liberalization or small scale privatization, the so-called

second round of costlier arrangements - large-scale privatization, enterprise restructuring and legal and administrative reforms - is higher (Mattli & Plümper, 2005). Beyond this link constructivism gives us a further explanation – that applicants have a strong desire to identify themselves and consequently be identifiable as bearers of liberal democratic values. From utility perspective the focus would rather be on the provision of financial assistance and technical expertise in view of creating economic growth and prosperity, as it creates trust in the business environment, predictable trade flows and finds expression in increased FDI flows. Preferences for widening thus depend largely on the perceived effects of welfare gains, stronger for countries-promoters of the ‘European project’, a condition shaped by the national context (Hobolt, 2014)

Enlargement is also a way to avoid opportunity costs of illegal immigration, social unrest, displacement, trafficking and human rights violations in the adjacency. It expands the formal external borders of the Union and creates technical and non-technical barriers to entry. However, in many cases this constitutes a first paradox, as visa regimes hinder formerly unrestricted mobility between countries, as is the case between Poland and Ukraine – the so-called Schengen paradox (Casier, 2008, p. 21).

However significant economic gains of Enlargement can be easily they can be achieved simply by providing access to the common market (Sjursen, 2002), guaranteeing that the benefits will still appear on both sides and safeguarding some of the expenses connected with enlargements, such as inclusion in the structural funds, fisheries or agriculture. Still, this leads to yet another paradox – the insider v. outsider one, which compels that outsiders undergo significant changes of integration, if they are to keep their economic activity with the growing number of member states

(Casier, 2008). Simply by surrounding the outsiders with members, EU has made it much costlier for them to remain outside.

Hitherto we understood that Enlargement is one profound policies shaping the dynamics within the EU, it has internalized abundant effects from the surroundings and cultivated various impetuses in the neighbourhood. But a significant link is missing – we cannot understand the effects without stepping on the very foundations they were derived from. Typically these are the classical European Studies, which have dominated the scientific discourse for certain periods of the history of the European Integration.

Preferences and Agenda-Setting

However, since the idea of this study is to come up with a certain proposal on how to influence the current stalemate in the European Neighbourhood Policy and as the nature of the European Union is such that technocracy drives political sentiments, it remains essential to come up with a win-set of policy fields.

Andrew (Moravcsik, 1993) pioneered the European Studies theory through an explanation of how the major developments in the integration took place, concentrating mainly on bargaining. In his later work, sauntering through the auspices of intergovernmentalism (Moravcsik, 1998) he argues that the relative power of Member States is shaped by their asymmetrical interdependence, while the outcomes can be measured by the relative weight of the position a state is supporting. He is also an exponent of agenda duality and defends the notion that states are playing a two-stage game, defending only those issues that are supported on the domestic scene, with their actions' foundations being on the auspices of re-election. While of utmost importance remains the size of

the win-set that can alter domestic and international preference, actors might employ different tactics that will redistribute outcomes. Still, as (Peter B. Evans, 1993, p. 25) notices

“perhaps the most radical method of altering domestic constraints (to ratification) is to implement a broad program of social or institutional reform”.

In view of achieving a desirable outcome alternating coalitions, as well as the readiness of each actor to concede in view of achieving his desirable outcome are to be considered. To this end Moravcsik proposes a three-stage sequencing of events— national preference⁹ formulation, interstate bargaining and institutional choice, all of which would be based on a rationalist and institutionalism perspective.

He gives four explanations for geopolitical preferences formations of which for the purpose of the study of higher employability remains the second one, combining realist and ideational elements - institutions enhance the commonality of interests, reduce the number of uncertain variables and structure the setting of negotiations. Building on these assumptions, (Keohane, 1984) characterizes institutions to imperfect markets, where interest conflicts exist due to externalities, leading to distribution of costs and benefits among actors.

Effective coordination and Pareto-optimal outcomes, however, are possible if a number of prerequisites are present – a legal framework authorized and confirmed by a governmental authority, availability of full information and zero transaction costs of cooperation. In his contemplations cooperation nears ‘adjustment to the actual or the expected preferences of states’ by one actor, while his policies are to be considered as facilitating the implementation of the

⁹ Defined as “Ordered and weighted set of values placed on future substantive outcomes”, (Moravcsik, 1998, p. 24)

respective partners' targets. Cooperation is thus a politicized harmony, which encompasses conflict¹⁰ as a compound of a irrational group of rational individuals – a state of affairs sensitive to the structural context that often sets decision constraints more important than the choice itself. From this array of thoughts we can extract that external conditions often result in a non-optimal distribution of prerogatives and benefits, resulting in maladjusted outcomes.

Institutionalized interplay between actors can readjust these external pressures on a voluntary, even if predefined set of preferences, structuring the interaction, bringing up mutuality of interests and providing a setting with its own rules. Institutions thus create a *'logic of appropriateness'* that guides the participating actors in their actions, however, also restraining their set of alternatives. While setting the grounds of normative institutionalism (March, 1994) defines this logic as relevant to the questions of recognition, identity and rules. Identities are a powerful tool, built socially, created contractually through compensations or brought up by means of evoking morality or in the case of ENP – the 'naming and shaming' tools. According to rational choice institutionalists, acting parties within an institutional polity have also a limited set of preferences, defined mostly by prediction through foresight and cost-benefit analysis, alleviated by the reduction of uncertainty and distribution of information by the institutionalized setting.

By transferring the microeconomic logic into inter-state relations, they often try to explain to what extent the interests of the principal, a member state, which delegates its competences to the agent (often the European Commission) are kept. Recent research concentrates on competence transfers in financial governance (Mügge, 2011), exposing a 'U-shaped relationship between degrees of delegation and the European presence on the global stage' (high or no delegation of authority result

¹⁰ Ibid. (p.54)

in a strong international stand, with a partial one debilitating their endowment to negotiate) or on foreign economic policies (Elsig, 2011), who provides an exhaustive account for such an authorization. It includes a stronger provision of expertise, a possible credibility gain, breakthrough in a reform deadlock, enhancement in collective decision making or tackling externalities (which are extensively discussed later in the chapter).

Specifically, in the realm of development they are connected with consistency of the position among member states, in competition – to ensure coherent enforcement of the policy and so forth. To assess the applicability of these factors in a similar principal-agent perspective within the European Neighbourhood Policy would certainly be an arduous undertaking, considering the various interests of member states within it. However, since we assume the extrapolation of these, it will be necessary that we distinguish between supporters, opponents and neutral states, as states represent a collective principal with often divergent opinions. Such a differentiation might help us draft possible schemes for cooperation with the proponents, whilst the exact reasons for delegation or non-delegation (usually ranging from asymmetry in information to insufficient execution of mandates) could potentially answer the question ‘how to approach them?’.

Nevertheless, factors with substantial effects on decisions might also be embedded in the past chronicles of event with relevance to today’s set of alternatives:

“Geopolitical interests of individual states must be traced to national values, historical analogies, and “lessons of history” distilled in the minds of leaders, political elites, and the mass public. Critical in such an explanation are historical attachments to former colonies, traditional relations with the superpowers and salient experiences in World War II”. (Hoffmann, 2000, p. 30)

For the analysis of post-national preferences formation he proposes two theories for interstate bargaining, in lieu with the dominant forces in the intra-institutional paradigm of EU – supranational and intergovernmental. To a significant extent they can be correlated to the two tracks of cooperation in the ENP – via messages sent out by the institutional trio to individual countries in the policy or for example via the negotiations in forums, such as the EuroNEST Assembly, a specific format of parliamentarianism comprising of members coming from the neighbours, the European Parliament and national assemblies. A similar analytical reasoning can be applied to the institutional order itself, which often tends to create patterns of behaviour, sequencing decisions in certain contexts, as proven by numerous historical institutionalists. Examples can be found in (Armstrong & Bulmer, 1998)’s account of the developments within the Single European Market, where historical intuitionism resulted in an, albeit disregarding different levels, inclusive approach that is capable of explaining seismic change, with diffuse effects on governance structures and a structural emphasis on the ‘interest-driven, elite-level politics’, but also strengthening their efficiency and highlighting its underpinned nature in terms of democracy (Bulmer, 2011). A geopolitical framework, sets out the importance of foreign and defense ministries, elite opinion, ruling parties and chief executives (Moravcsik, 1998, p. 28) as key actors in shaping policies.

Even though European Neighbourhood Policy was denied institutionalization¹¹, the degree of materialization of the policy can be defined as an operational structure (Chilosi, 2006), which creates beneficial effects for the neighbourhood. These include amongst others public goods in

¹¹ ‘Anything but institutions’ Romano Prodi

terms of norms and standards facilitating trade, net benefits of financial aid¹², as well as a ‘certain stake in the internal market’. Even if the author amounts the inclusion to a free trade area, rather than customs union, the nature of DCFTA still requires abolishment of tariffs¹³ and regulatory convergence in competition policy, state aid, property rights and energy policy (Aslund, 2013) will take place.

The European Neighbourhood Policy

“In the EU-Russia-Ukraine triangle the three sides must be as equal as possible”.

Frank-Walter Steinmeier, German Foreign Minister at the German-Russian Forum, 21.03.06

Having discussed extensively different approaches in the literature review that touch on effects we can observe in the European Neighbourhood Policy hereby we will present a different contextual connection of Bulgaria with it, followed by a discussion on the policy failures leading to the gaps between expectations and reality.

The Connection

“Bulgaria is returning politically to the family of European nations to which it has always belonged.” (Presidency, 2005) was an infamous citation voiced out by the member of the Royal Family Simeon Saxe-Coburg on the occasion of the signing of the Treaty for Accession to EU at the Neumünster Abbey in the then presiding Luxembourg. It has circulated widely in the Bulgarian an international media, bringing along different tunes. Among them were the blindfold credence

¹² 2007-13: 11,967 billion; 2014-2020:15.433 billion Euro

¹³ Albeit with a limited effect manufactures tariff amounts to 1.19% in EU and 2.45 in Ukraine, agriculture – 7.42% in EU and 6.41 in Ukraine

in the King's words, followed by the obliteration of his party NDSV¹⁴ and its recent reincarnation through being by the ex-EU minister M. Kuneva in the "Coalition for Bulgaria" run-up for the European Parliament elections¹⁵. Having noticed this trend, the leader of the "Bulgaria without censorship", proposed that the King should become the new¹⁶ EC Commissioner, because of his potential to turn into the new High Representative, whilst Poland pushed forward its foreign minister Radoslaw Sikorski candidature for the same post (EurActiv.com, 2014). Whether any of the two has the capacity to nurture new developments in the CFSP of the EU remains doubtful, due to its institutional constraints, the latter is somewhat more befitting by virtue of accumulated experience, as well as proven ambition.

Nevertheless, Simeon's words remain provocative both in reading and substance. Bulgaria has been characterized to a Russian trojan horse ever since its accession to EU, mainly due to its susceptibility to Russia's various attempts at energy expansion in EU. At its heights, they unfurled on three horizons – oil (Bourgas – Alexandroupolis pipeline), gas (South Stream) and nuclear (the power plant in Belene, which was to be powered by a Russian reactor) (Tscherneva, 2009). These all have had a resounding effect on the political discourse and constellations in the country and continue to play a grand role in the socialist party's plans. While energy security is a matter intertwined with strategic interests for diversification throughout Europe, it remains overlooked in Bulgaria that to present day is 93% dependent on Russian supplies (Noël, 2010). Not only has the

¹⁴ During the 2009 Parliamentary Elections the National Movement for Stability and Prosperity was supported barely by 127 340 voters, or 3,0% of the votes casted, thus remaining outside the new parliament, because of the 4,0% entry barrier.

¹⁵ Turnout of 18,935% of the votes casted or 424 037 votes.

¹⁶ <http://bit.ly/1o01M2Y>

strategic power play in the country reversed the echo of pronouncement of a European belonging, but it has exposed the enduring cleavage between Russophiles and Russophobes.

The ethno-historical lineaments of the country also reveal a strong kinship to the East. While often in historical textbooks the provenance of proto-Bulgarians, the ethnical predecessors of the modern nation is said to be in the Altai Mountains on the crossroad of contemporary Mongolia, China and Kazakhstan, the ethnical depiction of the nation has ever since been influenced by the rise of Russian Slavophilism and since 1954, when the first official History of Bulgaria was published, the Slavic ethnic have been starkly emphasized (Mihăilescu, 2008, p. 148). Others genealogists stress out the belonging to the Ugro-Finn, Turkic or Turanian (Detchev, 2011, p. 24), while when it comes to pure genetics the impact of the proto-Bulgarians on the indigenous Thracian and migrant Slavs has been overlooked (Karachanak, 2012, pp. 497-8). Thus, the most recent insights into the ethno-historical developments show that the Bulgarians have initially resettled themselves from the hills of Pamir and Hindu-Kush towards the Caucasus and found their first recognized settlement – Old Great Bulgaria (c. 630-35 a.D.) around the Azov Sea, from where Kuvrat sons, against his will, departed towards Volga, South-Eastern Europe and Italy.

Hence, one of the most controversial territorial shifts in contemporary times – the Soviet secession of the Crimea Peninsula had happened on avowedly former Bulgarian territories. This first expression of imperialism, post-Israeli annexation of Palestine in 1967, has grown out of magnitude and included many unexpected parties in the vortex of interests. Beyond the question of the legality, to which two articles of the UN Charter – Art. 1.2. which stipulates the maintenance of friendly, peaceful relations in respect of the right of self-determination; and Art. 2.4. which designates a restraint “from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political

independence” – are substantiating respectively the position of Russia and EU, backed up by its transatlantic proponent, other aspects of the crisis have been raised. Among them are the political philosophy one, which claims that “provinces might justify seceding if they are discriminated against” (Economist, 2014), the comparative historical perspective (with the Baltics, Tibet and Eritrea) demanding the “existence of a historical grievance over territory” (Brilmayer, 2014) or that of a constitutionally legitimized actions.

On one hand such will authorize Ukraine to act against its territorial breach, as Art. 73 of its Constitution univocally declares that such matters are to be decided on an all-Ukrainian referendum (thus rendering the Crimean one void), but on the other one the actions by interim government would be illegitimate, as Art. 111 of the Constitution postulates that only a $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Verkhovna Rada could impeach Yanukovich (resp. 337/449 votes, while only 328 were cast). Bulgaria adjudicated, after a long discussion among ruling parties and while omitting the sanctions side of the issue, that Ukrainian political and economic association with EU should continue, but that it should ensure the rights of minorities, among which are 300,000 Bulgarians (Globe, 2014).

Seemingly forgotten, the incessantly revolving twirls through the crisis began as early as November 2012, when the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement between EU and Ukraine was to be signed. An extensive negative integration plan, part of the broader Association Agreement, it aimed to remove as much as 98-99% of the customs duties between the two signatories. It expected a gradual normative adaptation to the European acquis on behalf of Ukraine, surrounded by demands by EU for release of Tymoshenko. However, the first part of these was often perceived solely as a part of a ceremonial exercise by the oligarchic elite in the Parliament, while the latter would have bolstered the opposition. Along intra-parliamentarian

disinterest there were other factors, such as closer ties of the President with Moscow and its Eurasian project, energy dependence and revival of Russia's pressure, which ultimately led to what could be defined as the ultimate point of failure of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

A policy under constant review, driven by the stagnating absorption capacity of the European Union, as well as, to a certain extent, the unclear enlargement prospects towards the east, the European Neighbourhood has largely been defined as unsuccessful (citations). Aimed at addressing the issues of instability, rising islamocentrism and consequently a danger of excessive immigrant influx towards the borders, its first model – the Barcelona Declaration for a Euromediterranean Partnership (November 1995) enshrined political, security and economic commitments among EU and 12 non-member states. With Spain and France taking the protagonistic role of marrying domestic interests with the euro-wide stability agenda, EU evolved into a normative exporter, democracy promoter and developer ultimately bumping a need for altering focus, scope and guiding principles (interventionism) and policy-mix (liberalism and developmentalism) (Philippart, 2003, pp. 205-212). On another note, prevailing liberalism thinking has cultivated an inimical EU-containment agitation among the MENA countries.

A retrospection given by (Zagorski, 2004) reveals that in the mid-90s the newly independent states beyond the enlargement demarcation line were far from prioritized by the EU. The efforts to ease their transformation through facilitating the penetration of the market dynamics into them, purging restraints to elevation of democratic standards and ensuring dominance of legality faced a backslide also as a result of a shifted focus towards peace building on the Balkans. Moreover, the EU expected that Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus would remain a cohesive group gravitating around Russia, as well be a source of 'soft security threats' in nuclear safety, organized crime,

drug trafficking and illegal immigration – issues where progress was scarce. Doubtlessly, security matters were high on the agenda, following up also the 2001 terrorist crackdown in the United States. Whilst inside the Union they created impetus for initiatives such as the European Arrest Warrant, concerns over the pending dangers on the new borders were visible, as we can see in the second security strategy document “A Secure Europe in a Better World”:

“Neighbours who are engaged in violent conflict, weak states where organised crime flourishes, dysfunctional societies or exploding population growth on its borders all pose problems for Europe.” (Consilium, 2003)

These challenges can easily be translated into a growing threat of criminal networks becoming part of EU, siding with failing regimes and leading to massive illegal immigration – prospects that directly concerned the provision of a secure area. However, simply mounting physical restrictions would have barely lessened their effect. The notion of good governance was perceived as a much more corresponding to the traditional value setting in the Union, but was effectively possible only in the East. To the South, where governmental structures are not that responsive, the formulation cooperation seemed to be more appropriate.

Thus, already prior to the “Big Bang” enlargement of 2004, different factors aroused concern about the immediate neighbourhood that was to be established. The idea can be traced back already to the Agenda 2000, where the emphasis on stability in it was already acknowledged, whilst the Strategy papers issued in 2001¹⁷ and 2002¹⁸ recognized the need of a “proximity policy”. This formulation was present in the Commission President Prodi’s speech “A Wider Europe - A

¹⁷ Making a Success of Enlargement

¹⁸ Towards the Enlargement Union

Proximity Policy as the key to stability”¹⁹. UK and Denmark have already come up with a separate “New Neighbours Initiative” meant to address the countries standing beneath the eastern external border of EU with a strategic focus on Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova (April 2002), which was elaborated by Poland in November the same year. However, due to the fact that the proponents of the already existing EuroMed strongly lobbied for further emphasis on the South, the final version of the communication by the Commission “Conclusions on Wider Europe” in March 2003, included both, further expanded in June 2004 with the Caucasus.



Figure 3. The Eastern Partnership (MFA, 2012)

¹⁹ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-02-619_en.htm

Overview and structure

The legal basis for the ENP can be found in Art. 8 of The Treaty of EU, which stipulates that “The Union shall develop a special relationship with neighbouring countries, aiming to establish an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness, founded on the values of the Union”, to which end it “may conclude specific agreements”. Its being situated in the common provisions section and not in the external actions section shows the significance of this relationship, based on the foundational values described in Art. 2 TEU, as well as a geographical scope wider than the perspective of the Enlargement policy.

The ENP is interpreted in a number of ways. While ENP is often viewed in terms of external governance or expanding the normative order of EU without formally altering borders (Lavenex, 2008), it is also a policy to ward off the risks of ‘negative spillover’ that comes with enlargement, such as immigration, organized crime, poverty etc (Joenniemi, 2014, p. 531).

Based on genuine partnership it remains ‘in the making’ leaving the ends open. In essence it is instigated by a desire to increase the area of security and prosperity, provides a setting for institutional learning and also increases the influence of the European Commission in the Foreign Policy domain, thus creating a win-win game. (Dangerfield, 2007, pp. 486-488) On the other hand, it relies completely on the accession logic, but instead does not opt for a degree of integration, enough for the countries not to feel ‘excluded’ and parrying their demands with positive ambiguity. Even if the root cause for that lies in a neo-realist distribution of spheres of influence that will hinder complete Europeanization, in effect the lack of membership in absolutist terms simply

creates ‘outsiders’²⁰. Perceptions vary also among parties involved in it. To Poland and Lithuania to include the ‘wider’ Eastern Europe would mean a revival of historical linkages and in essence is an embodiment of ethno-cultural ties. To Russia it means a threat to a revived grand-Russia aspiration and a further loss of the sphere of influence, cut off with the Eastern enlargement. To the countries within EaP itself it is a chance to join a club dominated by rationality rather than power aspirations.

As a policy within the domain of the Common Foreign and Security policy it serves the underlying aims of the European Union for creating a Free Trade Area, complemented by a state-building exercise. Even though its operation did not involve new institutions, this track provided for an institutions-centred approach. At the same time these very same entities are not the ones who send the strongest signals, as they remain dependent on the incumbent politicians. At the same time the strongest signals are sent from the people by opposing the existing dominance of Russia. To meet their needs the policy relies on the effects of socialization track existing on at least three levels – governmental learning through ‘Twinning’²¹, non-state actors’ interaction within the Civil Society Forum and the Erasmus Mundus educational, cultural and research exchanges. The Civil Society Forum has had already five editions²² and has been a substantial part of the reinforced EaP from

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ “Through the Twinning” program public officials from Member States are sent on spot to share their technical expertise, while the “TAIEX” program is further used to clarify the legal system of the EU.

²² First in Brussels on 16-17 November 2009, second in Berlin on 18-19 November 2010, third in Poznan on 28-30 November 2011, fourth in Stockholm on 29-30 November 2012, in Chisinau, Moldova on 4-5 October 2013, sixth one to take place 20-21 November in Georgia.

2011, where strengthened partnership with the civil society was meant to provide new inputs for the four thematic platforms²³ of EaP through five working groups.²⁴

The platforms constitute the so-called multilateral track of the policy that is advanced through a set of flagship initiatives among the participating states. They are the result of the German Presidency of the Council as well as the MFA meeting in Kiev that initiated the Black Sea Synergy in 2008. This practical, complementary initiative foresees convergence with the Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation, counting on Russia and Turkey's contributions and established parliamentary contacts between EP and the BSEC Assembly (EC, 2007). To EU this constellation provides great potential for dialogue and cooperation, which is why it has adopted an inclusive approach of interconnecting different policies. The aim is to construct a bridge between BSEC and the multilateral track of the ENP (Lippert, 2007, p. 13).

Among the critical components of the policy is the *“monitoring process based very much on the modalities of the accession ‘partnership’ with capability to ... encourage ‘competitive’ attitude”* (Dangerfield, 2007, p. 489). It is based on a irregular relationship built in the last two decades encompassing all the 16 neighbours founded on Association Agreements with the southern countries and Partnership and Cooperation Agreements with the Eastern Countries.

The legal base of these international agreements can be found in Art. 217 TFEU and Art. 218 TFEU, which establish a reciprocal regime of rights and obligations, common action and a special

²³ As follows: 1. Democracy, good governance and stability; 2. Economic integration and convergence with EU policies; 3. Energy security and 4. Contacts between people

²⁴ As follows: 1. Democracy, human rights, good governance and stability; 2. Economic integration and convergence with EU policies; 3. Environment, climate change and energy security; 4. Contacts between people; WG 5. Social & Labour Policies and Social Dialogue

procedure²⁵, while the base for partnership Agreements can be found in Art. 212 TFEU. Thus the latter falls under financial, technical and economic cooperation, can be complemented by actions from Member States and is subject to the ordinary legislative procedure. Both frameworks are guided by the principles of the EU’s foreign policy – “democracy, rule of law, universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the UN charter and international law”, outlined in Art. 21(1) TEU (Lisbon, 2009). Below there is an outline of the ENP state of play as of 2007²⁶.

ENP partner countries	Entry into force of contractual relations with EC	ENP Country Report	ENP Action Plan	Adoption by EU	Adoption by partner country
Algeria	AA – Sept 2005	--	--	--	--
Armenia	PCA – 1999	March 2005	Agreed autumn 2006	13.11.2006	14.11.2006
Azerbaijan	PCA – 1999	March 2005	Agreed autumn 2006	13.11.2006	14.11.2006

²⁵ The Council plays main role in the procedure, authorizing the opening of negotiations, adopting negotiating directives, signing the agreements and concluding them (Art. 218. (2) TFEU). It receives recommendations by the Commission or the High representative, nominates a negotiator, decides unanimously after gaining the consent of the EP. Thus in comparison with other CFSP agreements a majority in the EP or any MS can block the process.

²⁶ Taken from http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-06-1676_en.htm. Since then, on the 27 June 2014 Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine signed Association Agreements creating a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area and including political commitments. The latter were negotiated and signed for Ukraine on 21 March 2014. The agreements are not applicable for Crimea and will lead to the creation of an Association Council that will alleviate the work.

Belarus	--	--	--	--	--
Egypt	AA – Jun 2004	March 2005	Largely agreed autumn 2006	--	--
Georgia	PCA – 1999	March 2005	Agreed autumn 2006	13.11.2006	14.11.2006
Israel	AA - Jun 2000	May 2004	Agreed end 2004	21.02.2005	11.04.2005
Jordan	AA - May 2002	May 2004	Agreed end 2004	21.02.2005	11.01.2005 02.06.2005
Lebanon	AA - April 2006	March 2005	Agreed autumn 2006	17.10.2006	Pending
Libya	--	--	--	--	--
Moldova	PCA - Jul 1998	May 2004	Agreed end 2004	21.02.2005	22.02.2005
Morocco	AA - Mar 2000	May 2004	Agreed end 2004	21.02.2005	27.07.2005
Palestinian Authority	Interim AA - Jul 1997	May 2004	Agreed end 2004	21.02.2005	04.05.2005
Syria	--	--	--	--	--
Tunisia	AA – Mar 1998	May 2004	Agreed end 2004	21.02.2005	04.07.2005
Ukraine	PCA – Mar 1998	May 2004	Agreed end 2004	21.02.2005	21.02.2005

Figure 4. Agreements with the ENP Countries

* AA: Association Agreement

** PCA: Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

PCAs are negotiated jointly with the country in question and thus constitute a regime of ‘joint ownership. They are international binding instruments, resembling broader trade agreements and bear the characteristics of a skeleton agreement. In terms of institutions they create 1) Association or Cooperation Council, comprising of sectoral ministers that meet at least once per year and oversee the implementation 2) Cooperation Committee that supports the Council and apart from its members, has members of the EC 3) Joint Parliamentary Committees of MPs from the Member States and the participating states, which decides alone when to meet. Framed within three to five years, PCAs propose reform road maps that are predetermined by the ambitions, reform dynamics and the capacity, thus aligning the finality of the policy towards support of the reforms. (Herdina, 2009, p. 10). Their provisions are financially guaranteed through the ENP Instrument. In a sense “they have been more about security”, setting a drive to enlarge NATO in the East and combating “networks of organized crime, illegal immigration and even nuclear smuggling” (Smith M. , 2011, p. 815). In terms of scope the EU has chosen an expansionist approach of rule selection, which was followed by selective adoption and implementation (in Ukraine) (Langbein & Wolczyk, 2011). However, the PCA’s trade, investment and approximation sections comprise its vital elements that can attract foreign capital and modernize the ‘obsolescent infrastructure and technological standards’ (Zagorski, 2004). On the other hand association agreements are longer-term documents, constituting of political and economic commitments.

Issues and policy failures

By including countries from Russia to Morocco, EU “recycled” one of its most influential policies – the Enlargement, applying the same logic of conditional imposition of a set of norms, however without granting its primal accolade. So far, albeit with certain differentiation when it comes to

implementation of the adopted law, it has been the prospect of full membership that has triggered the political determination for pursuing necessitated reforms. Bereft if it, the logic of the ENP remains entrapped in a system of neo-liberal compensations that often carry short-term negative effects, which can be overcome, for example, by an upsurge of sheer trade or, in case of increased expectations for normative and political stability, to investment. However the purely economic rationale often brings reconsiderations of alternatives – membership prospects in a Eurasian duplicate with dubious values or encapsulating in a stringent, but untarnished society. Thus prospective partners are included in a single bi-polar policy that, with the help of “transplanting” the conditionality and differentiation principles, aims to consolidate contrasting challenges, values and ambitions.

The literature on the European Neighbourhood Policy has focus so far mostly on historical, descriptive accounts of how the policy was initiated, interpreting important documents and events, the role of the Enlargement, the European Union’s role as a normative, civilian or stabilizing (Missiroli, 2004) or security actor in the region or focusing on single issues within the countries. After a critical review of the structure of the policy, we would then advance the chapter into why there is a stalemate in the Neighbourhood Policy.

ENP is a prototypical example of structural foreign policy, of more than traditional diplomacy (Landaburu, 2006, p. 3), as it shapes the environment through socializing and stabilizing nearby countries; a differentiated policy that extends the Single European Market mechanics without other benefits or duties; EU-centric policy that reflects sole-handedly the norms and values of EU and aims their export and a dynamic policy (Casier, 2008, p. 24). It was meant to be built on the foundations of EU’s own credible integration process, particularly by the normative power of the

acquis (Landabaru, 2006), as it consisted of an “selective extension of the EU’s norms, rules and policies / opening of its institutional boundary” (Lavenex, 2011, p. 694)

In reality this principle led to significant distortions in the relationship with the EaP countries. Despite the fact that it is based on the principles of ‘differentiation’, that is intended to go further as a result of the ‘interdependence’ and the ‘joint ownership’ of values and interests, the ENP “seems to be driven by a desire for standardization and homogeneity and for asserting the EU’s hierarchical position” (Browning & Joenniemi, 2008). The policy has been doomed to this asymmetry ever since Russia denied participation in it (in 2003), as it became unclear whether the main goal is the “assimilation” of the outstanding partners or simply the creation of a strategic partnership (Kratochvil & Tulmets, 2010, p. 73). Had it been the first option, states would have remained in an inferior position, as they would have had to catch up on clear targets. The latter option concedes an equal relation, but this is also hardly the case as EU plays a dominant role by invoking norms, which are to be complied with. This has been a major drawback in the negotiations alongside normative approximation.

Due to the assumption of membership aims of the ENP countries, “*there was a consistent and cumulative effort to build institutional links and structured dialogues to provide an infrastructure of co-operation*”, led by considerations to modify the boundaries. The countries’ political, economic and administrative systems have been internalized, while private agents have internalized their networks across the formal boundaries of EU (Smith M. , 2011, p. 813). In effect, the geopolitical and geoeconomic efforts have blurred the confines of the communion and its measurement becomes troublesome. Within specific domains, where a three-level negotiation game is present due to strong interests of Member States

Due to strong interests in specific domains on behalf of Member States a three-level or multi level character of bargaining is present that impedes the horizontal and vertical coordination, as has been the case with EU's Foreign Policy with regards to Russia (Gänzle, 2008, p. 56). This is a result of not only economic, but also historical considerations, which create concentric circles of national interests that are projecting over the ENP.

In addition to that the ENP suffered largely from a lack of credibility. In the Enlargement the use of conditionality has been the main catalyst for reforms, which now has proven too weak. Sector-specific conditionality in interior and justice affairs had worked well, as it coupled with the visa question, but in issues such as democracy and human rights it did not, as negative conditionality was not implemented consistently (Langbein, 2013, S. 39). While the EU promoted extensive rule selection in the framework documents, it underscored the salience of domestic structures and led to alliances solely with the pro-reform groups within ministries. These were later faced by a strong domestic opposition, leading to a selective, piecemeal rule adoption and application (Langbein & Wolczyk, 2011). The state centered-approach, championed by the Twinning program, has led to an insufficient capacity-building of non-state actors. If they happen to be the addressees a lack of knowledge about the key players in these constellations and their preferences is present and the emphasis is on specific projects, rather than *acquis* approximation (Langbein, 2013, p. 44).

The Stalemate

With the recent focus of the “one size fits all” policy being increasingly premised on bilateralism, power asymmetries continue to be exposed, even if they were meant to tailor cooperation to the specific needs of the countries (Browning & Joenniemi, 2008, p. 41). While dispelling aspirations towards a formal accession to the EU the ENP could not provide the intrinsic impetus for pursuing

reforms. It has continuously counted on external factors for initiating advancements, constituting a major expectations gap in the EaP countries. Russia is the primal example of such a coercive force – the outright onslaught on Georgia in 2008 brought the first precedent of fast advancement of the policy and it took about 10 months for the second one to amplify and be streamlined. The outbreak of the pro-European protests caught off guard the European elite, whose empathy was constrained by a strict reading of the formal principles, as well as economic considerations.

The fragmentation of the national positions has been conditional on the “special relationship” with Russia, peculiar to the Elysee duo. Germany has been swaying between attempts not to ‘jeopardize a lucrative relationship’ (there are 6500 German companies operating in Russia) and outspoken public disapproval of human rights violations (Trenin, 2013). Business dialogue became redundant and was superseded by the growing need for a clear policy stance towards Ukraine. The counterpart of the integration engine France demonstrated preference of economic gain over ethics by training forces for the Mistral warship to be sold to Russia (Meichtry, 2014). In effect the ENP has turned into a litmus test for the ability of the European heads of state to demonstrate leadership in defending European values such as unity, solidarity and peace.

The lack of political will is furthermore coupled with a growing security challenge in the region. While Moscow justifies the stationing of troops and support of insurgency with the seizure of primordial territories by an illegitimate government the same logic has authorized Azerbaijan’s attempts to regain control over Nagorno-Karabakh from Armenia. Due to its heavy energy and security dependence on Russia the latter was compelled to retract from its integration path and refocus on the Customs Union. Being a mixture of subsidies and coercion, the Customs Union has actually led to a downturn of imports to Russia from the neighbours – from Azerbaijan by 1.4%,

from Kyrgyzstan by 33.4%, from Tajikistan by 24.2%, from Uzbekistan by 25.1% and from Ukraine by 10% - and at the same time Kazakhstan had to double its average tariff rate from 6.5% to 12.1% (Dreyer & Popescu, 2014). The prospects for participation of the countries are therefore hardly bright, as the Eurasian alternative diverts trade, rather than creating such.

To dismantle the Eurasian alternative EU should put to trial its capacity for coordination in foreign policy, military intervention, border security and political will, which will hardly be possible without further strengthening in its core along federal lines. These challenges constitute however only the broader picture. The signing of the Association Agreements with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine might be deemed an act of historical significance, by itself it is not a solution of the stalemate and instead its catalyst. For Ukraine it triggered the detrimental ‘butterfly effect’, which has been a result of aggrandizing the significance of European values (Samokhvalov, 2007, p. 35), whose revolutionary charge proved detrimental to the stability of the triangle. In championing Georgia it has been accompanied by a policy of zero tolerance that included also the prosecution of former president Saakashvili that raises worries over demoralization of the state (Pomerantsev, 2014, p. 14). In Moldova, the Association Agreement might have only strengthened the position of the political lead, which instead is devaluing the European integration of the country by pursuing solely its own personal interests (Soloviev, 2014, p. 18)

Bulgaria

From the outset of its transition efforts Bulgaria has been an illiberal democracy with an arduous pathway towards EU accession. In order to explain some of the irregularities in this chapter we would build on the profile of the country and its party system. Then two models will help explain

the reader, first of all what difficulties the Bulgarian policy-making faces, as well as how a prospective decision-making cycle should look like.

Profile of the country

In comparison with other transition economies, where decentralization, citizens participation in management (as in Poland and Hungary), provision of expertise and capital flows (Germany) or transfers of state assets to citizens (Czech Republic), Bulgaria followed closely USSR's concept of governing the economy and its structures. This explains why there has been a drastic collapse in budget revenues after the unexpected fall of the regime as no adjustment parameters were present. The decrease amounted to -22% of GDP, a number close only to Albania's (-19%) and exceeded solely by Turkmenistan (-29.30%) (Bogetic & Hillman, 1995). The lack of revenues in the national treasury was to be overcome through gradual restitution and privatization as in other of the described cases.

While after 1989 wage levels and economic growth were similar to the other post-soviet countries, it lacked the political will to cross out the communist past. The political elite remained in power and the revealing of the dossiers of the State Security agency has been a painstaking process up until 2009. Restructuring of metallurgy and other industries was not successful due to private debt, many enterprises were privatized at symbolic prices. The banking sector collapsed in 1997, followed by depreciation of the currency with 1000:1 in 1999, which melted private savings. Judiciary and police were ravaged by corruption and bore least public trust amongst other institutions, which was followed by the proliferation of security companies.

They used their dominant position in the state security order to nourish smuggler, drug trafficking, prostitution and counterfeiting channels and consequently took possession of enterprises, assets and land. Consequently a bond between local and state politicians and these groups emerged and often their interests were served by the political system. Prior to the accession to EU some power groups were hunted down and their ownership was transferred to the state, but distributed among incumbents and others related to them. Nepotism and favoritism in public procurement, abuse of land owned by the state were routine ways for personal gain and were subsequently followed deforestation and disproportionate unregulated building on the land.

Due to problems with the rule of law Bulgaria did not manage to enter the EU by 2004 and lost the chance to receive a proportion of the FDI from the member states which were moving their production sites. Subsequently the market of IT and services expanded and provided for some growth.

Political Parties and Cleavages

The reform deadlock in Bulgaria has been a result of unstable preferences of altering governmental constellations. After the fall of the USSR the Bulgarian socialists were the only ex-communist party to remain in power after 1999 (Balkan Insight, 2010), were soon overthrown by student-led protests and were replaced by an interim government. The failure to constitute a stable government led to the assembling of a caretaker government, after which a certain typology of voter patterns can be followed. First of all, there is an interchangeability of preferences that can be followed, as with the exception of NDSV, the party of the King in exile that ruled between 2001 and 2005, there has always been a ‘swapping’ of the direction where subsequent governments could be

positioned on the political spectrum that can be seen for example in the historical overview of the cabinets in (Ramet, 2010, p. 410).

Secondly, the disenchantment with politics is a strong feature of the political system, which can be attributed to the lack of fulfillment of pre-electoral promises. The validity of this argument is so compelling, that pre-electoral platforms barely correspond to the traditional values, which parties share, while corrective initiatives during the term of office can even challenge political observations. An example for this is the adoption of the flat tax rate in 2008 by the socialist government that is a result of advocacy pressure from neoliberal think tanks (Institute for Market Economics) and whose reasoning, can be found in the very idea of justice in equality, which is however decayed by the low level that was decided on (10%). To substantiate this claim one can simply turn to voter turnout statistics, which show that the latter has been steadily declining, resulting in a loss of more than one third during the last elections in 2013. Examining the statistics from (IDEA, 2014), we can see that since 1991, when 5,7 million voters accounted for almost 85% in the last elections 3,6 million citizens accounted for 60% of the votes. It is not surprising then that since the turnout is approaching the illegitimacy margin of 50% there is currently a debate on the introduction of compulsory voting in the country.

On the first place comes the lack of long term political vision, which is fueled by the interchangeability of parties. Not a single time there has been a consecutive winning of terms by the same party throughout the modern history of the country. Parties usually address temporary necessities and rarely confront issues with policy-oriented solutions. Their pre-elections programs play hardly any role in the mobilization of voters and are not constructed according to the

belonging of the party to the political spectrum. Instead formulations can be described as broad, grandeur and impossible to assess.

This is one of the main reasons why the political system distinguishes itself with interchangeability of alternatives. More often than not there is a drastic downturn in a party's support after the (preliminary) completion of its term (see NDSV, BSP and SDS). In the case of SDS it led for example to the decomposition of the party to small fractions, with the interplay among them focusing on boulevard accusations and attempts at discrediting. That has led to the destruction of the 'authentic' right, whose alternative appeared after the accession to the European Union. The Europeanization here had the effect of creating a need for a major player that will position itself as a leader in the Christian-democratic domain, the embodiment of which was GERB. A party led by captivating personality epitomizing simplicity it consolidated the voting base, baffled by the inability of the Tsarist party NDSV to sustain administrative stability and comply with its own promises. After numerous attempts for reunification of the right as a result of GERB's government, in 2013 and 2014 the right wing projects have mushroomed, of which the Reformist bloc has succeeded in its reemergence.

On the other side of the spectrum, the traditional striking out of the communist party and the reincarnation of some of the ideals in the left political spectrum did not happen in Bulgaria. Instead, as confirmed by many authors the transformation was incomplete and consisted of a mere alteration of the name and not of party structures or elite. In comparison to other left-wing or social-democratic parties there were hardly any redistributive undertakings or attempts at increasing social welfare. Instead its main tenets can be depicted as energy endeavours, creating debt and destabilizing public administration through appointment streaks. Its progressive and

ceaseless movement towards right actions (for example the adoption of a 10% flat tax rate) led to the creation of the Bulgarian leftists in 2009. There had been two massive energy projects supported by BSP – building a second nuclear reactor near the city of Belene, as well as the Black Sea gas pipeline that will divert deliveries of gas via Ukraine – South Stream. While the first undertaking reached a halt due to the stress tests following the Fukushima disaster, the second one has abundant implications in the country and the region, which are to be explained later. They can be viewed as an attempt to reinvigorate the energy independence of the country after the closure of four of the reactors of the Kozloduy nuclear power plant.

There other antipode based on ethnicity in the country is between the so called ‘Turkish Party’ DPS, which acts as a traditional coalition partner and the extreme right ‘ATAKA’, which has evolved from an aggravating xenophobic party to a coalition party of the ethnic minorities and a pro-russian representative of EU skepticism. This development has gradually led to its deprecation. Along the mentioned divide there are a number of other small ethnic parties alongside the Macedonian question, as well as the entirely populist movement of ‘Bulgaria with Censorship’. Coming back to DPS, it played a major role in the credibility loss of the 2013-2014 coalition government with ATAKA and BSP by appointing the media mogul Delyan Peevski as chief of the National Agency for State Security. Later on, another scandal was about to erupt due to his inclusion in the party lists for the European elections, from which he receded. The latest developments have been connected with the power play between him and Tsvetan Vasilev, an owner of a bank where state assets are concentrated and multitude of companies. The perceptions built by the media led to an avalanche of liquidity withdrawals and consequently the insolvency of the financial intermediary.

Therefore we can observe two big cleavages alongside the left-right opposition and an ethnical cleavage that is respectively for or against the inclusion of minorities in the public life, provision of equal opportunities for them and respectfully treating their needs. While the traditional interpretation of the first one provides no significant clues on how to improve the governance capacity, its reinforcement by a geopolitical dichotomy certainly prevails in our analysis. Numerous media, as well as the German intelligence²⁷ reveal its marriage with Russian interest, among which is the destabilization of the country, which could enable an easier assimilation of important ports, land and other state property; disrupting the partnership with the European Union through funds embezzlement or simply their suspension and boosting anti-EU sentiments. Therefore its counterpart, albeit not devoid of critique, could be considered a better alternative, as it strictly follows a pro-European path.

In the aftermath of the year-long protests among sociological agencies there is a notion that GERB is going to win the next elections and form the next parliamentary majority. It is therefore meaningful to go through its pre-election program and see whether any points of relevance with our topic can be found. In the foreign policy sub-section of its political program (GERB, 2013) apart from strengthening euro-atlantic ties we can see that a priority is the increase of influence in the Black Sea region and Northern Africa, strengthening economic ties and presenting them within the EU arrangements, as well as a successful preparation for the presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2018, with the main efforts to be made within the next four years.

²⁷ Deutsche Welle

Post-communist policy-making

In order to explain the underlying dynamics of the current situation in Bulgaria it is due to create a construct of the universal values, dependencies, interactions and sentiments that have created the need for a transition, which can be defined as the process of changing from one state or condition to another (Oxford Dictionary). Since we would be examining mostly the perspective for administratively registering, creating and evaluating certain policy aspects of the post-transition reality, then the institutional dynamics and patterns of decision-making in a socialist state might invigorate our analysis of the preconditions necessary for overcoming the status quo. Here we will consult the ideal models of politburocracy and policy-making created by (Karamfilova, 2012, pp. 106-141), based mostly on (Howlett, Ramesh, & Perl, 2009, pp. 103-181):

1. **Ideal model of political burocracy.** The ruling communist party sets the tasks of and controls the principles governing the socialistic society. Resources are targeted towards weak economic units or large-scale projects, without the distribution being subject of any control. Negotiation about economic undertakings finds its expression in asking solely for a bigger “piece of the pie”. All production capacities are property of the state. Society is subject of politics. Ministries are part of the executive power, only an instrument of politics, which is why they are disconnected from the addressees of the policies. The state has a monopoly over public interest and the individual is subject to it. Policies thus have no public character, as they are not directed to the citizens. The communist party makes all cadre appointments and oversees the activity of the civil servants. Personal connections, friendship and loyalty play dominant role. The state administration is voiceless and serves the interests of the political power. Orders are the major method for control, they stand

above legal order. Responsibility simply does not exist and allows for inactivity as best strategy. There is enmity between units and secrecy of their activity. The persevering resistance against reforms is a result of the lack of authentic civil sector that can take the role of regulator and mediator between private and public interest.

2. **Ideal model of institutional capacity for policy-making.** Allows an investigation of the roles of all actors and institutions involved in the process. Includes technical, procedural, human, financial resources.

a. *Agenda-setting.* Consists of limiting the range of questions that need to be addressed. Inclusion solely of social problems, existence of guarantee for their prioritization. They emanate from the wide public participation in the following stages.

b. *Policy Formulation.* Due adequacy, acceptability and rationality of the alternatives, bound by rules ensuring their relevance to the problem. Public content of the policy, normatively ensured by the public discussion of the alternatives. Use of professional methods for policy analysis and guaranteed use of qualitative information (e.g. exhaustive, analytical, impartial). Use of methodology defining the roles of participants (different for the political subject and the administration) and the steps to be undertaken. Creation of a vision for socio-economic development by the political subject and supply of instruments by the administration. Creation of an administrative structure to play the central role. Elaboration of alternatives as prerequisites for a rational choice by the strategic planning unit or an external contractor, if it has proven expertise. Impact assessment

of the alternatives and outlining the presumed addresses of it. Discussion of the strategic document with the involved administrative structures to create policy ownership. Implementation of public consultations of the alternatives to legitimize the choice. Outlining the agreed aims in a governance document and the proposed actions in a program. Use of indicators for measuring effectiveness and efficacy. Outlining of a plan for action, while ensuring the uniformity of all the documents.

- c. *Decision-Making.* Small number of actors; short, simple and transparent procedure; maximum clarity of the alternatives and the matter to the actors; exhaustive information and lack of time constraints.
- d. *Policy Implementation.* Clearly defined competencies in view of implementation, continuous and subsequent control, existence of sanctioning mechanism.
- e. *Policy Evaluation.* Importance of measurable results. Impartiality of evaluating structures, periodicity of the monitoring, transparency of the activity, clear addressee of the uniform evaluations, conformity with procedural rules.

The mere fact that many of the described circumstances in the first model are still existent in Bulgaria speaks of the transitional nature of the characteristics pertinent to the bureaucratic model of socialistic decision-making. While the statements connected with the role of the society have gradually lost their significance, other allegations remain true.

The political parties in Bulgaria have conducted numerous attempts to control the present society through restrictions of the information available to the wider public, a situation possible through the media ownership concentration in D. Peevski, affiliate of DPS. The last stable government of GERB was exemplary in its infrastructure projects, where the whole potential for project

implementation was targeted. However, they remind of inconsiderate distribution of human and financial resources, as the public attention was drawn to a number of projects such as the metro in the capital or the completion of the first trans-country highway, which lacked adjacent infrastructure and their effect isolated from the surrounding urban infrastructure. With the failure of the first Bulgarian Commissioner Rumyana Jeleva during the public hearings in front of the EP it has become increasingly evident that new faces intertwined with politics continue to emerge, while at the same time administrative structures continue to be overwhelmingly subjected to political appointments. A rather standard practice is swiping whole departments of crucial significance such as those controlling EU funds, hampering thus the continuity in planning and the capacity building in administrations. As mentioned already in the previous section, political programs and respectively created policies lack a social dimension and address only intermediate or immediate problems, not accounting for strategic challenges or reform needs.

While targeting all these issues would be an undertaking of striking volumes, it seems appropriate for this study to concentrate therefore solely on the first stage of the policy-making model, namely agenda-setting. It would be impossible for a single person to create alternatives for policies and to assess them or to simulate the decision making. This, as well as other models for policy-making could well account for the necessary steps to be undertaken. In view of our hypothesis and research questions, it would be therefore needed to limit the alternatives that can be included on the agenda. As ultimately, we would aim for fusion effects in this endeavour, the chosen issues must be of national significance, but subjected to effects stemming from the adjacent neighbourhood. As pointed out in the literature review, this would be the only option for political survival.

Options for Influencing

However, for that to happen we might need a range of strategies for ‘uploading’ domestic preferences, which, as mentioned in the previous chapter, was not discussed in the academic scholarship concerning the Enlargement policy. Since currently there is a significant switch of attention towards security issues in the Eastern Partnership we might need to raise that issue first. The institutional responses to a challenge in the environment would create the predictability that is required for the creation of a security community. This rational choice perspective recognizes also the potential of perseverant networks within a consideration of “creating legitimacy for decisions, or for gathering the expertise available” (Peters G. , 2011, pp. 83-88), which are later to be used for the creation of suitable, robust innovative and inculpable decisions.

These are formulated mostly by radically new ideas and manners of thinking, aimed by epistemic communities of experts and distributed by advocacy coalitions, as had been the case with the creation of the Common Security and Defense Policy, especially for proprietors such as Germany, which “positively bristles with foreign and security policy think-tanks, institutes, experts and commentators whose links to government are close and permanent” (Howorth, 2004, p. 219). The effectuation of the discourse transactions or the externalization of ideas happens through powerful actors or due to economic calculations (Hass, 1976, p. 173), or both high and low politics. The fostering of capacity for policy analysis both inside strategic planning units of the national administration and in non-state actors remains one of the quintessential foundations for structuring, correlating and advancing an imperative issue.

In the Bulgarian realm there are two factors hindering the development of the scientific sector – its fragmentation and the lack of financial resources. Among the sectoral ministries only four have

special research units²⁸ – the system is fragmented, creates conditions for concentration of resources and duplication of expenditures; division among the units according to effectiveness is lacking and there is absence of (new) public management according to European standards. When it comes to non-state actors even though there is a rise in their activity, think-tanks account only for 1% of the public expenditure for science (as of 2007) (MON, 2008).

It is due that not only coordination, evaluation and prioritization take place, but also that the created resources create fusion with the strategic planning of the public administration. The integration of policy subsystems or the actors who have similar interests in the governmental policy-making area is necessary, as well as their grouping into advocacy coalitions, sharing a set of values, assumptions and problem perceptions (Rozbicka, 2013, pp. 839-840). Important factors due to the institutional and issue complexity of EU would be their internationalization and the overcoming of an ad-hoc regime. On the lower levels negotiators of these aims should acquire common views on problems, as this “should predispose them to a problem-solving approach” (Mateo, 2010, p. 681).

Even though the next Multiannual Financial Framework of the EU is already negotiated²⁹, there remain numerous ways to formally push a policy through the agenda – through the Commission, as it holds the exclusive competence to initiate legislation, informally through ministers of the Council, through the ‘conditional agenda setter’ – the Parliament or even through bringing a case against a member state, as the European Court through its decisions advances the policy order

²⁸ The Ministry of Health with its National Center of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases and the National Center for Radiobiology and Radiation Protection, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs with its Diplomatic Institute, The Ministry of Culture, mainly with the national museums and libraries and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food through the Institute for Plant Protection.

²⁹ Scientific Research and Technological Advancement stands at the heart of the new operational program “Science and Education for Intelligent Growth” with 555.4 mln. Leva and the target is 1.5% of GDP to be invested in the sector by 2023.

(Peters, 1994). The accommodation of policy preferences in the Commission depends largely too on the advocates around specific DGs and the cabinets of Commissioners, which have a stake in the influence of the ‘macro’ substance of a policy. (Sedelmeier U. , 2005, pp. 240-241). Given the intergovernmental bargaining and coordination of the sectors inside the Commission, the personal factors can also prove of significant importance and currently the appointment of the of the new College might prove essential to our case. However, by the time this study was conveyed, the decision remained ‘in the making’.

The new Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker sees in the former Bulgarian Commissioner Georgieva a suitable addendum to his team (EurActiv, 2014). A couple of factors have a dimension in this – the strong qualifications of the Commissioner as a former Vice President of the World Bank having been responsible for Russia and subsequently for sustainable development; her political neutrality and the fact that she could be nominated by BSP, which belongs to PES, thus contributing not only to gender, but also to political balance in the Commission, as well as the her approval rates. The main runner-ups remain the Italian Foreign Minister Federica Mogherini, who lacked some support due to the overly friendliness of the country to Russia, as well as the Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski. Even though nothing can predict the distribution of portfolios in the Commission, the above mentioned factors could pay homage to a prospective forcing through of an ENP agenda.

The Council Presidency

However, the most appropriate among various choices might lie in the Council of EU Presidency that Bulgaria will hold in 2018. Even though the Presidency has been viewed mostly as a “leader, mediator, external representative and administrative manager”, it has the power to influence the

EU policy order through agenda-setting of new issues or agenda-shaping of existing issues (Tallberg, 2003, pp. 1-2). Often the Council Presidency is perceived as constrained in shaping the agenda, as it is not conferred any formal legislative initiative. Post-Lisbon, as the Presidencies are bound in trios and have to work together to achieve continuous and coherent goals, they often inherit the topical framework from the previous wielder and are subjected to a normative neutrality. However, tactics of agenda-shaping and agenda-exclusion are possible to mould agenda-setting as a ‘conceptual umbrella’ of the devised policy undertakings (Tallberg, 2003, p. 5).

Thus, in its quality of a ‘setter’ a member-state acts as a ‘policy entrepreneur’, which allows, next to providing alternatives to an existing issue and setting an appropriate working climate, to raise awareness to problems heretofore neglected and direct the attention towards certain region. It is possible also to come up with certain proposals for action (especially in II and III pillar, where individual MS have the right to initiative) and develop new institutional practices. As a ‘structure-provider’ it can impact the frequency of meetings, shape informal meetings and adjust the topic of meeting agendas, whilst as a ‘excluder’ it can remain silent, exclude items through COREPER or its working groups or make impossible proposals. On the whole, while a great degree of the practices are institutionalized, to hold a presidency means to be considered ‘first among equals’ and the maneuver possibilities to satisfy national agendas are amaranthine, which is also perceived as way to enrich and avoid the stagnation of the policy priorities within EU.

The road from conceptualization to the actual setting of a notion on the European institutional agenda is bumpy and restrictions to relative bargaining power have to be taken into considerations. In the real world, cases that do not correspond to ideal types do exist and these might provide us

the best inputs for advancing a strategy. They can be described as self-interest maximizing actors, who are “cynically pushing their preferences (Friis, 1998), as was the case with the agenda-setting for the Eastern Enlargement, push through the Commission and two small member states. This happened, however, owing to the fact that other countries on the table did not have stable preferences.

In terms of bargaining, a small country like Bulgaria would rather employ hard bargaining tactics. Even if a first assumption is that they would rather be used by populous and economically strong countries, they are perceived as the weapon of the weak. Small countries might need to employ such a tactic to divert ‘soft’ rewards and side payments. Also, weak countries are generally more prone to commitment to a cause, despite the fact that this might lead to retaliation. As less experienced negotiators new members of the EU could also viable users of hard bargaining tactics. (Mateo, 2010)

In some of the organs of EU, especially the Commission, the agenda order is formulated as a response to various external pressures or demands. It being an institution where competing alternatives are abundant, indeterminacy present, coordination loose and chaotic, advocates of a particular issue might have leverage over the formulations of the hosting DG. (Peters, 1994) But in any case for any policy to be implemented it must first be on the active agenda of a governmental institution. As the coalition would rather emerge from the very same country, the socio-political composition of the together with the national policy style might be a significant variable in the formulation of an approach.

Therefore a more general strategy to advance an issue might be usefull to overcome the problematic arising from the institutional setting we will be operating in. A recent example of such

is given by (Princen, 2011) who recognizes two main challenges – gaining attention and building credibility. When it comes to the first one, he reminds us that ‘controlling agendas is about controlling participation’ and creating a supportive mass. To that end and similar to what was stated above, the exact framing of the issue is essential (foreign policy, economic, judicial), so that it becomes appealing to the potential supporters. From there onwards the important factors are the decision-making venue and the issue frames. Due to its system of conferred competences, the principle of subsidiarity and potential lack of expertise or organizational capabilities, the EU might not be the best venue (other possibilities are OECD, OSCE, Council of Europe, UN etc.). An overview of the four proposed strategies can be seen in Table 1 and revised below:

- ∞ Mobilizing supporters – in general two strategies are important – venue shopping within existing venues, which could be horizontal – within EU institutions (viable because of differentiated policy communities) and vertical – multilevel system (through complaints, which includes also other organizations dropping down their priorities; and venue modification, such as creating new ones or alterations of Council configurations during its presidency by a specific country.

- ∞ Arousing interests – can happen through ‘big words’ such as tying with established core values, with policy priorities and commitments and thus works best with issues containing significant moral or symbolic argument; or through ‘small steps’ such as a study, conferences or focusing on specific elements of a policy or target groups.

∞ Capacity building – could work through seconding experts in EC, create intergroups in EP, build up networks of experts or subsidize interest groups, with the latter two examples usually initiated from within the EU structures.

S. Princen: Agenda-setting strategies in EU 931

Table 1 Four strategies in EU agenda-setting

	Venues	Frames
Gaining attention	Mobilizing supporters	Arousing interest
Building credibility	Capacity-building	Claiming authority

Figure 5. Agenda-setting strategies in EU

∞ Claim authority – link an issue to an existing policy or identify common grounds, such as (adverse) impact or identification of ‘common challenges’

Case: Sweden

Such is the case with Sweden, a small member state which maximized its bargaining power within the EU. Its practical steps to exert normative pressure in the field of CFSP / ESDP are described by (Björkdahl, 2008), whose article we will consult to create our first model case.

Setting its efforts on a non-controversial issue such as conflict prevention and taking advantage of its recognized efforts in the matter, it successfully employed framing, diplomatic tactics and timing within the Council Presidency. To become an effective normative agent, Sweden framed the issue in commonly held, humanitarian values using established and well-resonating language patterns, an act done with the help of its diplomatic carrier. For this to work an actor must remain observant of possible interpretations and actively construct the norm within a foreseeable period, adjust it to the evolving context and meet expectations, while existence of a political document with guiding principles remains crucial. Among the means it employed were:

- ∞ Proposal to introduce the Petersberg tasks (equal right of participation in all MS) in the Amsterdam treaty
- ∞ Distribution of an Action Plan in the MS capitals, which drew the attention also in EC and the EU Council Secretariat, which adopted guiding principles in the matter (12.1999)
- ∞ Informal contacts in consideration of backing up the proposal by other MS (Finland, Germany, Italy) such as continuous discussions with Finland in the pre-phase of the Helsinki Summit, which shaped perceptions, which was delineated by a joint article
- ∞ Avoiding putting too much effort on partners with little interest or alternative visions – Portugal, Belgium, France, UK. Importantly ‘none of the big powers was interest in taking a lead’ (p.145).
- ∞ Utilization of competition for power within EU institutions (Council and EC), as well as advocate work by representatives of the Foreign Ministry and officials in the EC
- ∞ Good personal communication, distribution of materials
- ∞ Use the Council Secretariat for achieving broad acceptance and fall back on its expertise
- ∞ Avoiding over-institutionalized forms of shaping the norm – in this case an EU Programme

We can see that Sweden has proved quite a capable and balanced author in its efforts to externalize national priorities. Certainly, it redeemed a favourable extrinsic environment both within its member-states and EU institutions, but what was valued mostly was its robust posture in the diplomatic domain. Its incessant skirmish to protect common values beyond the domestic and EU scene was recognized by its counterparts within the EU institutional dynamics. Moreover, it being presented as a ‘small’ country, which could be due to its relative voting weight based on population, many other factors speak otherwise – such as pure geographical, economic and discourse volumes. Last but not the least, we should not undermine the fact that it has been one of the keen supporters of deepening European integration, as a result of the pro-active stance of its foreign minister Ana Lindh.

Sweden remains one of our main advocacy cases also due to its engagement in pushing the Eastern Partnership agenda. As an already established actor Sweden served in the instrumentalization of Poland’s aspirations for establishing a new branch of the European Neighbourhood Policy pointing towards the East. While Poland was not being perceived of as a liable actor prior to and after its accession (Pomorska & Copsey, 2013) partly due to the unfruitful rivalry between the former president Lech Kaczynski and Prime Minister Donald Tusk, partly due lack of experience in the intra-institutional affairs, which can be read as also as being administratively incapacitated. A number of incidents have shown this, such as the tactic of communication twilight in the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, when it comes to devising a position on a contentious topic or the proven disability to encapsulate the wider array of policy visions.

Case: Poland

Initially attempting an ambitious strategy for an Eastern Dimension that will give membership prospects to Ukraine and Moldova, Poland was aspiring to follow a balancer tactic – to revive and strengthen its relationship with the countries to the East, so as to become a more powerful actor in the West. This idea, outlined in a non-paper, published by the MFA in 2003, was not well received, because of the ENP being a easier way to engage with these partners. It inserted the no “*dividing lines*” rhetoric and addressed the “*less developed former Soviet republics of Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova*” (p.426)

Poland bumped into the opposition of the Southern Dimension supporters – France and Spain, which used wisely their Council Presidencies to that aim. Therefore, the revised, more pragmatic approach now was one of a ‘*small steps approach that will allow it to push for incremental changes*’ (Pomorska & Copseya, 2013, p. 424), managing to keep the prospect of membership in the discussion. Further on, in 2006 the country stressed out the imperative relations with Ukraine as well as the managing the South Caucasus and Transnistria conflicts. This time the policy paper proposed an “*independent framework*” (p.425) as separate track of the ENP and was followed by a similar scenario by the Czech, which albeit could not be coordinated and resulted in discord. Realizing that although there was no explicit disapproval by the V4 and big member states, none of them wanted to take the lead and it remained in Polish hands, which united with the Swedes and presented it jointly to the GAERC meeting in Brussels³⁰. A month later it was endorsed by the European Council and the Commission was delegated to come up with a detailed proposal.

³⁰ 26-27.05.2008, complete text under <http://www.easternpartnership.org/content/eastern-partnership-concept-implementation>

However, at that time the interests of the older member states were better represented, as the EuroMed countries included two founding members – Italy and France, and two further strong supporters – Greece and Spain. This impeded the relative counterbalance of the new proposition as could be seen from the final conclusions of the Council. Generally, as hinted by (Pomorska & Copeya, 2013), the unclear role of Poland in the Proposal can be either interpreted as a lack of ambition or as a newly-realized ability to coordinate and cooperate with other Member States. Even though launching the Eastern Partnership on behalf of block of countries would have meant a relatively bigger strength and perseverance, it seems that in the end Poland did not make use of the existing sub-regional entity – V4, as the profile of all these countries was similar – new, small-to-medium-sized and prone to euro-scepticism. Counting on an already established partner seemed to be Poland’s tactic for sharing the weight of the proposal, as well as the gains of it. Yet another factor impeded the proper dynamics within the EU institutions – lack of diplomatic experience and ability to have most use of the existing human capital. Poland could have counted much more on its existing capacity in the institutions, as well as in different think tanks to reach a momentum on shaping the details of the proposal after the initial success.

As hinted by (Schweiger, 2013) the dominance of the old Franco-German dichotomy has been altered by new leadership constellations in specific policy areas, as the vociferous assertion of core interests offends new rising powers. These new, flexible, policy-oriented coalitions characterized by protectorate of domestic interests include preferably those ‘close to the median of the European Community, since they are potential members of more viable coalitions’ (Morvcsik, 1993). Moreover, the ‘constitutionally structured process of oscillation between states and central

governments' (Pollack, 2010) continues to be shaped by the relative strength the states have in the macro-setting of the European Council, but dominated by the decision-making setting of the Council of the European Union. Especially after the adoption of the double majority voting³¹, when the constellations' weight will be altered and blocking majorities readjusted the validity of this claim might increase, as for example in the case of UK, whose voting weight will increase from 8% to 12% (UK Parliament, 2014).

While one could be wondering why Sikorski would be rebuffing the traditional anti-immigrant rhetoric of UK, thus lowering his chances for a high cabinet, there is an underlying circumstance. Allegations for a strong Russian lobby in UK could explain this for example. Still, Poland is an active contributor not only in the V4, which it is going to preside in 2018, but also in the Weimar Triangle, together with France and Germany, where it, as the 6th largest country, acts as the new counterpoise to the traditional Elysee engine of integration.

This is especially apparent in the common position on Ukraine the three countries came with (Auswärtiges Amt, 2014), calling for three guiding principles in the implementation of the Association Agreement – Inclusiveness (strengthening the representative nature of the regional governments), Democracy (free and fair elections leading to a constitutional reform) and Reconciliation (re-establishment of the state monopoly in the use of force and accelerated disarmament). As these were so far successfully invoked by the new Ukrainian President, we can

³¹ Introduced by Lisbon Treaty and meant to strengthen voting mechanisms in the Council by including a double formula (55% of the states and 65% of the population) to enter into force from 31 October 2014, with the option for reverting until 1 March 2017 upon request.

deem that the integration engine, especially when it comes to foreign and security policy, has found a new arm in the face of Poland. The successful reinvigoration of the trio, brought about by the conciliatory change of addressing Germany's role - from an European partner with dubious motives during Kaczynski, to a cornerstone partner in numerous fields such as trade, research, cultural contacts, and as evident, policy-making.

Potential role for Bulgaria?

As evident from both of the cases, both prior accession to EU and after that small-to-medium sized countries have had the existential opportunity to use the EU decision-making dynamics to further structure, deepen and build on their national priorities. The cases of Sweden and Poland thus provide us with two-track input – on the strategic uses and potential weaknesses of holding the Council Presidency, as well as specifics relating solely to ENP. Bulgaria boast similar post-communists deficiencies, intertwined history in the region, Bulgarian minorities in many of the EaP countries, as well as Russia, strategic interests as an energy corridor for the South Stream and Nabucco projects, a shared economic space around the Black Sea, as well as ethno-cultural and identity similarities due to its language similarities and a 'brotherhood' feeling with Russia.

To see to what extend Bulgaria has any potential to contribute to the issues in the Eastern Partnership branch of the ENP we will thus need to find parallels, which are naturally existent due to the shared geographical polity and the reasons given already. The cases have shown us that the Council Presidency is a powerful tool for 'uploading' domestic issues of national importance and it is the main reason why we would employ a similar strategy as a test for our study. However, in any case decisive limitations will be needed. First of all, as mentioned, we would focus solely on 'agenda-setting' or choosing the most appropriate issues to be included on a prospective agenda

for the Council Presidency that has overarching importance to the European Neighbourhood Policy.

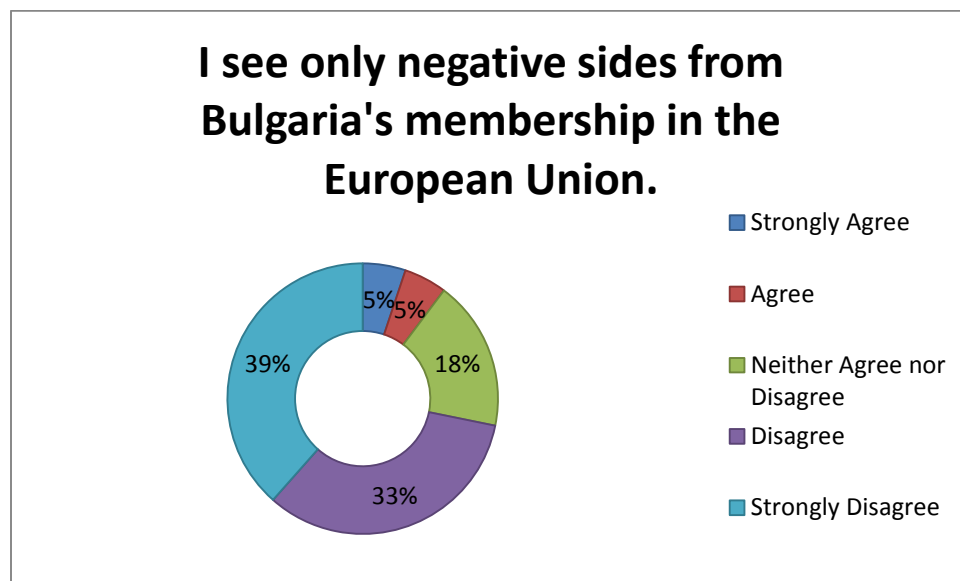
Since one of the main aspects of a successful policy-cycle is the public ownership of the alternative that is chosen. This makes the participation of the wider public due during all the stages of the cycle and for our test we would use a simple poll to counsel the opinion of some Bulgarians as well as foreigners to standard questions of relevance to both dimensions of our study.

Discussing the Poll Results

Our poll consisted of two sections with questions on the European Neighbourhood Policy and Bulgaria. There were 16 questions that were scaled with five possible measurements ranging from complete agreement to complete disagreement with the statement. Two other questions directed at preferences for policy areas to be addressed consisted of sum total 10 options, whereas the respondents had to give at least 4 answers. The first one attempted to identify the most pressing issues on the domestic scene in Bulgaria and the second one attempted to give a range of proposals for emphasis during the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2018. Totally 39 people participated in the poll and gave their answers, of whom 30 (77%) were Bulgarian citizens and 9 (23%) citizens of other countries. We assume that most of the respondents had completed or were in the tertiary cycle of their education and have some degree of interest in the current affairs, as the poll was distributed freely through social networks.

Bulgaria

The first statement “*I see only negative sides from Bulgaria’s membership in the European Union*” was intentionally formulated negatively to test whether the exceptionally high trust of Bulgarians towards EU and its institutions is valid. In the last public opinion report by (Eurobarometer, 2013, p. 58) its values were highest of all member states, amounting to 54%³² trust versus 31% for EU28 with 28% tending not to trust EU as a whole. In our results the favorability of the EU was confirmed with 36% (13) disagreeing and 33% (12) strongly disagreeing with the statement. With a combined trust of 69% the responses even exceed Eurostat’s last poll from May 2013. This might be a result of the fact that EU is often perceived as a corrective force in the country and due to the protests the trust in the government has fallen, while the trust in EU has increased.



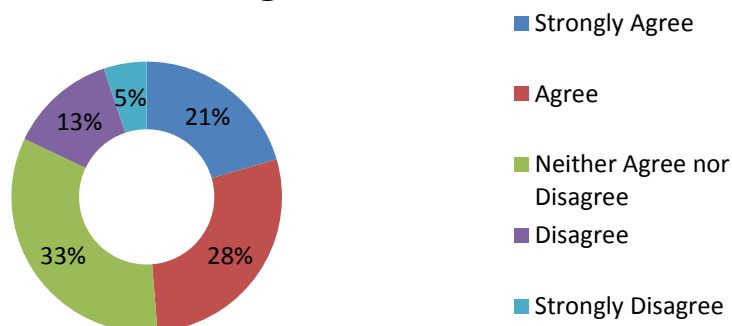
³² In our case study countries the approval was the following: Lithuania – 51%, Poland 39%, Sweden 36%.

The Second Statement “*There are direct effects of the recent events in Egypt and Ukraine in Bulgaria.*” was formulated in that way as allegedly there are indeed such effects according to the author. They range from the rise of immigration from the Middle East to effects of the events in Ukraine such as the revival of the Russophile / Russophobe disunion among the citizens of the country, typical for the early years of its revival (until First World War)³³. Respondents have shown to be in accordance with this statement, since the combined value of those who agree with it reaches 49%. The relatively significant amount of people of neutral judgment (33%) can be explained with indecisiveness, disinterest or lack of access to convincing analyses. Most of them are usually published by foreign media, while the majority of the Bulgarian media forgoes such undertakings and usually portrays information one-sidedly, a major reason for that being the concentration of its ownership.³⁴

³³ See for example „How Bulgaria fell victim to the tug of war over Ukraine” (Gillet, 2013), which draws parallels with how South Stream triggered the bank worst bank crisis since the 1990s; “How Bulgaria’s Bank Run Affects Ukraine’s European Dream” (Konstantinova, 2014), which describes Bulgaria as the main culprit for the lack of political will for further enlargements; “Bulgarian nationalists may topple government over Russia sanctions” (Tsolova & Williams, 2014), which mentions the growing divide on the question with Ukraine, as a Gallup poll has confirmed that 30% of the population supports its accession to EU, while 27% are in favour of its closer ties with Russia; “Bulgaria torn between EU and Moscow as Ukraine crisis lingers” (AFP, 2014), which cites also that polls have shown that between 40 and 53 percent of the population is against sanctions, as well as that 85% of the gas comes from Gazprom and 65% of all investment / 62% of the trade from EU; “Explainer: Is South Stream The Latest Victim Of the Ukraine Crisis?” (RFE, 2014), which states that if South Stream is to be built, Ukraine’s will become “much weaker with regard to Russia”.

³⁴ Ranking of Bulgarian Media according to the Press Freedom Index, Reporters Without Borders: 2006: 35th, 2007: 51st, 2008: 59th, 2009: 68th, 2010: 70th, 2012: 80th, 2013: 87th, 2014: 100th. Journalists are threatened, attacked by police during the protests, exposed to arson attacks and harassment.

There are direct effects of the recent events in Egypt and Ukraine in Bulgaria.

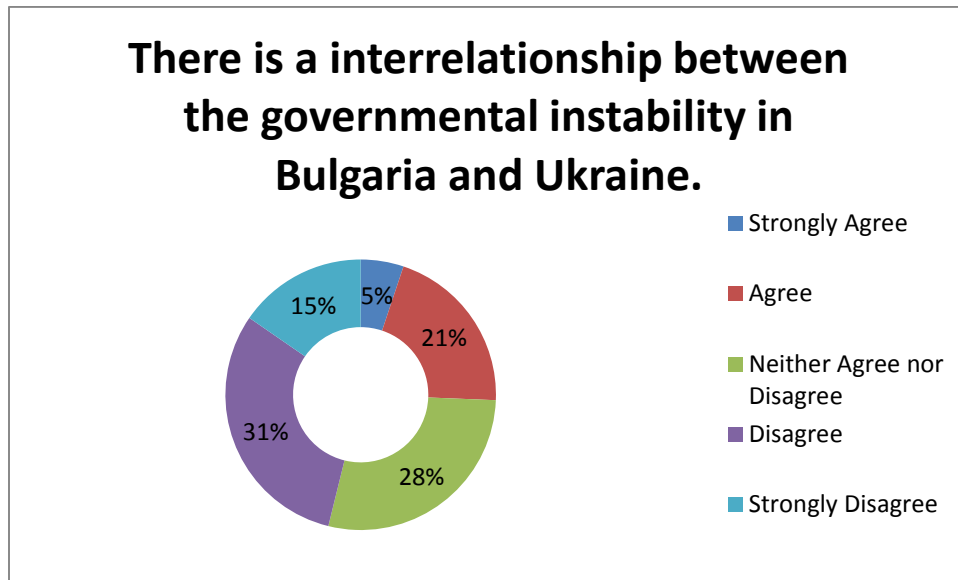


With our third statement “*There is a interrelationship between the governmental instability in Bulgaria and Ukraine.*” an attempt to bring forth the possible similar effects of the Russian policy was made. While in Ukraine the electorate of the former president Yanukovych (presidential elections 2004 and 2010), as well as the supporters of the Party of Regions (parliamentary elections 2012) was based in eastern Ukraine (mainly Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv, Dnepropetrovsk, Odessa, Crimea) he was an exponent of the pro-Russian sentiments before the coming into office of the incumbent prime Minister Yanukovych³⁵. At the same time, the last³⁶ Bulgarian government was led by the Socialists (in coalition with the Turkish ethnical party DPS and the extremist right party ATAKA), which were upholders of the very same interests. Since this parallel could not be draw at the time the poll was conducted (July 2014), we can understand the lack relative lack of proponents for the statement (only 5% agree strongly and 21% agree with it). Most of the answers were either undecided (28%), against (31%) or particularly against it (15%). After all the near

³⁵ Created on the 27th of February 2014 after an approval of the Verkhovna Rada. The latter denied his resignation on the 31st of July 2014, which was handed in after lack of back-up for budget laws jeopardizing military funding.

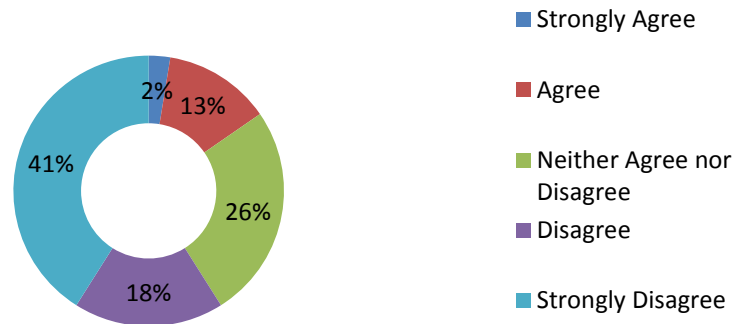
³⁶ The coalition resigned on the 23rd of July 2014, after DPS hauled off its support.

splintering of the Ukrainian government and the toppling of the Bulgarian one did not bear the same results, which leads to the inference that the indicated opinions are logical.



Our fourth statement “Politicians have learned a lesson from the protests in Bulgaria and the situations will improve.” tries to invoke the attitudes towards the possible outcomes of the rallying protests and the expected resignation of the coalition. The civic turmoil is a signal that the expectations of the citizens as constituents of the democratic system and electorate are not met. Furthermore, they illustrate the inability and even the lack of desire on behalf of the government to be receptive and responsive towards the public interests and its self-serving desire to remain in power. However, even the resignation of the current government has not brought any hope of improvement of the situation, which is perceived by 72% of the population as unbearable (Arndt & Slavkova, 2013). A total of 59% of the respondents continue to have a negative view of the future of the country, while only 15% agree with the statement.

Politicians have learned a lesson from the protests in Bulgaria and the situation will improve.

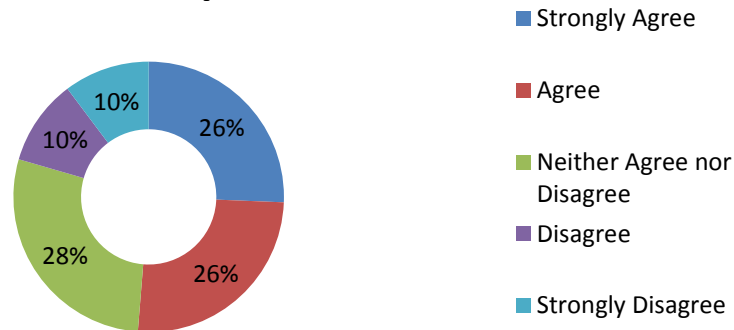


Our fifth statement „There are numerous ways for a small country to be influential within the European Union.” was drawn as a result of the study of our study cases. While in the decision-making dynamics of the European Union the population of the country plays a key role³⁷, certain countries have managed to grow out of their fixed influence rates through arduous advocacy, regional alliances, strong diplomacy and networks.³⁸ The majority of the respondents have recognized and acknowledged these trends – 26% of them agree strongly with the statement and 26% more are in favour of it. About a third has remained undecided – 28%, while the amount of those whose opinion is dissimilar is 20%, distributed equally between the agreeing and the strongly agreeing cohort.

³⁷ See Article 16 (4) TEU and 244 of the TFEU (Lisbon, 2009). Without considering the transitional rules, from 01st of November 2014 the population of country will play a stronger role in the weighting of the votes in the Council due to the introduction of the double majority equal to 55% of the Member States representing 65% of the population. At the same time the degressive apportionment of MEPs in the European Parliament is corresponding to the population of the country with certain adjustments.

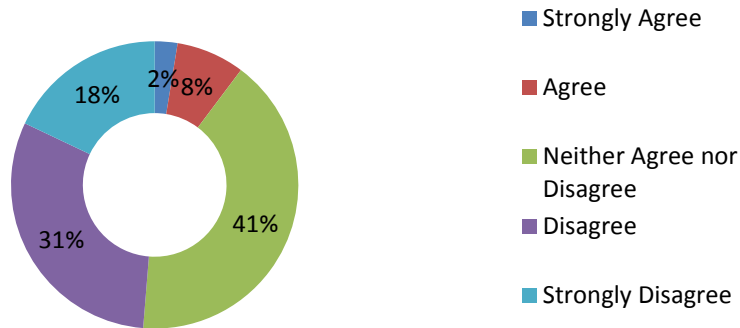
³⁸ Other literature?

There are numerous ways for a small country to be influential within the European Union.



With our sixth statement “In the next legislature period in EU/2014-2020/ the significance of Bulgaria's position will increase.” we aimed at drilling the opinion of the respondents on whether they see any perspectives of a rise in the influence of the Bulgarian position. This statement has received a relatively weak support with only 2% strongly in favour and 8% in favour of it, a significant amount of hesitant respondents (41%) and almost a majority against it – 31% disagreeing and 18% strongly disagreeing. Even if these answers are based only on subjective projections it is reasonable to say that the expectations for this to happen are quite low, which poses yet another challenge to our study. Bulgaria does not boast a strong appeal internationally (33% of the non-Bulgarian respondents disagree strongly), but still the external perceptions of its potential are slightly better (the only respondent agreeing strongly with the statement is of non-Bulgarian descent and the agreeing ones are distributed equally between Bulgarians and non-Bulgarians). There might be a favourable environment, if an initiative to counter domestic quandaries is shown.

In the next legislature period in EU /2014-2020/ the significance of Bulgaria's position will increase.

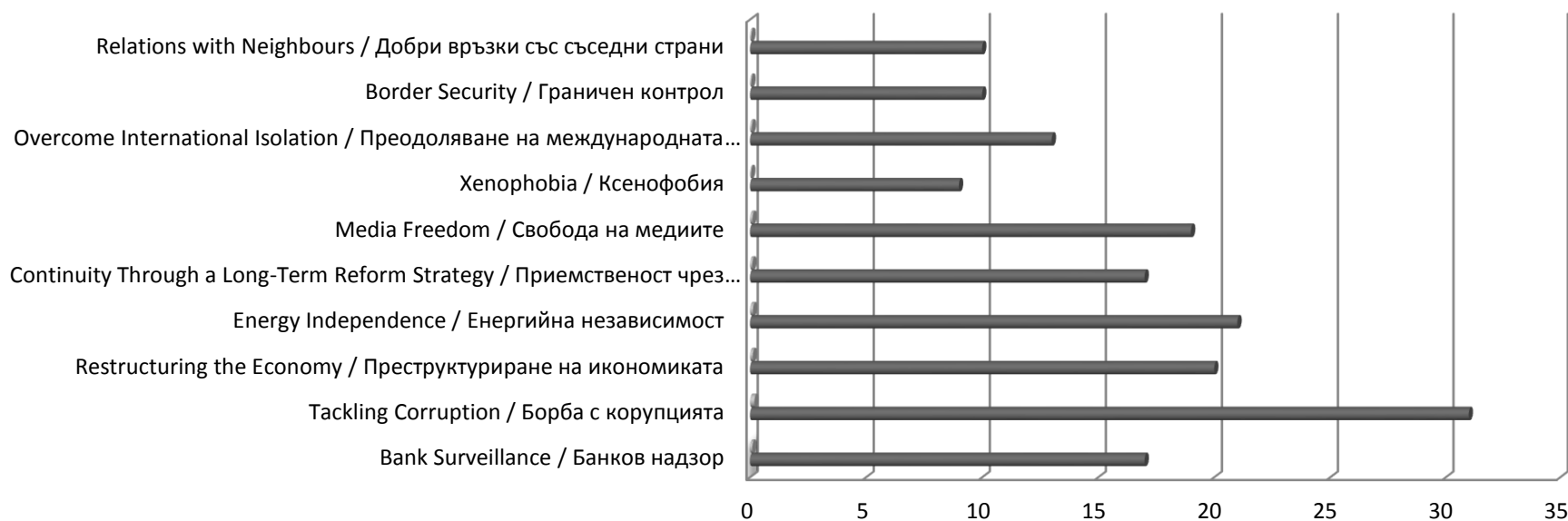


The final question in the section on Bulgaria attempted to prioritize the challenges that Bulgaria is currently facing. Because of their multitude the answers were limited to 10, of which the respondents had to select at least four. Below there is an overview of the given responses, with “Series 1” from the agenda corresponding to the number of answers and “Series 2” to the percentage of this answer as a part of the whole. Indeed the participants in the poll have concentrated on domestic issues, of which “Tackling Corruption” came on the first place through being chosen by 31 out of 39 respondents (19%). Reform and increased expenditure of the judiciary, its independence, nepotism and opaque public procurement are among the most pressing issues. On second place with 21/39 respondents (13%) is Energy Independence, which is set to grow to 80% by 2035 and in the case of crude oil is already near 100% (CSD, 2014). On third place with 20/39 answers is restructuring the economy, the reasons for which are numerous – FDI has plummeted since the outbreak of the crisis and continues to fall, because of the political

turmoil³⁹, GDP growth is stagnating. The fourth place is occupied by lack of media freedom with 19/39 respondents and 11%. The fifth place is shared with (17/39, 10%) by the lack of any political vision or strategy for the development of the country, with most of the parties concentrating on immediate issues and political survival; and by Bank Surveillance, which has grown in importance since the KTB default and Bulgaria being the first country outside the Eurozone willing to join the Banking Union. Apparently, the rest of the issues such as the control of immigration influx and its societal implications, international isolation and the relations with the neighbours are acknowledged, but are falling significantly behind. Since they are all connected with external factors, the rational explanation is that the respondents have focused on the issues stemming from within the country.

³⁹ For January-May 2014 net FDI equals to 232.1 million euro, with 174.5 less than for the same period in 2013. Solely for May 2014 they amount to 8.6 million in contrast to 151.8 for May 2013. (BNB, 2014)

Which of the following policy issues need to be addressed first:

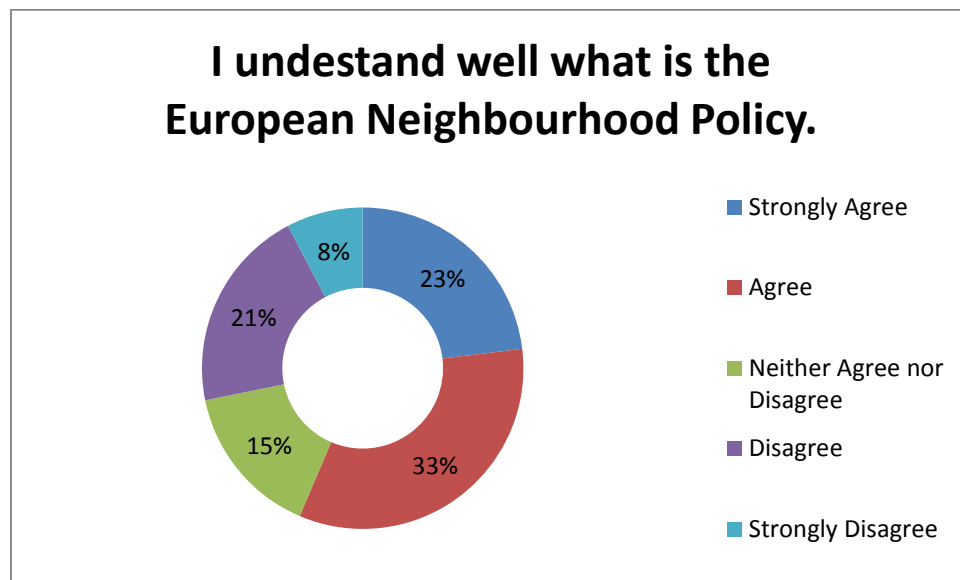


	Bank Surveillance / Банков надзор	Tackling Corruption / Борба с корупцията	Restructuring the Economy / Преструктуриране на икономиката	Energy Independence / Енергийна независимост	Continuity Through a Long-Term Reform Strategy / Приемственост чрез дългосрочно планиране на реформи	Media Freedom / Свобода на медиите	Хenophobia / Ксенофобия	Overcome International Isolation / Преодоляване на международната изолация	Border Security / Граничен контрол	Relations with Neighbours / Добри връзки със съседни страни
■ Series2	10%	19%	12%	13%	10%	11%	5%	8%	6%	6%
■ Series1	17	31	20	21	17	19	9	13	10	10

The European Neighbourhood Policy

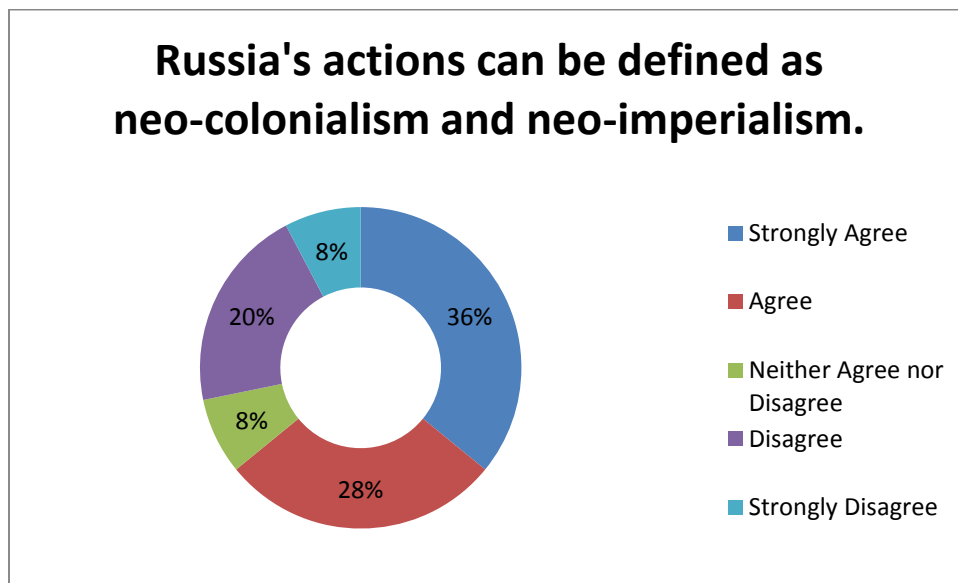
In the second section of the poll consisted of 10 Statements and one multiple choice question.

Naturally, the first statement “I understand well what is the European Neighbourhood Policy.” was aimed at matching the provided opinions with the background knowledge of the respondents. A substantial number of them (23%) feel very confident about their knowledge of ENP, followed by an even greater amount (33%) feeling comfortable within its auspices. While 15% remain undecided, about one third (29%) has no grounds in the field. Nevertheless, the results speak well of the applicability of our results at least in terms of the subjective self-assessment of the respondents. Bulgarian, as well as foreign participants in the poll are into terms with the policy.



The second Statement “Russia's actions can be defined as neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism.” relates to the recent expansionist ambitions of the Russian Federation. Claiming its descent from today’s Ukraine Russia seceded Crimea and has been clandestinely supporting separatist rebels in eastern Ukraine, hoping initially for federalization, with subsequently Donbas and Donetsk

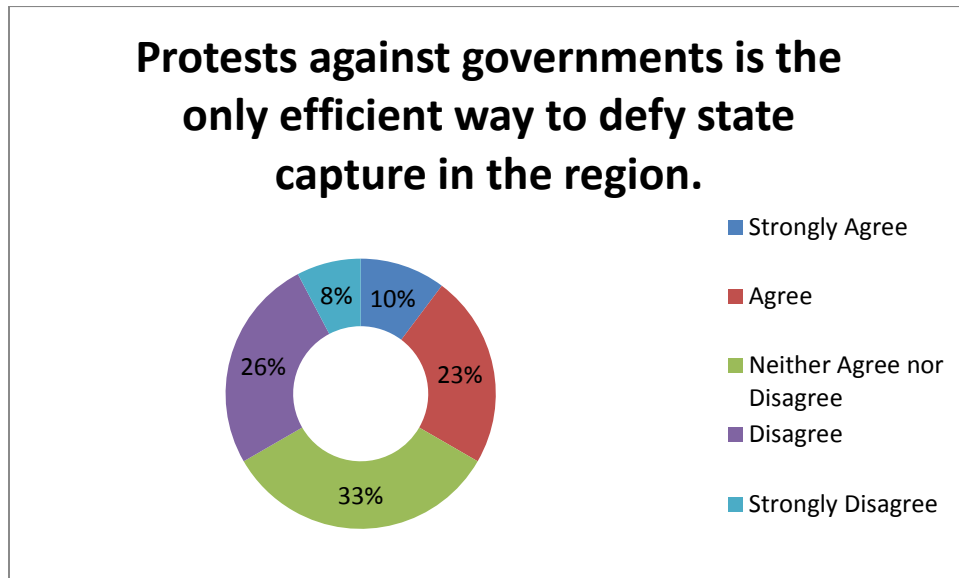
proclaiming themselves as the independent New Russia. As we are about to see later in the study, this has augmented the divisiveness along the Russophile / Russophobe axis in Bulgaria. However, from the results it is evident that the majority of the respondents is against the expansion of Russia’s sphere of influence - 36% are strongly inclined towards describing it as imperialism and 28% more agree with the statement, thus constituting a majority. While barely 8% feel unsure about framing the country’s actions, a total of 30% are, with only 8% strongly, against it. Even though Bulgaria is considered to be subjected to Russia’s goals in the EU, this was/is true only on governmental level. On the grassroots level, people disapprove of its aspirations.



The third statement “Protests against governments is the only efficient way to defy state capture⁴⁰ in the region.” was formulated in that way to initiate a logic that the protests against the marriage between media, banking sector and politics in Bulgaria can be expanded. The results are however, equally divided among supporters, opponents and neutrally inclined. Therefore no strong

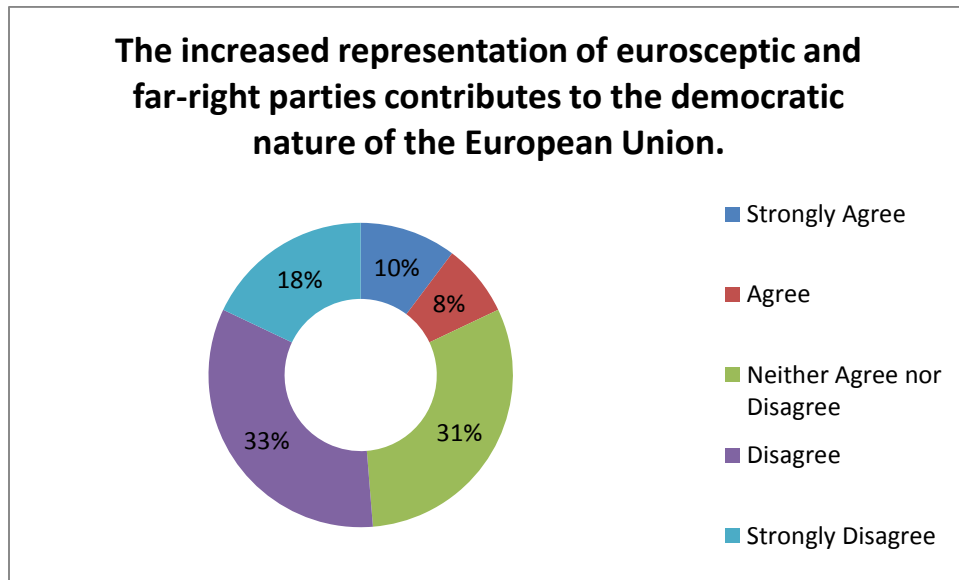
⁴⁰ A process through which “firms make private payments to public officials to influence the choice and design of laws, rules and regulations” (p.1), in comparison to influencing a government or corrupting it administratively with petty bribery. (Popa, 2009)

conclusion can be made as a result of this formulation. An explanation for this might lie in the different profiles of the protests in the region – in Ukraine they were pro-European, in Turkey they were in defense of the freedom of speech and media and in Egypt – against Morsi’s upheaval. Corruption therefore cannot be recognized as a cross-border issue of principal importance.



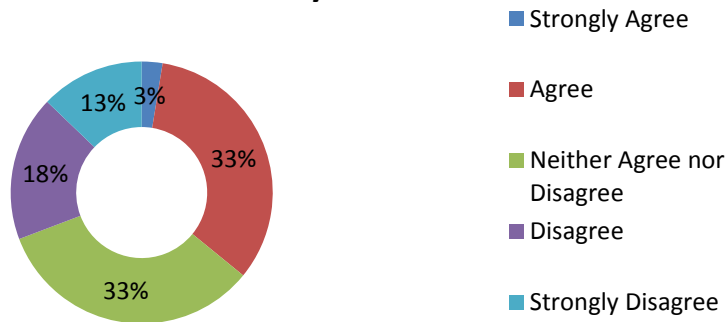
The formulation of the fourth statement “The increased representation of eurosceptic and far-right parties contributes to the democratic nature of the European Union.” can be justified on the grounds that in the 2014 EP elections the eurosceptics dislodged about 10% of the seats held by the four main party families. In essence the statement is a bias-check over whether respondents omit the fact that even if antisystematic, eurosceptics still represent mainly the will of the European Citizens (although predominantly of UK and France). Since only 18% of the respondents agree with the statement there is indeed some bias, which can be associated with the strong pro-European attitudes in Bulgaria, confirmed by a totally of 51% being against this statement. However, another

interpretation might lie in the fact that euroscepticism receives support from Russia, which is interested in destabilizing the Union. This would render the answers much more useful.



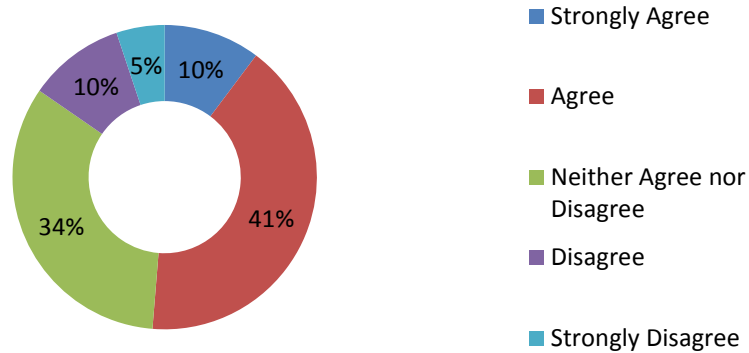
The fifth statement “The Presidency of Council of the European Union that Bulgaria will hold in 2018 is a viable opportunity to solve domestic problems in the country.” was recognized as valid by 36% of which only 3% felt strongly about it. With 33% undecided and 31% against we see no strict tendencies among the respondents. The rationale might lie in the fact that the work on is yet about to start and in the media the topic has not been raised with the exception of some proposals for a new governmental centre. The interpretation might lie in the lack of understanding of what are the responsibilities and the possibilities stemming from the chairmanship. For the public ownership of the agenda to take place, the next government should not only concentrate on the inclusion of wide spectrum of citizens and experts, but also on the conferral of accessible, impartial and understandable information on its nature.

The Presidency of Council of the European Union that Bulgaria will hold in 2018 is a viable opportunity to solve domestic problems in the country.



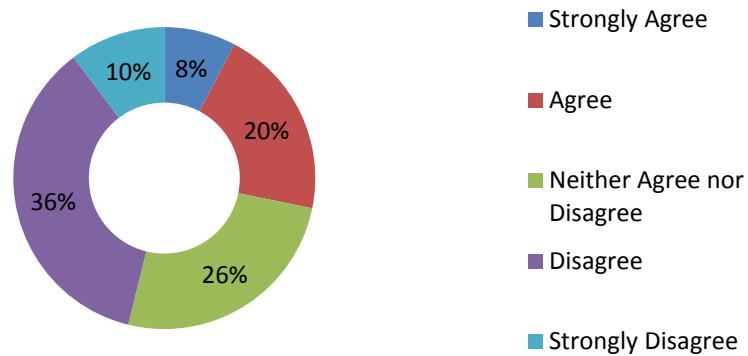
The sixth statement “The European Neighbourhood Policy poses a challenge to the inefficient coordination of foreign policy in the European Union.” is intended to see to what extent do the respondents agree that the European foreign ministers have difficulties coming up with a single position towards the crisis in Ukraine. With some states being particularly financially intertwined with Russia (France, Italy, Austria, Hungary) imposing sanctions has been a lengthy process with no winners. Barely its third version that happened in July-August has been appreciated as a strong message and overthrew USA’s lead. A total of of 51% of the participants in the survey agreed with the statement, of which 10% felt strongly about it and barely 15% were against it. This tendency has been approved also by the initial difficulty in the advancement of a position to the issue in Bulgaria. Because of the discord among parties - DPS and ATAKA were against and GERB for the sanctions, the government waited for the rest of the members and then followed them.

The European Neighbourhood Policy poses a challenge to the inefficient coordination of foreign policy in the European Union.



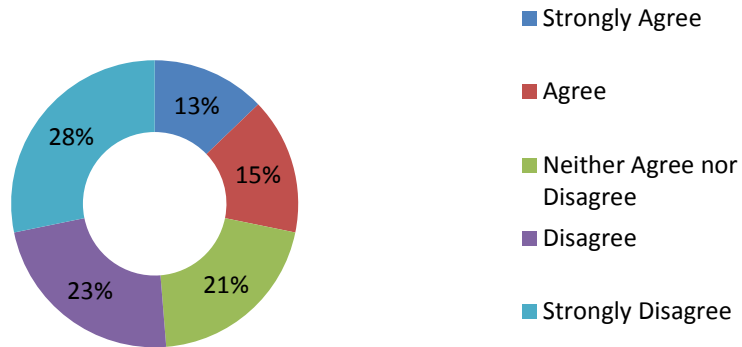
The seventh statement “There are no enlargement perspectives towards the countries that are taking part the Eastern Partnership.” wants to test the attitudes towards further Enlargement Perspectives. As discussed earlier, there are a number of reasons for support of widening of the Union, but on the other hand as a small country Bulgaria might feel exposed to a threat of losing influence. (Hobolt, 2014, p. 669) Since a total of 46% of the respondents disagree with the statement, which is nearly a majority, we can say that these fears are not grounded. Undecided remains a share of 26% and those agreeing with the statement amount to 28%. On the whole more tend to disagree with it, which means that they are supportive of further enlargement to the East. The rationale might vary – if for example Moldova enters the Union Bulgaria will no longer bear the label of the poorest country, Bulgarians might also see prospects in positioning the country as an experienced collaborator of EU or they might simply see EU as a solution to many existing problems.

There are no enlargement perspectives towards the countries that are taking part the Eastern Partnership.



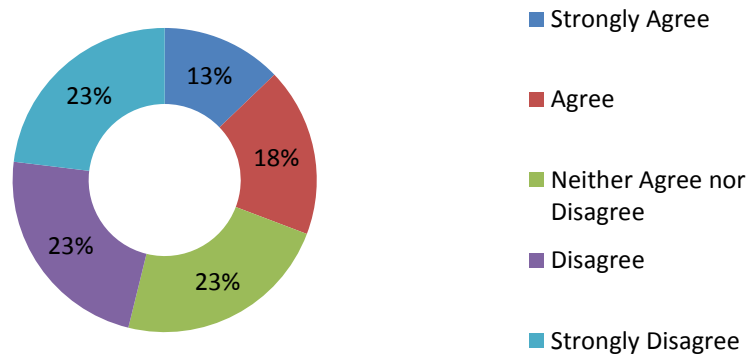
The eight statement “I see no security threats for Bulgaria as a result of the disturbances in the Middle East.” is a check on whether the respondents feel in any way – be it security issues, terrorism or an influx of immigrants – threatened by the protests, the theocratic movements or the civil war in Syria. Those who agreed with the statements remain within 28% of the whole, with 13% feeling strongly about the issue. On the other side of the answers prism 51% see no connection and 21% remain undecided. In summary the majority’s attitude disapproves of the statement. Indeed apart from the relatively low influx of immigrants and an isolated case of terrorism in Burgas in 2012 threats do not seem imminent.

I see no security threats for Bulgaria as a result of the disturbances in the Middle East.

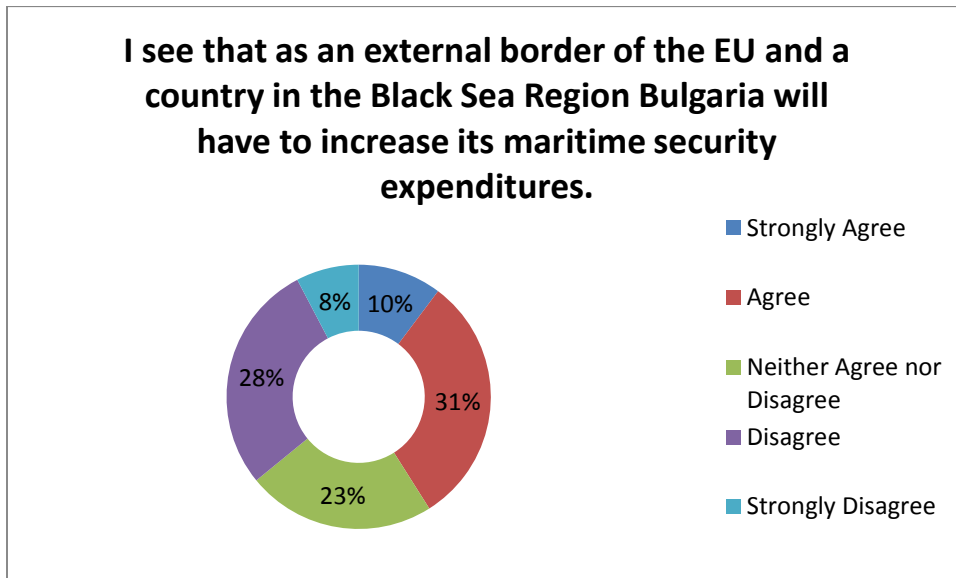


The ninth statement “Only economic interests of certain member states in the EU matter when it is dealing with the European Neighbourhood Policy.” tests the understanding of the policy in terms of seeing only the economic, neoliberal logic behind it, which omits considerations of incongruity with the legal system of EU, institutional alterations or a values-perspective. More of the respondents (46%) disagreed with the statement, rather than supporting it (31%) and less than one third (23%) did not feel strongly about it. The picture according to our respondents is manifold and other factors have significance as well, be they security, geopolitics or values.

Only economic interests of certain member states in the EU matter when it is dealing with the European Neighbourhood Policy.

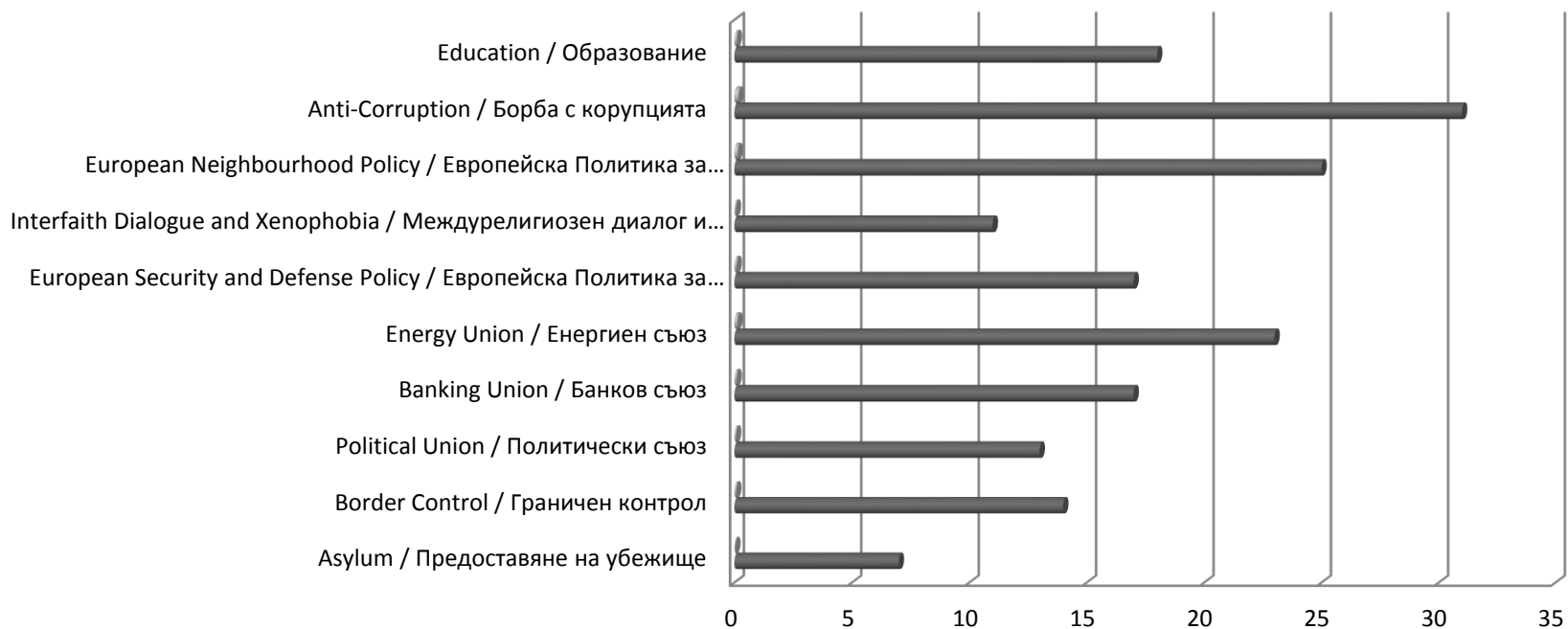


The tenth statement “I see that as an external border of the EU and a country in the Black Sea Region Bulgaria will have to increase its maritime security expenditures.” delivers a test on whether the respondents felt that the region is going to become a setting for measuring naval strengths between NATO and Russia. Currently NATO cannot enter the sea with air carriers and Russia’s control over Crimea and in the future probably Odessa might mean that as an external border and NATO member Bulgaria will have to increase its spending on navy vessels. This was confirmed strongly by 10% of the respondents and further 31%, which agreed with it. Those who did not, were respectively 8% (strongly agreeing) and 28% (agreeing), while 23% did not feel inclined towards taking a strong position on the issue. While the numbers are not strikingly different, those in favour of the statement are slightly more. Indeed in the future this might be a possible scenario, especially having in mind the separatist pro-russian tendencies in the north of the Black Sea basin. At a point in time the Transnistria conflict might re-emerge and provide a platzdarm for further destabilization along the external borders of EU.



The last question from the second part of the poll “The Presidency of Council of the European Union that Bulgaria will hold in 2018 should concentrate on the following policies:” aimed to provide inputs for one of the main hypotheses and structure them in a descending order. As in the previous one, respondents had to check at least four options. Anti-corruption again came on the first place with 31/39 people having chosen it (17.6%), the second one being occupied by the European Neighbourhood Policy (25/39, 14.2%), the third by the Energy Union (23/39, 13%), fourth – Education (18/39, 10.2%) and the fifth shared by the European Security and Defense Policy and Banking Union with 17/39 respondents or 9.6%. While corruption remains the main concern, the poll has confirmed that ENP should stand high on the agenda for the Presidency. In their responses people continue to be more concerned about domestic problems, as for example the Political union stands relatively low on their preferences. Bulgarians might be in fact not ready to abandon the possibility of having a contrasting and independent position. However, the problem of the energy independence continues to be high on the agenda.

The Presidency of Council of the European Union that Bulgaria will hold in 2018 should concentrate on the following policies:



	Asylum / Предоставяне на убежище	Border Control / Граничен контрол	Political Union / Политически съюз	Banking Union / Банков съюз	Energy Union / Енергиен съюз	European Security and Defense Policy / Европейска Политика за Сигурност и Отбрана	Interfaith Dialogue and Xenophobia / Междурелиг иозен диалог и Ксенофобия	European Neighbourho od Policy / Европейска Политика за Добросъсед ство	Anti- Corruption / Борба с корупцията	Education / Образовани е
■ Series2	3.98%	7.95%	7.39%	9.66%	13.07%	9.66%	6.25%	14.20%	17.61%	10.23%
■ Series1	7	14	13	17	23	17	11	25	31	18

Analysis

For the sake of the analysis I will be adding up the results from both questions asking for the importance of specific policy issues, so the given percentages will be as a share of 200%. We will limit the discussion only to the first three issues, which have been chosen by the respondents. The analysis takes note of the respondents' answers and structures a preliminary topical distribution. Then it takes note of the presented model cases and develops a roadmap to the Council Presidency in 2018.

Policy Mapping

To begin with the question of including the ENP on the political agenda has raised a significant number of awareness, as one-tenth of the respondents gave it as an answer. Indeed, the share has been much lower when the respondents viewed it from domestic perspective, but then when we asked already about the Council Presidency's aims, more of them deemed its inclusion worthy. Among the strongest messages that have been sent is that of fighting corruption, which remains an issue of utmost importance. Bulgaria has been part of the specific Mechanism for Cooperation and Verification through which already twelve reports have been issued. It has been systematic in neglecting or scarcely addressing the recommendations given by the European Commission.

1. Corruption

While the 2012 report (EC, 2012) gave an overview of this five year post-accession conditionality and appreciated the pace of the reforms satisfactory, but emphasized the lack of their completeness. Bulgaria has implemented the six judicial benchmarks, but remains highly unable to combat vested interests. Its Supreme Judicial Council has failed to ensure the consistency of the judiciary based

on the merit of the cadres. Alternating emphasis by different governments has been mixed with intrusion into the independence of the judiciary and putting pressure on it. At the time there had been still strategic legislative gaps and implementation had been inconsistent, as is the disciplinary jurisprudence. “Various senior appointments during this period lacked sufficient transparency and continue to be marred by accusations of political influence and shortcomings in integrity” (p.7). In fighting organized crime major drawbacks remain the few effective sentences, due to systematic weakness of the police-prosecution-courts trio. Specifically towards corruption the report emphasized the lack of sanctioning mechanisms and an uniform body to implement the policy.

The latest 2014 report (EC, 2014) confirmed previous concerns over the independence of the judiciary, as the SJC’s appointments did not demonstrate the due merit and civil society continues to be excluded from it. Appointments in the Constitutional Court similarly continue to be intransparent and politically driven. Inconsistency within the judiciary has been noted down (e.g. SJC’s decisions being reversed by Supreme Administrative Court). Penal and criminal codifications and the prosecution need improvements, but the involvement of non-state stakeholders has been assessed positively. Lack of significant high-level convictions deter from the credibility of the anti-corruption system and the main project Bokkor has shown no solid results and labour division in fighting organized crime has been pointed as a drawback. The report has also drawn comprehensive guidelines, pointed mostly toward clear and transparent procedures, filling loopholes, strategic approach, uniform supervision by a single institution and implementation of e-justice.

Stricter compliance with the established conditionality is due, as these problems “undermine public trust in state institutions and hamper economic development and the creation of a favorable

business climate” (Trauner, 2009), constituting a main challenge towards involvement of citizens in any dialogue, which is deemed meaningless. Moreover, systematic dysfunctionality makes it much more cost-effective for citizens not to comply with norms and bribe officials, as it is “more cost-effective than taking somebody to trial or doing the official procedure”⁴¹. Of utmost importance remain therefore emblematic convictions of higher officials and politicians that can foster the credibility of the system and public drive towards turning to an uniform organ.

By its lack of conformity with post-accession conditionality Bulgaria shows the negative effects of resisting reform and confirms the statement that EU membership is not a panacea, but a process. The application of conditionality instruments can again become necessary due to the rising demand for strong political messages. Especially in the case of Ukraine the demand for state-building might increase and include prospects for accelerated accession to the EU. Post-accession conditionality along similar lines or in expanded version might be among the few options for retaining reform impetus for the ENP countries, would their status alter in a way. Inclusion of public procurement, conflict of interest, state capture, nepotism and other acute issues in the region on the agenda could increase the credibility of the region.

2. Energy Union

EU has been trying to increase its self-sustainability by various measures, including by transition towards greener economies, as part of the EU2020 strategy. Even if its gas consumptions is gradually falling (-3,6% for 2012, it remains dependent on external supplies from Russia (32,4%), Norway (26,7%), Algeria (13,0%), Qatar (11%) (EuroStat, 2013). Diversification being also on

⁴¹ Ibid.

the agenda, the Nabucco project did not succeed, because of Turkey's aspirations for membership. The advancements of the South Stream corridor, regardless of Russia's power politics in Ukraine and infringements in public procurement have been ongoing.

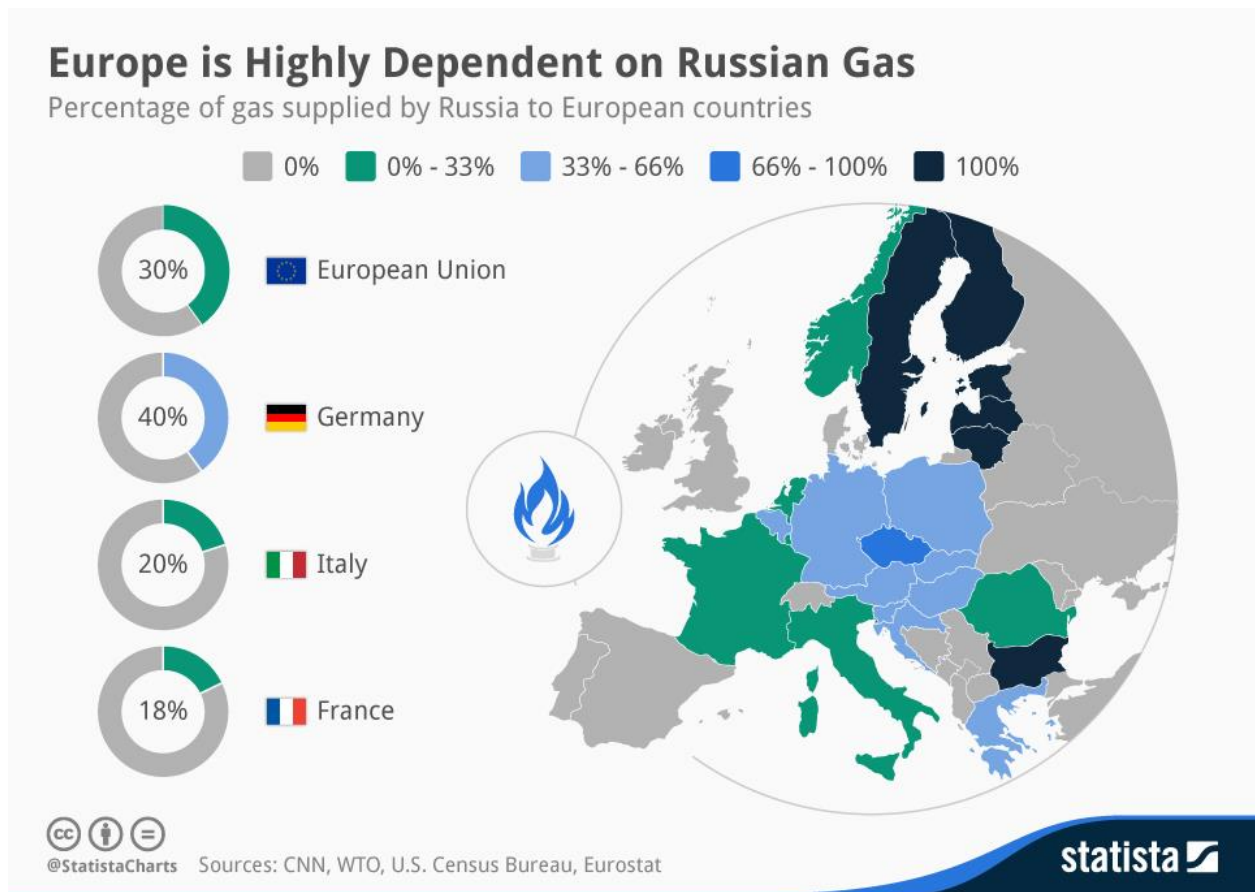


Figure 6. Dependence on Russian Gas⁴²

The main concern is that further entanglement with Russian supplies will increase the possibilities for discriminatory access according to the conformity with Russian foreign policy. Given the fact that Russia deems EU's involvement in the ENP as a treat to its sphere of influence this project might mean a new deadlock in the EaP. Moreover, as it is a way to bypass Ukraine it will devoid

⁴² http://one-europe.info/user/files/Hanna/Europe_is_Highly_Dependent_on_Russian_Gas.jpg

it of the ability to renegotiate prices through closing the transfer routes to EU. The South Stream poses an environmental challenge to the Bulgarian coast, as well as to its stability – non-compliance with the third energy package, procurement and ownership rules means losing authority and credibility to EU. To combat these and other effects Poland already came up with a proposal for an agency that will centrally negotiate prices and purchase gas from Russia. Naturally, as a country from where the gas is entering EU Bulgaria might be in the position to secure itself better prices.

However, a total of 26% of the respondents has registered concern over the topic of energy. Bulgaria is among the countries with the strongest dependence on Russian supplies. The circumvention of the EU legislative package on energy and especially on ownership would mean further state capture by vested interests. Bulgaria might need to eschew its own precedence to contribute to the Energy dialogue. Existing alternatives such as Nabucco might re-emerge and their assessment in view of over-dependence and energy poverty should be reassessed. If they would not become possible, the unbundling of the 3rd liberalization package should be among the priorities, as it is the assessment of large-scale projects and corporate governance models instead of political sidelining (CSD, 2014, pp. 111-112). Shale gas also remains an option, albeit Bulgaria has been recognized internationally for a hardliner stance against it. Putting a similar emphasis along the energy projects with the EaP countries will also be necessary and the country might need to find strategic partners in the face of Poland, Lithuania, Estonia or Turkey to balance Russia's prevalence, when coming up with specific proposals. Such might be the creation of a Black Sea Energy Union along similar reasoning as the EU's.

3. Banking Union and Economic Governance

The Banking Union⁴³ was enacted in response to the growing hazard for bailing out banks as a result of their insufficient liquidity. It sets out a dualistic system consisting of a mechanism for uniform supervision by the ECB and an additional resolution fund for restructuring their debts. It is a club for the countries from the Eurozone opened for other countries too. After requesting a 3.3 billion credit from the EC to save its KTB (Corporate Trade Bank) and PIB (First Investment Bank), Bulgaria decided to join the new Banking Union initiative. This major event complemented the governmental instability in 2014 and was therefore recognized by one tenth of the respondents as crucial. The increase of the capital requirements might reciprocally lead to an increase in the lending interest or simply volumes of lending due to the increased capital requirements in Bulgaria. This might diminish the growth prospects in the country, as the future costs of private investments and tendency to save increase.

On the other hand, the Central Bank in Bulgaria has been deemed one of the few institutions that are politically neutral and independent. Removing yet another of its competences, as is the case with monetary policy since the Bulgarian currency is anchored to the Euro, would mean a further crack in its credibility to adjust the monetary base and maintain an effective currency board. The Bulgarian Lev's artificial weight compared to the Euro has been maintained with higher reserves of foreign assets, but in reality, it should be up to 60% less. If a larger part of the monetary policy is being diverted to ECB, Bulgaria would simply follow the Eurozone's policies, without retaining the tangible benefits of being its member. The accession to the Eurozone would cement the government's debt stability policy and provide a long-term impetus for restructuring the economy.

⁴³ So far legally consisting of the Capital Requirements Directive IV (2013/36/EU), the Deposit Guarantee Scheme Directive (2014/49/EU) and the Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive (2014/59/EU).

Apart from the growing entrepreneurial culture supported by start-up accelerators such as Eleven⁴⁴, efforts should concentrate on lowering administrative weight to boost the business environment and endorse scientific undertakings through the mentioned OP, as so far they have had mostly isolated effects.

To create a long-term reform strategy the government should first of all address the low level of taxes collectability and reform its revenues structure. With the further erosion of the National Bank's powers accession to the Eurozone seems an imminent necessity. It will mean, however, removal of the opt-outs from the Euro+ Pact that will increase the corporate tax base and hinder the sole competitiveness of the economy based on a 10% flat tax rate. To foster growth in the SMEs sector and increase revenues without a shock, the government might need to introduce progressive corporate taxation, while leaving private revenues untouched to circumvent public turmoil. Strengthening of the certification of financing for EU projects in terms of its independence and expertise is another crucial factor to the reinforcement of funds utilization. Experience-sharing with member states that are championing in these efforts such as Poland, as well as twinning of projects in similar formations with Eastern Partnership states in the framework of the Twinning program is advisable.

In view of the fusion effects with the European Neighbourhood Bulgaria could attempt to externalize its policy for transferring banking and monetary management to Frankfurt. Since there are explicit parallels in the power structures and the structure of the economies, we might expect similar crises to occur in EaP. Even though the current depreciation of the currencies in Ukraine and Moldova makes FDI prospects from EU better due to lower labour and production costs, for

⁴⁴ <http://eleven.bg/>

the citizens of these countries it means mainly rising consumer prices and lower purchasing power of their national currencies. By adding bank, currency and debt stabilizers to the Neighbourhood policy and consequently to the Enlargement policy the EU might further ensure the smooth transition of the eventual members. Especially in the case of Ukraine, because of its sheer size accession might bring with itself adverse effects alongside this rationale. Expanding the European Semester surveillance on the EaP countries could fortify market trust and provide incentives for inclusion of further stabilizers.

4. Politics and Security

The strong post-accession conditionality that the country is unable to overcome speaks of two tendencies – first that a small country cannot compete with the specialization and the concentration of human capital in Brussels and Frankfurt and that technocratic supervision and transfer of competencies to the core can increasingly be seen as solutions to domestic problems. They are proprietors of a stronger political agenda in EU, as they hope that while the country is being subjected to scrutiny, a new generation will devour the technicalities and a technocratic approach to dealing with issues. This is especially through if we see governing a country through a strategic prism (10%).

Devoured by domestic problems, they do not see beyond the tangible and the immediate. Xenophobia (5%) towards minorities and outsiders remains a problem facing increased negligence. The border protection against influx of migrants is still viewed as relatively unimportant (6%) and a bit more important on European level (8%), but drastically less important than providing normal living standards for asylum-seekers (4%). Nevertheless, Bulgaria is experiencing severe problems with the provision of appropriate standards to the latter and must

unify itself with the South (Spain, Italy, Greece) in the lobbying for a common migration policy of the EU.

Still they see perceive the rising theocratic contemplations in the Middle East as presenting a security threat, but whether this means increased military and defense spending is hard to tell. In any case direct effects on governmental level are reproducing themselves from the neighbourhood, so they might be expecting more instability, even though they disagree that governmental instability is interrelated. Bulgarians do not see themselves as more influential in the next years or expect their politicians to change. Even if other countries might be influential in the EU they do not see this happening soon in Bulgaria and the effect of the protests on state capture is hard to interpret. But instability can be seen also as the rising challenge on the destabilization of the external border security of EU. Bulgaria should gradually begin to encourage internationalization of border missions and inclusion of Bulgarian observers and advisers in EUBAM, EUMM, EUAM^{45/}

Bulgaria has played a legitimizing and empowering role in the European integration context. As a country situated on the Black Sea Coast and member of both EU and nation it can function as a stabilizing element for the concurrent situation on the Balkans and within the Black Sea Basin (Pantev, 2008, pp. 110-117). Its proximity to the neighbourhood constitutes an experience-sharing possibility that can combat the “belated economic, technological, infrastructure and political modernization”. It can be founded on institutional learning from EU and developing platforms within the Black Sea community. Rethinking the past and winning Turkey as a strong partner is

⁴⁵ EU Border Assistance Mission to Ukraine and Moldova, European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia and EU Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform in Ukraine.

important too as it is the only actor strong enough to balance eventual security threats from Russia and maybe important transit country, if Nabucco's project revival takes place. In any ways the cooperation within Black Sea Economic Community might pave the way to membership in OECD, an actor increasingly entangled in the Neighbourhood.

Diffusing the model cases into the Bulgarian reality

From the Polish model case and (Pomorska & Copsey, 2013)'s paper we can draw some important lessons for the Bulgarian presidency of the EU. First of all, although employing a grandeur approach to create an entirely new dimension parallel to ENP, Poland switched to incremental small-steps approach and learned to compromise. Mainly because of the scale and the capacity of a small country like Bulgaria the same tactic might turn plausible. It might rather need to concentrate on a couple of issues that are interconnected and can still create a new profile of the country after the Presidency.

Second of all, even though it is not a small country, it was inexperienced with the exact functioning of the EU structures and needed the support of a competent collaborator who can translate the initiatives into EU's operational language. Bulgaria might find currently a similar partner in the face of Poland. Moreover, it softened the line on the politics of the past with Germany – an initiative taken up by Tusk and Sikorski that found its material expression in the setting up of a German Historical Museums Institute. Bulgaria has distinct friction only with two countries in Europe – its immediate neighbour Macedonia, with whom it has disagreements on history and UK, which is leading a compelling anti-immigration rhetoric against Bulgaria and Romania. Since Bulgaria is in the same Presidency Trio with UK, it might need to counteract and face this position, possibly through channeling the dialogue into support for further Enlargement, if UK itself remains

in the EU. Bulgaria itself has been largely supportive of Turkey's accession bids, but it missed the historical chance to advocate for the Eastern partners (Georgiev & Petrova, 2014). Naturally, it might need to maintain a strong position on the labour market dynamics with UK and learn from Estonia on how e-Government is done.

Thirdly, it abandoned the euroscepticism rhetoric and became more measured about Ukraine, which has improved its image in Brussels. For the conceptual shaping and delineation of its proposals it included a number of think-tanks, such as the Institute for Eastern Studies (OSW). Bulgaria can certainly also reproach civil society in its policy undertakings, with preparing useful reports, organizing outreach activities well-ahead, and combining national and international advocacy (Anati, 2006). In any ways reaching out to already existent movements to foster new thinking would be a viable strategy. They can be helpful in amassing participatory rates and fostering thinking in social contexts that can help the citizens shape their own visions. From the negative experience of Poland we might draw conclusions on the importance of timing, integrating all the present staff in the European institutions and the diligent, industrious approach to a Presidency of the Council.

From Sweden Bulgaria could learn about the importance of personal communication and distribution of materials, appropriate framing, concentrating mostly on interested parties, avoidance of rigid institutionalized proposals and adapting to the environment. The same applies to this study - we are currently discussing a possible agenda based on the current perceptions of the citizens, but at a later stage it must certainly be adapted. If we look at the last Council Presidencies of Lithuania, Greece and Italy, we see first of all, a strong emphasis on maritime, defense and migration topics. Italy is trying also to revive the EU institutional effectiveness

dialogue and to engage the European Parliament in the shaping of the agenda for a Presidency, as well as to revive federal ideas, such as a Convention for a Treaty Reform (Alessandri, 2014). In any ways these are a result of the access to water basins and their policy dimensions. Bulgaria must start learning from the preparation work of Latvia, which has already set out some targets – become a member of OECD, expand the dialogue with Russia, Baltic Sea Cooperation, Marking of Events and Hosting Forums, Expand Embassies Network (MFA, 2014). Last but not least, the values-based approach used by Sweden might bring new dimensions into Developmental Aid, Poverty or CSDP – areas in which Bulgaria is not exceptionally active.

Roadmap to 2018

To reach these aims Bulgaria needs to overcome its main incapacitated administrative structure by releasing it from the political pressure and letting it develop its own ecosystem. It should not be permeated by political appointments and isolated from party dynamics, as it needs to foster its own self-sufficiency. Ministries and other public institutions need to become increasingly entangled with the wider public by creating participatory instruments. Exchanges with governments that have successfully implemented liquid democracy solutions, especially with its partner in the presidential trio Estonia will be available. Capacity building through maximizing the national expert secondments in the European Commission must be maximized to increase the absorption capacity of ministries.

Broader political agendas must be owned by the population by its inclusion through forums, discussions, tables and the involvement of the civil society. In many cases, non-governmental entities are quite specialized in analysing specific issues or have ideas of transferring policy solutions and cases of good governance and effective public administration. Successful

coordination and gradual creation of an integrated e-government system are targets that go hand in hand. To increase participation rates in prospective electronic initiatives, the credibility of the judiciary should be strengthened, as an independent controller of political experiments. With the prosecution of Tsvetan Vasilev and the removal of a number of political immunities, it can create a perception spiral of awe and trust, important also for whistle-blowing.

Bulgaria must make its presence in the region tangible and to comfort the other actors in the Black Sea in view of its presidency. They should be invited on all possible occasions to present their views for further developments and synergies. Information about funding should become widely available to scientific communities, environmental civil society organizations, educational facilities etc. Special attention should be turned to grassroots organizations, entrepreneurs and SMEs, which are the driving forces behind dynamiting the lethargic eastern European economies. They should be provided a favourable business environment, tax exemptions and easy access to registration. Bulgaria has already a number of information centres on the EU funds, but they do not provide support for the preparation of project documentation. The creation of a genuine experience-sharing and socialization platform such as Black Sea Summit could also be devised.

Strategical imperatives for ensuring a functioning agenda include the gradual planning of awareness activities, inclusion of wide social strata, defining a strategic approach and the scope of the agenda. Political parties need to begin outlining their strategic visions for the development of the country prior to the election and use them as benchmarks. From there on involvement of existing policy capacities from think-tanks, MFA and other ministries as well as international experts from countries which have had similar presidency agendas (Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Czech Republic, Germany) could enrich alternatives and specify the range of the proposals.

Strategic thinking in terms of legislation should also be taken into consideration, discussing and researching for other partners' inclinations. An inclusive approach of domestic, EU and regional matters might provide richness, but efforts should concentrate on single initiatives per policy area. Fostering of networks and coalition-building should be started well in advance, especially with the Trio partners. Regardless of the portfolio Commissioner Georgiava receives, it should be maximized to create fusion effects (possibilities are foreign policy, environment and sustainable development).

Efforts should be concentrated on leaving a long-term mark of the Presidency work, such as the creation of an Institute of Black Sea Integration. Possibly, if UK remains in EU a topic of the agenda should be the adaptation of EU institutional dynamic, but it will also bring an Enlargement emphasis, for which Bulgaria should be prepared. Estonia, a world recognized leader in e-solutions would certainly upload digital literacy and e-government, e-participation solutions, so Bulgaria needs to start to reach out to the ICT and prepare them for such a shift of focus. Estonia and Bulgaria might try to create a specific maritime initiative under one roof for the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea.

Last but not least, as evidenced from the growing interest in the conduction of military exercises in the Black Sea Area in the future we might expect certain degrees of security emergence in the Black Sea. It will increasingly become a center for trade, as the only viable option to trade diversion from the rising sanctions is Turkey. The rise of Erdogan as the designer of the another presidential authoritative regime is good news for Russia. EU lost its game bargaining with Turkey for its membership, asking for Nabucco and recognition of the Greek Cypriot Community. We can expect a rise in cyber security threats such as drones in the region that will be targeting ship cargoes

for example, as a means to create losses without human victims. Bulgaria needs to carefully examine these threats with the help of its ICT sector and possibly Estonia and address them.

Conclusion

The European Neighbourhood Policy has become a vibrant setting of social disturbances, instability, power play and energy interests intertwined with security. We evidenced an anarchical setting, which is increasingly moulded by the interference of international actors. While Russia is combining coercive methods, dualistic rhetoric and destabilization tactics on the multilateral field it is turning to real politics (DW, 2014). The energy dependence of Europe puts it in an asymmetric stance, subjecting its economic growth to its foreign policy instruments.

Economic sanctions have led for the first time in recent history not to increasing interconnectivity, but to breaching it. Since much of the export of Europe will have to be redirected, the importance of the new members of the free-trade zone will increase, while at the same time Russia will turn to regimes in Asia concerned only with growth. This is an enormous challenge for the foreign policy of the EU, as it is facing a paradox of turning inward economically, while having to hasten the positions formulation and tools creation capacity. In an ever wider context, as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership is advancing, EU's sphere of interest could intensify and re-emerge as Atlantic-centered, further intensifying the prospects of global bipolarity, even if initially USA had restrictive, secondary interests in the region (Haukkala, 2008).

The Enlargement has led to numerous side effects – from inefficient post-conditionality to asymmetric expectations in the Eastern Partnership. These are not isolated effects and it is solely in the hands of Bulgarian citizens, civil society and elite to channel their energy in overcoming the

post-communist administrative deficiencies and following a stricter policy cycle that can address societal problems effectively. Would they be able to overcome the problems persisting even after its accession to the EU, Bulgaria might even be able and could be entitled to externalize this post-accession conditionality in terms of sound finances, effective judiciary, anti-corruption and bank surveillance to the Eastern Partnership Countries.

From a strategic viewpoint, the Council Presidency that Bulgaria will hold in the latter part of 2018 represents a major opportunity to recover the impetus lost after the accession and to provide a framework, time frame and a major deal of learning opportunities from other countries, who have engaged a similar path. While the Presidency itself is devoid of formal characteristics to shape the European policy order, it lies in the hands of the country to create a network of experts that can shape the details of a prospective agenda according to the public preferences. Thus the Council Presidency represents a grand alternative to outline the profile of a country within the EU social order. Had this happened at the time this study was written, according to our observation corruption, banking, energy and security would be the overarching topics where the initiatives should concentrate. These results are reflections of the current situation on the region are most likely to change. But the guiding principles remain the same – it is up to the Bulgarian government to provide the appropriate incentive-fostering framework.

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Appendix 1. Poll Respondents⁴⁶

7/26/2014 6:12:38
7/26/2014 6:49:44
7/26/2014 7:12:53
7/26/2014 7:59:44
7/26/2014 8:00:36
7/26/2014 9:40:42
7/26/2014 9:47:53
7/26/2014 9:55:34
7/26/2014 10:55:43
7/26/2014 11:26:41
7/26/2014 12:26:16
7/26/2014 12:43:55
7/26/2014 14:34:24
7/26/2014 14:36:22
7/26/2014 14:45:25
7/26/2014 15:10:52
7/26/2014 15:11:47
7/26/2014 15:43:45
7/26/2014 15:53:42
7/26/2014 15:58:32
7/26/2014 16:13:28
7/26/2014 16:31:18
7/26/2014 16:33:12
7/26/2014 18:09:35
7/26/2014 18:39:43
7/26/2014 22:03:04
7/26/2014 23:14:06
7/27/2014 0:44:00
7/27/2014 1:28:07
7/27/2014 3:18:28
7/27/2014 12:49:37
7/27/2014 14:42:49

⁴⁶ Address of the poll: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1_0HOMg_KDj65_g1xIKZitJdNlw--J4manx6ixN4ExU/edit

7/28/2014 9:00:08
7/28/2014 9:33:14
7/28/2014 10:42:51
7/28/2014 12:57:12
7/28/2014 20:11:22
7/29/2014 15:29:53
7/29/2014 19:56:52

